

# How to Become an Amazon Associate

A fill-in workbook for getting the application accepted, landing the first three qualifying sales, and staying inside the rules.

Corrected for the April 14, 2026 operating-agreement update.

**0**

Follower minimum

**\$0**

Cost to join Amazon

**180**

Days to land 3 sales

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## INSIDE

Platform decision · Application answer bank · Commission math  
UGC plugs · Disclosure swipe file · Link tracker

Not an official  
Amazon publication

START HERE

## How this workbook works

This is the full workbook. It replaces the earlier checklist. Fill it in on a device or print it. By the end you should have a submitted Associates application, a short list of products you can actually recommend, a six-week plan aimed at three qualifying sales, and a tracker for every link you post.

You do not need a large following. Amazon asks for a platform — a website, a YouTube channel, an app, or a social profile such as TikTok or Instagram — not a follower count. The steps are the same at 10 followers and at 100,000. What changes is how specific you are.

**0**  
Followers required

**\$0**  
Cost to join

**3 sales**  
Needed in 180 days

### WHAT'S INSIDE

Work in order. Section 1 picks the platform. Section 2 is the sign-up checklist. Section 3 is the answer bank — this is the page that gets applications accepted. Section 4 is the niche worksheet. Section 5 is how commissions actually work after the April 14, 2026 update, including the two different 180-day clocks. Section 6 is the product math. Section 7 is a filled six-week sprint plus a blank planner. Section 8 is disclosure copy you can paste. Section 9 is links and reports. Section 10 is compliance. Section 11 is what to do if the account is closed. Section 12 is how to plug a product in UGC without breaking the link rules. Section 13 is the official links worth bookmarking.

## What you will have when you finish

A chosen platform with content already live, before you apply.

A store ID, a written audience description, and five products you would genuinely recommend.

Your application date and the date 180 days later, written down.

A six-week posting plan and the companion spreadsheet, Amazon-Associate-Link-Tracker.xlsx, with the rate card, a commission calculator, and a link log.

### BEFORE YOU RELY ON A NUMBER

This workbook is not published by Amazon and is not legal, tax, or financial advice. Commission rates, cookies, and the operating agreement change without much notice. Confirm anything you plan around in Associates Central and in the current Operating Agreement at [affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/agreement](https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/agreement). Do not promise earnings to an audience, and do not promise them on a sales page for this workbook.

# Two clocks, and one rule that is easy to get wrong

Shorter guides collapse three different Amazon rules into one sentence. They are not the same rule. Mixing them up is how new Associates either panic, or leave commission on the table.

| Rule              | What it actually is                                                                                                                                                                                                | When the clock starts                                                                                |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Application clock | After you apply, you have 180 days to refer three qualifying sales. Miss it and Amazon can withdraw the application. The ID is not reinstated; you reapply once the platform is established.                       | When you apply, not when you feel “approved.” Amazon evaluates the application after the third sale. |
| Purchase clock    | As of the April 14, 2026 operating-agreement update, a product qualifies only if the customer has paid and the item has been shipped, streamed, or downloaded within 180 days of the click.                        | The click on your Associates link.                                                                   |
| Cart cookie       | Offsite, you earn on qualifying items placed in the cart within 24 hours of the click. Those cart items can still be purchased for about 90 days. A later Associates link from someone else can close your window. | Arrival at Amazon via your link.                                                                     |

Sources to confirm: Amazon Associates help, “Account Dormancy” (180 days from application to refer a sale; three qualifying sales, then Amazon evaluates) and the April 14, 2026 Operating Agreement changelog at [affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/compare](https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/compare).

## The attribution mistake

The April 14, 2026 update narrowed **onsite** commission — content hosted on Amazon, such as a shoppable video or a creator storefront — to a Direct Qualifying Purchase of the same ASIN variant as the linked product page. Onsite rates are also lower than standard Associates rates.

That change does **not** mean a normal offsite link only pays on the exact product. A blog, TikTok, YouTube description, Instagram caption, or Pinterest pin that sends the shopper to Amazon still uses the session rule: qualifying items added to the cart within 24 hours can earn the rate of the category that was actually purchased. The days of “any purchase in the session can count” are not over for ordinary links. They are over for onsite content.

### HOW TO USE THIS

Link the product you are actually talking about. Offsite, a shopper may still buy something else in that 24-hour cart window, and you are paid the rate of what they bought. Onsite, assume you are paid only if they buy that variant. Track at the product level either way — that is how you learn what to post again.

## Write your dates now

Fill these in the day you submit the application. The three-sale clock does not wait until you feel ready.

Application date

180 days later — three sales due

Associates tracking ID (store ID)

Platform I applied with (URL or @handle)

## Pick the platform before you apply

Amazon will ask where the traffic comes from. Apply with a platform that already has original content a stranger can open. An empty site, a private account, or a profile you plan to start next month burns the 180 days.

April 14, 2026 also added a definition of original content: it needs commentary, analysis, or some transformation that adds value. A page of copied product descriptions is not a platform.

| Platform                       | Apply with it when                                                                                                        | Watch-out                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website or blog                | At least a handful of posts a stranger can read, with your own commentary.                                                | A brand-new domain with one “coming soon” page is a common rejection.                       |
| YouTube                        | A few public videos that show what you will recommend. Links go in the description, above the fold.                       | Unlisted or empty channels do not show Amazon a plan.                                       |
| TikTok                         | Public videos already live. Follower count can be small. Put the link in the caption and a link-in-bio, not only the bio. | A bio disclaimer alone does not cover the link.                                             |
| Instagram                      | Public posts or Reels that match the niche you describe.                                                                  | A private account cannot be reviewed.                                                       |
| Pinterest                      | Pins that lead to your own content, not only to Amazon.                                                                   | Thin pins with no original context get weak results and weak reviews.                       |
| Amazon Influencer / storefront | You want content hosted on Amazon. Registration can open a storefront and a creator link.                                 | Onsite rates are lower, and since April 14, 2026 onsite pays on the same ASIN variant only. |

### THE DECISION

If you have no site, do not build one just to look official. Apply with the social profile you will actually post on, after a handful of real posts are live. You can add a site later. If you already have a site with original posts, that is the cleaner application.

## My platform

Circle one primary. You can list more than one during sign-up; add the others later if you are unsure.

| Platform                           | Handle or URL | Posts live today |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Website   |               |                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube   |               |                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TikTok    |               |                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram |               |                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pinterest |               |                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other     |               |                  |

### Audience size today — honest is fine if it is small

Amazon's example of a normal answer is a specific one: “TikTok, about 500 followers, short-form product tips.” A round number you invent does not help.

## The sign-up checklist

Do these in order. The clock in Section 0 starts when you submit, so steps 1 and 2 happen before you open the application.

- ☐ **Have content live first**  
A handful of real posts or videos. They do not need an audience. They need to show what you will promote. Original commentary, not copied listings.
- ☐ **Go to [affiliate-program.amazon.com](https://affiliate-program.amazon.com)**  
Sign in with an existing Amazon account, or create one you will use for the Associates business. Bookmark Associates Central.
- ☐ **Enter account information you can verify**  
Legal name, address, and a phone that can receive a text or a call. A number you do not control stalls the application.
- ☐ **List the website, app, or social handle**  
No website is fine. This is where a TikTok, YouTube, or Instagram handle goes. Use the platform you circled in Section 1.
- ☐ **Choose the tracking ID**  
This tag is appended to every link. Short, tied to your name or brand, letters and numbers. Do not put “Amazon” in it. Write it on page 3 of this workbook.
- ☐ **Describe the audience and the traffic**  
Specific and honest. Use the answer bank in Section 3. Vague answers (“I will share products”) are a common reason an application looks unfinished.
- ☐ **Complete tax identity**  
W-9 if you are a US person. W-8BEN if you are not. Required before any payment. This workbook is not tax advice — use the form Amazon asks for.
- ☐ **Add a payment method**  
Direct deposit is the fastest. There is typically a \$10 minimum before a payment is issued. Unpaid commission can sit until you clear that threshold.
- ☐ **Turn on two-factor authentication**  
Do it during setup. Associates accounts are a payout account; treat them like one.
- ☐ **Only then submit**  
Write the application date and the date 180 days later on page 3. The three sales are separate orders, not three items in one cart, and returned orders do not count.

## Application answer bank

The free-text box is where applications look serious or unfinished. Amazon is checking that a real platform exists and that you can say, in plain language, who it is for. These are patterns, not scripts to paste unchanged — copy the shape, use your facts.

### Weak versus specific

| Weak — reads unfinished                                                        | Specific — reads like a real platform                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "I will promote Amazon products on social media and make commissions."         | "TikTok @handle, about 400 followers. Three short videos a week testing under-\$40 kitchen tools I use in a small apartment. Links go in the caption and a link-in-bio."                                          |
| "My blog will have product reviews and gift guides."                           | "Six posts are live at example.com, all about desk setups for remote work. I will add one tested-gear post a week. Links sit under the product I actually show, with the Associates disclosure next to the link." |
| "YouTube channel coming soon, tech niche, I expect fast growth."               | "YouTube channel is public with four videos: budget headphones, a monitor arm, a webcam, and a cable-management tour. Descriptions carry the product link and the disclosure above the fold."                     |
| "Instagram influencer. I post lifestyle content and will add affiliate links." | "Public Instagram, about 900 followers, home organization for renters. Two Reels a week. I only link products already in the video. Disclosure is in the caption, not only the bio."                              |

### What gets applications closed or rejected

- Nothing public to review: private account, empty channel, or a site that says coming soon.
- The only content is other people's product photos and manufacturer copy.
- The description promises income ("quit your job," "guaranteed commissions").
- The platform you list does not match the URL or handle.
- You apply months before you can post, then the 180 days expire with zero sales.
- Tax or phone verification never finishes, so the account cannot be paid even if a sale lands.

### Draft your audience answer

Who it is for, where they see you, how often you post, and where the link will sit. Four lines is enough.

#### Tracking ID I will request

If the ID is taken, add a short suffix. Avoid amazon, amzn, and anything that implies you are Amazon.

## Niche and product finder

You do not need a new niche. You need the one you already post about, plus products that fit beside it. Genuine recommendations convert better than a random haul, and they are what the disclosure rule assumes: you are earning from a real suggestion, not a disguised ad with no context.

### What I already talk about

Topics from the last month of posts. If you cannot name them, you are not ready to apply.

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### Three categories that fit those posts

Examples: kitchen, home organization, books, fitness equipment, desk gear. Skip gift cards, alcohol, and wireless plans — those pay 0%.

| # | Category | Why it fits what I already post |
|---|----------|---------------------------------|
| 1 |          |                                 |
| 2 |          |                                 |
| 3 |          |                                 |

### Five products I would recommend this month

Only things you have used or would hand to a friend. Price is a planning guess — do not publish a specific price in evergreen content. Amazon's rules prohibit inaccurate prices.

| Product | Why I trust it | Rough price | Rate |
|---------|----------------|-------------|------|
|         |                |             |      |
|         |                |             |      |
|         |                |             |      |

#### EXPECTATION CHECK

A \$25 kitchen tool at 4.5% is about \$1.13 if one person buys that item. Three qualifying sales can be under \$5. The three sales keep the account. They are not an income plan. Higher-rate categories (Luxury Beauty around 10%, Amazon Games around 20% where it fits) only help if you already talk about them.

## How commissions work in 2026

Two things from the April 14, 2026 update matter before you pick products. Neither one is “rates were cut in half across the board.” Confirm the live table in your Associates dashboard before you plan around a percent.

### APRIL 14, 2026 — WHAT ACTUALLY CHANGED

Onsite commission now applies only to a Direct Qualifying Purchase of the same ASIN variant as the linked product page. Paid or boosted ads that send a shopper to Amazon can disqualify the purchase, with limited exceptions, even if you avoided banned keywords. Offsite session rules still credit qualifying cart-adds inside 24 hours.

### Approximate standard offsite rates

Compiled from the standard commission income statement as reported in 2026 Associates guides. Not a promise. Your dashboard wins if these differ.

| Category                                  | Approx. rate | Category                                  | Approx. rate |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Amazon Games                              | 20%          | Toys, furniture, home, pets, sports, baby | 3%           |
| Luxury Beauty, Amazon Explore             | 10%          | PCs and components, DVD / Blu-ray         | 2.5%         |
| Amazon Haul                               | 7%           | TVs, digital video games                  | 2%           |
| Music, Handmade, digital video            | 5%           | Electronics, consoles, grocery, health    | 1%           |
| Physical books, kitchen, automotive       | 4.5%         | Gift cards, alcohol, wireless plans       | 0%           |
| Fashion, devices, jewelry, watches, shoes | 4%           | Amazon Fresh and several exclusions       | 0–1%         |

Onsite (content Amazon hosts) uses a separate, lower table. Creator ads onsite pay more than ordinary onsite and still less than a normal offsite link in most categories. If your traffic is a blog or a social caption, use the offsite column and ignore the onsite table.

### The cookie, in one paragraph

From the click, the shopper has 24 hours to put qualifying items in the cart. That window closes if they check out or if they come back through someone else’s Associates link. An item added inside the 24 hours can still be bought for about 90 days and earn a referral fee. As of April 14, 2026, the fee also requires that the customer has paid and the item has shipped, streamed, or downloaded within 180 days of the click. Anything added after the first 24 hours is not yours.

### What does not pay

- Your own orders. Buying through your link is against the operating agreement.
- Orders you incentivize — “buy through my link and I will send you something,” fake clicks, or asking friends and family to purchase just so the account qualifies.
- Purchases referred through paid or boosted ads into Amazon, with limited exceptions, after the April 14, 2026 update.
- Returned orders. A refunded sale does not count toward the three.
- Gift cards, alcohol, wireless plans, and other 0% categories. Linking them does not move the three-sale count.

## Product math

Use this before you build a content calendar around a category. The spreadsheet does the same math and stays editable when Amazon changes a rate. Yellow cells in the tracker are the ones you type.

### A worked example — not a projection

|                          | Figure                       | Why it is here                                                                         |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Product                  | Silicone spatula, about \$28 | Kitchen, a category people can show on camera.                                         |
| Offsite rate             | 4.5%                         | Confirm in the dashboard. Books, kitchen, and automotive are often in this band.       |
| One sale of that item    | about \$1.26                 | $\$28 \times 0.045$ . Halo items in the same 24-hour cart pay their own category rate. |
| Three sales of that item | about \$3.78                 | Enough to qualify the account. Not enough to call a business.                          |
| Cold social conversion   | often 1–3% of clicks         | A review post to people who asked what you use can run higher. Do not plan on 10%.     |

### Filter before you add a product

- You have used it, or you can test it before you recommend it.
- It is easy to show in the format you already post (a 20-second clip, a photo, a paragraph).
- It is not in a 0% category.
- You can say why this one, not a generic “check out this find.”
- You will put the disclosure next to the link, every time.

### My five-product math

Rough price is for your planning sheet only. Do not hard-code that price into a post you will leave up.

| Product | Price | Rate | Commission if 1 sale | Worth a post? |
|---------|-------|------|----------------------|---------------|
|         |       |      |                      |               |
|         |       |      |                      |               |
|         |       |      |                      |               |

#### IF THE PERCENT LOOKS WRONG

Special rates, bounty programs, and influencer onsite tables change on their own schedule. If a guide — including this one — and your dashboard disagree, use the dashboard.

## The 180-day sprint

Once the application is in, Amazon expects activity. Three qualifying sales, separate orders, not returned, inside 180 days of the application. One clear recommendation beats ten generic ones. Repurpose a single honest post across every platform you listed.

### SAMPLE — KITCHEN TIKTOK, STARTING FROM A SMALL ACCOUNT

This sample is a renter who already posts weeknight cooking on TikTok, about 400 followers. It is an illustration of the shape of a sprint, not a result you should expect, and not a promise of sales.

| Week | What gets posted                                                                          | Where the link sits                                                            |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | "The spatula I actually reach for" — 20 seconds, one product, one reason.                 | Caption, pinned comment, link-in-bio. Disclosure in the caption.               |
| 2    | Same clip, cut for Reels and a still carousel. One sentence of your own in the caption.   | Instagram caption plus link-in-bio. Disclosure in the caption.                 |
| 3    | A second product from the same drawer. Do not haul ten things.                            | New link, new row in the tracker. Old link stays up.                           |
| 4    | Answer a comment with a follow-up clip. Specific beats a new niche.                       | Caption and pinned comment. No boosted post into the Amazon link.              |
| 5    | A short blog or notes post if you have a site: what you use, what you skipped, why.       | Link directly under the product mention. Disclosure in the same paragraph.     |
| 6    | Repost the winner — the link with clicks — in a new opening line. Check the order report. | Same tag. Note orders versus clicks. A blank "sale" cell on day one is normal. |

### Rules that keep the sprint legal

- Share the link where you would naturally mention the product: caption, description, pinned comment, link-in-bio.
- Do not buy through your own link to "test" it. Check that the tag is on the URL instead.
- Do not ask friends or family to order so the account qualifies.
- Do not boost the post into an Amazon link. The April 14, 2026 update disqualifies purchases from paid or boosted ads, with limited exceptions.
- Three items in one order count as one order. You need three separate qualifying orders.

# Your planner

Fill this the week you apply. "Done" means the post is live and the disclosure is next to the link.

| Week | What I will post | Where | Done |
|------|------------------|-------|------|
| 1    |                  |       |      |
| 2    |                  |       |      |
| 3    |                  |       |      |
| 4    |                  |       |      |
| 5    |                  |       |      |
| 6    |                  |       |      |

My realistic date for the first qualifying sale

Backup product if the first one gets no clicks

## IF THE FIRST POST IS QUIET

One specific recommendation, reposted, beats a new product every day. If week four has no clicks, change the opening line before you change the niche.

## Disclosure swipe file

Amazon requires a clear disclosure near the link. The sentence they specify is: “As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.” A line that lives only in a bio, an about page, or a footer is not enough when the link is in a caption or a description. US creators also have FTC endorsement rules: the relationship should be obvious before someone clicks. This is not legal advice.

### THE SENTENCE — PUT IT NEXT TO THE LINK

As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.

### Paste-ready lines

| Place                     | Use this shape                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TikTok caption            | The spatula I actually cook with — link below. As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.                                       |
| TikTok pinned comment     | Product link is in my bio. As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.                                                           |
| Instagram caption         | Drawer organizer I kept after a month of using it. Link in bio. As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.                      |
| YouTube description       | Put this in the first two lines, above the fold: “Spatula I use (paid link): [url]. As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.” |
| Blog, next to the link    | I use this spatula on weeknights. As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.                                                    |
| Pinterest pin description | Weeknight spatula I kept. As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.                                                            |
| Link-in-bio page          | Still disclose in the caption. On the bio page, label the button: “Amazon — I earn from qualifying purchases.”                                |

### Do not write

- “Guaranteed commissions” or any income figure presented as a result someone else will get.
- A specific price in a post you will not update. Prices move, and inaccurate prices are against the program rules.
- “Amazon’s official recommendation,” or anything that implies Amazon endorses you.
- A disclosure that only appears if someone taps “more,” when the link is already visible.

### The disclosure line I will actually use

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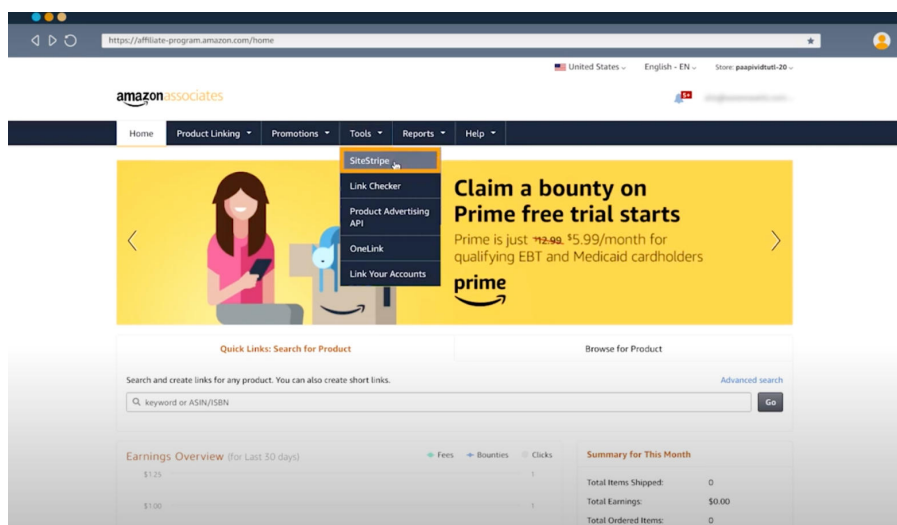
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## Links, tags, and the reports

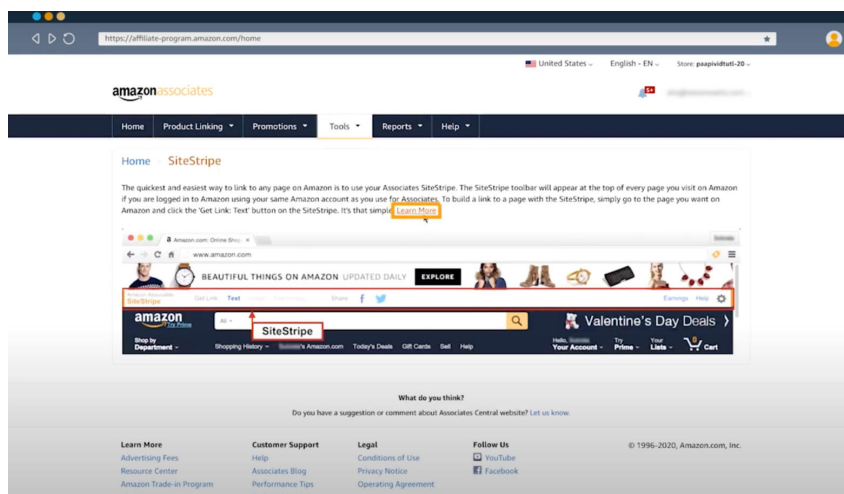
Every paid link needs your tracking ID on it. Associates Central builds these for you. Use SiteStripe when you are logged in on Amazon, or the Product Linking tool in Associates Central. Copy the link it generates. Do not rebuild it by hand unless you know the tag survived.

### Turn SiteStripe on

SiteStripe is the Amazon bar, not Stripe. It only appears after you are in the Associates program and signed in on Amazon with that same account. In Associates Central, open Tools, then SiteStripe. If the bar is missing, open Learn more on that page and turn the display on. You can also turn it off from the gear on the bar, or under Account Settings, Associates SiteStripe Options.



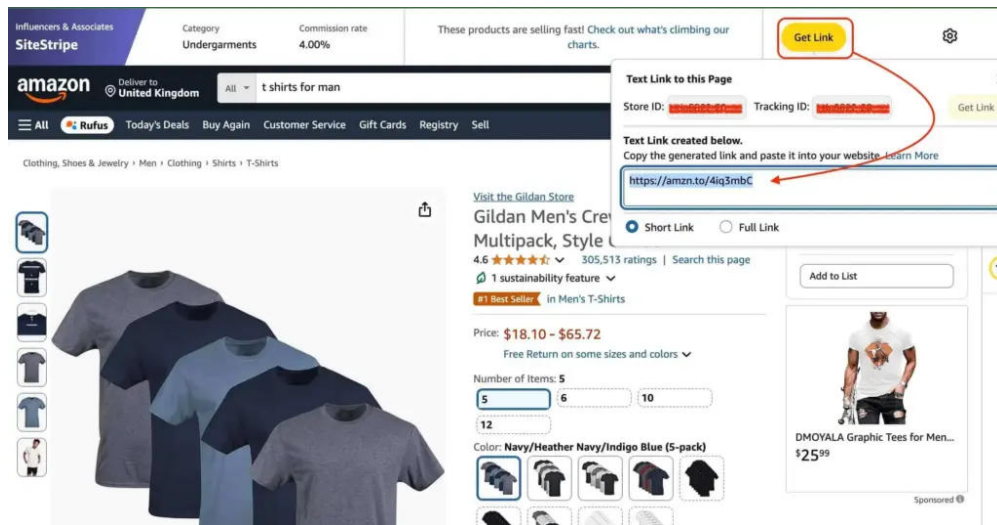
Associates Central, Tools menu, SiteStripe. This is where you turn the bar on. The earnings figures in this shot are someone else's sample, not a result to expect.



The bar sits at the very top of Amazon.com once you are signed in. Older bars also showed Image and Text+Image. Amazon retired those in December 2023. Use Text, or Get Link.

### Get the link

Open the product page. On the bar, choose Get Link, then Text. Pick your tracking ID if you have more than one. Copy the short link. It already has your tag. Paste it into the caption with the disclosure in the same caption. A short amzn.to link from this popup is fine. A shortener you do not control can strip the tag.



Get Link on a product page. Copy the text link it builds. Check that your tracking ID is the one selected before you copy.

## On a phone

Open the Amazon app, signed in with the Associates account. Go to the product. Tap Share, select your store ID, and copy the Associates link. That is Mobile Get Link. Desktop SiteStripe and the phone share sheet do the same job: a URL with your tag already on it.

### IF THE BAR IS NOT THERE

If the bar is still missing, use Associates Central, Product Linking, Product Links. Search the product and copy the link it builds. Do not assemble the tag by hand unless you have checked that tag= survived.

## A link is working when

- The URL contains your tracking ID, usually as a tag= parameter.
- It opens the product you meant, not a search page and not someone else's storefront.
- The disclosure sits in the same caption, description, or paragraph.
- You logged it in the spreadsheet the day you posted it.

## How to read an empty sale column

The order report is not instant, and it is not a one-day window. A click today can become a cart-add today and a purchase weeks later, as long as the add was inside 24 hours and the purchase lands inside the cart life (about 90 days) and the ship-and-pay rule (180 days from the click). A report that shows clicks and no orders is normal in week one. It is a problem if the tag is missing.

Short reporting windows also show orders without clicks, because the click happened before the dates you selected. Pull a longer range before you decide a post failed.

## Log this every time

The companion file Amazon-Associate-Link-Tracker.xlsx calculates estimated commission from your rate card. The columns are:

| Column            | What to put                                                                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date / platform   | The day it went live, and where.                                                        |
| Product / ASIN    | The exact item. Onsite, the variant matters. Offsite, it is still how you learn.        |
| Link              | The full Associates URL, tag included.                                                  |
| Clicks / orders   | From the Associates reports, not from TikTok analytics. Those measure different things. |
| Disclosure posted | Yes or no. No means the post is not finished.                                           |

#### TRACK AT THE PRODUCT

Since April 14, 2026, onsite earnings follow the variant. Offsite earnings can include other qualifying cart-adds. Either way, one row per product you linked. "Posted about kitchen stuff" is not a trackable claim.

## Compliance checklist

This is the page that keeps the account. It is short on purpose.

- ☐ **Disclosure next to every affiliate link**  
"As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases." Bio-only is not enough. Section 8 has the lines.
- ☐ **No earnings guarantees**  
Describe the process. Do not tell an audience what they will make, and do not put an income claim on a page selling this workbook.
- ☐ **No self-purchases, no fake clicks, no incentivized orders**  
Against the operating agreement. They do not count toward the three sales, and they can close the account.
- ☐ **No stale prices**  
Do not quote a specific price in evergreen content. Point people at the product page.
- ☐ **No paid or boosted ads into Amazon links**  
April 14, 2026 expanded disqualified purchases to traffic from paid or boosted ads linking to Amazon, with limited exceptions.
- ☐ **Original content only**  
Commentary, analysis, or transformation. Copied listings are not a platform and are not a defense if the account is reviewed.
- ☐ **Three qualifying sales inside 180 days of application**  
Separate orders, not returned. Revisit Section 7 if week four is still empty.
- ☐ **Full terms, not this summary**  
Amazon Associates Program Operating Agreement, [affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/agreement](https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/agreement). The changelog is at [affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/compare](https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/compare).

After an application is accepted, a different dormancy rule exists: if an account has earned no commission for three years, Amazon may deduct an account maintenance fee (the lesser of \$10 or unpaid commission) and can close the account. That is not the new-applicant clock.

## If the account is closed

Missing the three sales is the ordinary way a new account ends. Amazon's help says that once you have applied, you have 180 days to refer a sale, and that after three qualifying sales they evaluate the application. If there were not enough qualifying sales in the 180 days after the application was submitted, the application can be withdrawn. Amazon says it cannot reinstate the account or the Associates ID after a rejection. You reapply when the platform is actually established.

### Before you reapply

- The profile or site is public, and a stranger can see several original posts.
- Those posts show the kind of product you will link, with your own commentary.
- You can describe the audience in the specific shape from Section 3.
- You have a six-week plan, not a hope that one viral video lands inside the window.
- You will not buy through the new link, and you will not ask anyone else to.

### Other reasons accounts end

| What happened                                      | What to change                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Closed for no sales in 180 days                    | More original posts before the next application. Do not reopen the form the same day. |
| Rejected on review after the third sale            | The platform did not match the application. Add real content, then reapply.           |
| Closed for self-purchase or incentivized traffic   | Stop. A new account with the same pattern can be closed again.                        |
| Closed for missing disclosures or trademark misuse | Fix the captions and any use of Amazon's marks that implies you are Amazon.           |
| Closed for paid-ad traffic                         | Organic posts only, unless you have confirmed an exception in the current agreement.  |

#### Why it closed, in one sentence

#### What will be true on the platform before I reapply

## How to plug a product in UGC

A plug is one specific recommendation inside a post that already looks like your normal content. It is not a 15-second ad read, and it is not a list of ten links. UGC-style posts — filmed at home, one take, you talking to the camera — convert because the viewer believes you use the thing. The link still has to be disclosed, and it still cannot be boosted into Amazon.

### BRAND UGC AND AN AMAZON PLUG ARE NOT THE SAME

Paid UGC for a brand is a different job. A brand pays you to post, and that post is an ad. An Amazon Associates plug is you sending your own audience to Amazon with your tag. Do not boost, spark, or run the Associates post as an ad. The April 14, 2026 update can disqualify purchases that come through paid or boosted ads linking to Amazon, with limited exceptions.

### The four beats

| Beat          | What you say or show                                                                | Length       |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Hook       | The problem, not the product. "I stopped losing the spatula in the drawer."         | 1–2 seconds  |
| 2. In use     | Your hands, your kitchen, your desk. One action. No unboxing montage.               | 5–8 seconds  |
| 3. One reason | Why this one, not a category. "The handle doesn't slip when it's wet."              | One sentence |
| 4. The plug   | Say where the link is, then the disclosure, in the same caption the viewer can see. | Last line    |

### Three plugs you can film this week

| Shape        | Opening line                                                                                                    | Where the link goes                                                |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Show in use  | "This is the one I actually cook with." Then the action. No "link in bio" until the last second.                | Caption and pinned comment. Bio link is extra, not the disclosure. |
| Reply plug   | Stitch or reply to "what spatula is that?" Name it. One reason. Stop.                                           | Caption of the reply. Do not send them to a boosted post.          |
| Quiet review | "I bought the cheap one first. This is the one I kept." Show both if you want. Link only the one you recommend. | Same caption as the disclosure. One product, one link.             |

### Where the link sits

- TikTok and Reels: caption, plus a pinned comment. The bio link is a backup. A disclosure that only sits in the bio does not cover the caption link.
- YouTube and Shorts: first two lines of the description, above the fold. A verbal "link below, I earn from qualifying purchases" as well if you say the product name on camera.
- Stories and ephemeral posts: only if the link sticker and the disclosure are on the same frame. A story that disappears is a weak place to spend your only plug.
- Comment sections: fine for a pinned comment you control. Do not drop the link under someone else's video.

### Write one plug

Film this before you write a caption. If you cannot say the reason out loud, do not post the link.

## Product

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Hook — the problem, not the brand

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One reason I keep it

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Last line, including the disclosure

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### THE LINE YOU CAN SAY ON CAMERA

Say “I use this,” only if you do. Say “I was sent this,” if a brand sent it — that is a material connection on top of the Associates sentence. Do not quote a price. Do not say what someone else will earn.

## Before you hit post

- ☐ **The product is in the frame, in use**  
Not a screenshot of the Amazon listing. Your hands, your room, one action.
  - ☐ **One link, one product**  
A second link is a second row in the tracker, not a second sentence in the same breath.
  - ☐ **Disclosure is in the caption they can see**  
Bio-only does not cover it. Section 8 has the line.
  - ☐ **The post is not boosted**  
Organic only, unless you have confirmed an exception in the current agreement.
  - ☐ **The row is in the link log**  
Date, platform, ASIN, and the full tagged URL, the same day.
-

## Links worth keeping

Bookmark these. The workbook is a planning aid. The live page wins when they disagree. Associates Central pages ask you to sign in; the help pages below are the public ones.

| What you need                                        | Where                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Apply, or open Associates Central                    | <a href="https://affiliate-program.amazon.com">affiliate-program.amazon.com</a>                                                                                                             |
| Operating Agreement — the terms                      | <a href="https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/agreement">affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/agreement</a>                                                           |
| April 14, 2026 changelog                             | <a href="https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/compare">affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/compare</a>                                                               |
| 24-hour cart cookie                                  | <a href="https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/node/topic/G9SMD8TQHFJ7728F">affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/node/topic/G9SMD8TQHFJ7728F</a>                                           |
| 180 days and three sales                             | <a href="https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/node/topic/G7MJTPEP9NC3YKMG">affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/node/topic/G7MJTPEP9NC3YKMG</a>                                           |
| SiteStripe — build a tagged link on the product page | <a href="https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/node/topic/GJMMT7G4C8K4Y3AY">affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/node/topic/GJMMT7G4C8K4Y3AY</a>                                           |
| Rates                                                | Associates Central → Commission Income Statement. Do not trust a blog table, including the one in Section 5, over this.                                                                     |
| Reports                                              | Associates Central → Reports. Clicks and orders here, not TikTok analytics.                                                                                                                 |
| FTC: endorsements and reviews                        | <a href="https://ftc.gov/business-guidance/advertising-marketing/endorsements-influencers-reviews">ftc.gov/business-guidance/advertising-marketing/endorsements-influencers-reviews</a>     |
| FTC: Disclosures 101 for social                      | <a href="https://ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/disclosures-101-social-media-influencers">ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/disclosures-101-social-media-influencers</a>             |
| FTC: Endorsement Guides, what people ask             | <a href="https://ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/ftcs-endorsement-guides-what-people-are-asking">ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/ftcs-endorsement-guides-what-people-are-asking</a> |

### How to make the link

Sign in on Amazon with the same account as Associates. Turn SiteStripe on under Tools if the bar is missing. On the product page, Get Link → Text. Copy the short link. It already has your tag. Paste that into the caption, then paste the disclosure in the same caption. Log the row in the spreadsheet the same day.

If SiteStripe is not on the page, use Associates Central → Product Linking → Product Links, search the product, and copy the link it builds. Do not assemble a tag by hand unless you have checked that tag= survived.

### Links that are not useful

- “Make \$10k with Amazon” pages. They are the income claims Section 10 tells you not to write.
- Link shorteners you do not control. If the tag is stripped, the click is not yours.
- A rate table dated before you last opened Associates Central.
- Anyone selling “qualified sales” or offering to click your link. That is how accounts get closed.

#### The three links I bookmarked today

## Pinterest pins that can pay

A Pinterest pin is an offsite link. Organic pins can carry an Amazon Associates URL. The 24-hour cart rule still applies: they have to add a qualifying item within 24 hours of the click. A pin that sits for months can still earn, which is why it belongs in the plan, but only if the tag is on the link and the disclosure is on the pin.

### ORGANIC PINS, NOT PROMOTED PINS

Do not promote the pin. A Promoted Pin is a paid ad. The April 14, 2026 update can disqualify purchases that come through paid or boosted ads linking to Amazon. Organic pins only, unless you have confirmed an exception in the current agreement.

### Where the link goes

Create a standard pin, not a story that disappears. The commission link goes in the Link field. That URL is the SiteStripe text link from Section 9, the full Amazon address or the amzn.to short link SiteStripe made. Do not wrap it in Bitly or another shortener. If the tag is stripped, the click is not yours.

**Create Pin**  
Working on your profile

Choose a file or drag and drop it here  
We recommend using high-quality .jpg files less than 20 MB or .mp4 files less than 200 MB.

Save from URL

Title  
Add a title

Description  
Add a detailed description

Link  
Add a link

Board  
Choose a board

Tagged topics (0)  
Search for a tag

Tag Products  
Add products

Create Pin. Title and description are the words. The SiteStripe URL goes in Link. Board is where it is filed. The circled Tag Products control is a Pinterest shopping tag, not a substitute for your Associates link.

### The description has to say you earn

Put this near the start of the pin description, not only on your profile: “As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.” Add #ad so the commercial relationship is obvious before the click. If the pin goes to your blog first, the same sentence has to sit next to the link on that page. A profile disclaimer does not cover the pin.

| Field       | What to put                                                                                                 |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Image       | Your photo of the product in use, or a pin you designed. One product. Not a copied listing with no context. |
| Title       | The problem or the use, not “Amazon find.” Example: “The spatula that stays in the drawer.”                 |
| Description | One reason you keep it, then the Associates sentence and #ad.                                               |
| Link        | SiteStripe text link for that product. Check the tag before you save.                                       |

| Field | What to put                                                                             |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Board | A board that matches the niche. Kitchen tools, not a dump board of every link you have. |

## Two ways to send the click

- Direct. The pin link is the Amazon product. Fine if the description is your recommendation and the disclosure is in that description.
- Through a post you wrote. The pin link is your page, and that page has the Associates link under the product, with the disclosure in the same paragraph. Use this if you already have a site.
- Storefront tagging. In June 2026 Pinterest added Amazon Storefront linking for accounts that connect a storefront. If you see it in settings, tagging an eligible product can apply your affiliate info for you. Confirm it is on before you rely on it. A SiteStripe link in the Link field still works either way.

## Three pins to make this month

| Pin | Product | Board | Link pasted? |
|-----|---------|-------|--------------|
| 1   |         |       |              |
| 2   |         |       |              |
| 3   |         |       |              |

Log each pin in the spreadsheet the day you publish it. A pin with no tag, or a disclosure only on the profile, is not finished.

# Cheat sheet

| Question                                 | Answer                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Do I need followers?                     | No. You need a public platform with original content.                                                                             |
| When does the 180-day sales clock start? | When you apply. Three separate, non-returned qualifying sales, then Amazon evaluates.                                             |
| What is the other 180 days?              | From the click: the customer must pay, and the item must ship, stream, or download, within 180 days.                              |
| Do I only earn on the exact product?     | Onsite, yes — same ASIN variant, since April 14, 2026. Offsite, no — qualifying cart-adds inside 24 hours.                        |
| How long is the cart cookie?             | 24 hours to add. About 90 days to buy that cart item. Another Associates link can close your window.                              |
| What sentence is required?               | “As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.” Next to the link.                                                      |
| Can I boost the post?                    | Treat paid and boosted ads into Amazon as disqualified, with limited exceptions.                                                  |
| How do I plug it in a UGC clip?          | Problem, show it in use, one reason, link and disclosure in the same caption. Section 12.                                         |
| Can a Pinterest pin pay?                 | Yes, organic. SiteStripe URL in the Link field, disclosure and #ad in the description. Do not promote the pin. Section 14.        |
| Can I buy it myself to qualify?          | No. It does not count, and it can close the account.                                                                              |
| Where do I confirm rates?                | Associates Central. This workbook’s table is approximate.                                                                         |
| Where are the terms?                     | <a href="https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/agreement">affiliate-program.amazon.com/help/operating/agreement</a> |

## THE SPREADSHEET

Companion file: Amazon-Associate-Link-Tracker.xlsx — rate card, commission calculator, link log, and a copy of the six-week planner. Yellow cells are inputs. Everything else calculates.

Edition date: October 2026. Rules summarized from Amazon Associates help and the April 14, 2026 Operating Agreement changelog. Amazon can change rates and terms without notice. This workbook is an independent planning aid. It is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or sponsored by Amazon.