

The Affiliate Link-Building Playbook

How to get your review and bonus pages ranking — and quoted by AI answers — without buying spam or risking a penalty.

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A great presell page that nobody links to is a great page nobody finds. Google and AI answer engines both use links as a vote of trust. This playbook gives you a safe, repeatable way to earn those votes for thin affiliate pages — the exact channels, the order to work them, and the anchor-text ratios that keep you out of trouble.

Why affiliate pages struggle — and what actually moves them

Review and bonus pages have two disadvantages: they're commercial (search engines are cautious with them) and they're often thin (one page, one offer). You beat both the same way established sites do — with **relevance** and **links**. You already control relevance if you ran the SEO step. Links are the other half, and they're what this guide is about.

You don't need hundreds. For most launch keywords, a handful of relevant, real links plus a tight internal structure is enough to move a page from invisible to page one. Quality and relevance beat volume every time.

The three tiers — work them in order

Build links in tiers. Each tier is safe on its own, and doing them in order means every link you add makes the earlier ones look more natural.

Tier 1 · Foundation citations (day one, do once)

These establish that your page and brand exist. They're easy, permanent, and they make later links look normal rather than sudden.

- **Your own properties** — link the new page from your hub, your other reviews, your social profiles and your email signature.
- **Profile + bio links** — the "about" link on any platform you already post to (YouTube, X, Pinterest, a forum profile, Gravatar, a Medium/Substack about page).
- **Web 2.0 anchors** — one genuinely useful post on a free platform (Medium, Substack, a Blogger/WordPress.com page) that references and links your review. Write it for a reader, not for the link.
- **Q&A + community profiles** — a completed Quora profile and a couple of on-topic answers (see the Quora Buyer-Intent Playbook in this bundle) that link where it's genuinely helpful.

Tier 2 · Relevance links (the ones that actually rank you)

These come from pages about your topic. They carry the most weight and are worth real effort.

- **Roundups & "best of" lists** — find "best [niche] tools / best [product-category]" posts and pitch your review as an addition. One useful email, one relevant page.
- **Resource pages** — search `[niche] "resources"` or `[niche] "recommended tools"`; these pages exist to link out. Ask.
- **Guest angle** — a single guest post on a niche blog, linking your review once with a descriptive anchor, outperforms twenty profile links.
- **Digital PR / expert quotes** — respond to journalist and blogger requests in your niche (HARO-style services and niche Facebook/Slack groups). A quote earns a real editorial link.
- **Press releases** — the cheap, fast play covered in your *Press Releases for Search & AI Visibility* bonus. Use it as one Tier-2 channel: a syndicated release that gets indexed and cited.

Tier 3 · The internal hub (free, and most people skip it)

The links you fully control are your own. When you promote your second, third and fourth offer, don't leave those pages as islands. Link them to each other around a niche.

- **The four-link rule** — every new review links to two sibling reviews and your niche hub page; the hub links back. Four internal links per page, minimum.
- **Descriptive anchors** — link with "the [product] bonus page", not "click here". The anchor tells Google (and the reader) what's on the other side.
- **One hub per niche** — a simple index page that lists your reviews becomes the strongest internal linker you have. (Your Niche Authority approach covers this in depth.)

Get cited by AI answers (the new link)

AI answer engines increasingly decide what to quote based on clarity and corroboration, not just links. To become a source they lift from:

- **Make one clear, quotable claim per section** — a self-contained 40–60 word answer an AI can lift verbatim (the SEO step sets this up for you).
- **Add something only you have** — a real screenshot, a specific number, a first-hand note. Original detail is what gets cited.
- **Be corroborated** — the same facts appearing on your page, a press release and a forum answer makes an engine confident enough to quote you.
- **Structure it** — FAQPage schema and question-form headings make your answers machine-readable.

Safe anchor-text mix

Over-optimised anchors (every link saying "acme funnel review") are the fastest way to look manufactured. Keep the mix natural:

Anchor type	Example	Share
Branded / URL	IM Dominator, imdominator.com	~50%
Generic	this review, read more, here	~25%
Partial / topic	the acme funnel bonus page	~20%
Exact match	acme funnel review	~5%

10 links you can start this week

#	Source	The move
1	Your hub page	Add the new review to your index with a descriptive anchor
2	Your other reviews	Add the "four-link rule" internal links
3	Quora	Answer 2 buyer-intent questions, link where it helps
4	Medium/Substack	One useful post referencing your review
5	Niche roundup	Pitch your review as an addition to one "best of" list
6	Resource page	Ask one [niche] "resources" page to include you
7	Press release	One syndicated release (see the PR bonus)
8	Guest post	Pitch one niche blog a single useful article
9	Forum/group profile	Complete a profile + 2 on-topic, linked answers
10	YouTube description	A short review video linking the page in the description

What to avoid

- **Bought link packages / PBNs** — cheap, fast, and exactly what penalties are built to catch. Skip them.
- **Exact-match anchor spam** — see the ratio table; drifting past ~5% exact match is the classic footprint.
- **Irrelevant volume** — 100 links from unrelated sites do less than 5 from your niche, and can hurt.
- **All at once** — a brand-new page earning 50 links in a day looks manufactured. Spread Tier 2 over 2–4 weeks.

Action step — do this now

Pick your live review page. Do all of Tier 1 today (own properties, one profile link, one Quora answer). Then schedule [10 links](#) for three weeks from the "10 links" table. That's a natural, safe link profile — and it's usually all a launch keyword needs to move onto page one.

Pair this with the Index-in-48-Hours Playbook (get the page crawled first) and the Manual SERP Read Cheat Sheet (so you only chase keywords you can actually win) — both in this bundle.