

Amazon Niche Master

Informational Article Strategies for Review Sites

Info Article
Strategies
for Review
Sites



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Introduction

Not one for long-winded intros, I did want to at least introduce myself to you, in case this is the first chance we've had to meet. My name is Erica Stone and I'm a passionate (sometimes obsessed) affiliate marketer.

Several years ago, I'd never heard of WordPress. I didn't know how to buy a domain. I thought hosting was what you did when you had friends over for dinner.

I was a hard-working mother and wife with a bank job that required long hours and a fair amount of travel. What started as a way to learn HTML so I could build a family website led to a brand new career.

Two years ago I made the leap, left that full time job and have been working for myself ever since.

Building product review sites is my specialty. I've tried building sites around a number of other business models but nothing worked for me as well as creating product review sites with Amazon affiliate links.

The entire set of steps I follow for a new site is explained in great detail in one of my earlier products - [Extreme Review](#).

That book, however, only scratched the surface of writing what I call "informational posts". This book delves fully into how to find topics for these kinds of posts and the benefits they have for your visitors, your traffic and your site rankings.

When I first started, I wrote review after review after review for my sites. But then I got stuck....what DOES one write about after they've reviewed quite a number of products in the niche?

This book is your answer. It covers a number of very easy strategies for knowing exactly what matters most to the people in ANY niche for which you could create a review site.

For me, these are the posts that take your site from standard affiliate to sensational authority.

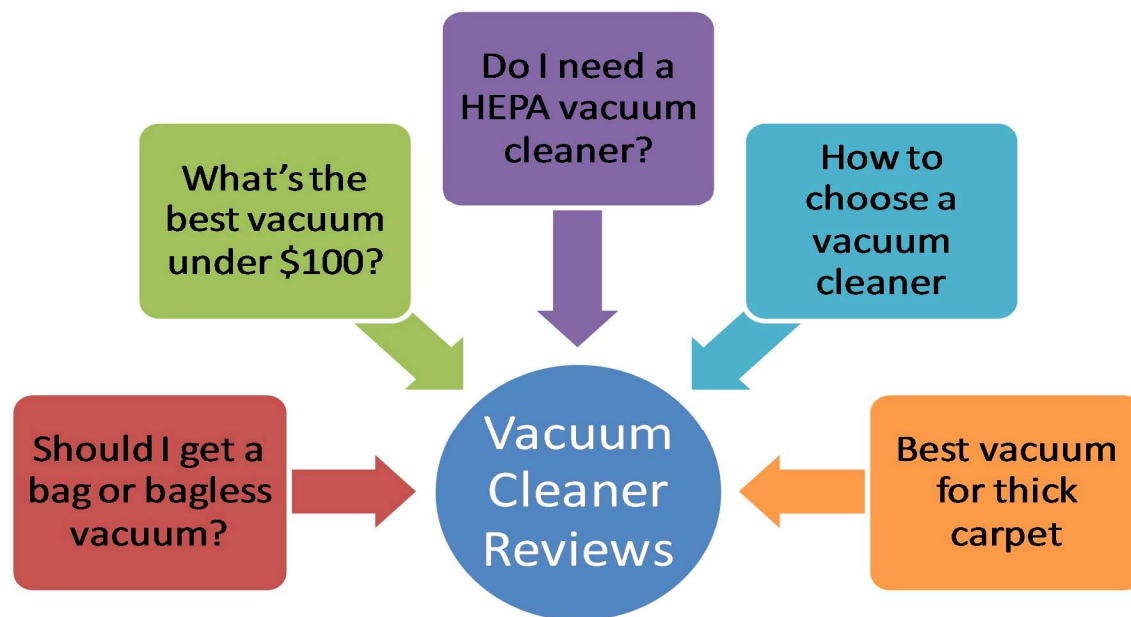
If you thought you'd covered your niche from top to bottom, think again – you're about to have an “ah-ha” moment (or two...or three...)!

Informational Articles

In a previous book, I explained that review posts – the posts that discuss one, specific product in detail - are the workhorse of any product review site. Review posts bring in targeted, quality traffic. They help your site rank for “review” related keywords.

Quality reviews that rank well for the right product can earn thousands of dollars per year by themselves.

However, a site filled with only review posts ignores large segments of a niche. Lots of buyers use non-review related keywords in their quest to find the right product. You want those folks to find your site, too, right?



A review site that covers a niche from top to bottom works at attracting visitors like a pot of honey attracts Winnie the Pooh. Once in, your visitor will feel right at home, licking up every scrap of information you’ve assembled for them.

Your goal is to have such a comprehensive collection of tools and information useful to the **shoppers** in your niche that they’ll have no need for another site. They’ll simply hop from your site straight to Amazon (or the retailer of your choice) to make a purchase.

Bringing in those additional visitors is the job of what I call “informational posts”.



Informational posts are non-review articles that discuss topics important to potential buyers in your niche.

A **review post** has a title like “*Brand XYZ Model 123 Review*”. It contains lots of detail about a single, specific product. An **informational post**, on the other hand, might talk about one product or many, it may talk about one feature of a set of products, or it might share news about your niche.

Informational articles answer all the questions that come up when someone is in the market to buy something for which there are many choices.

If you’ve followed my [Extreme Review](#) instructions for selecting the best kinds of products for review sites, your products have an average cost of more than \$100 and are complex products for which people want – **need** – reviews before they make a selection.

The complexity of these products provides many opportunities for informational posts.

Besides getting more traffic, these posts have the following benefits:

- Informational posts give you a chance to internally link new posts to your older content. An internal link occurs when you have a link inside Post A in your site that points to Post B on your site.
- Informational posts help balance the percentage of affiliate-links to non-promotional content on your site. Some informational articles may include a few affiliate links but many should include links to just other posts on your site. As a result, you’re site isn’t going to look like a big, old affiliate ad to Google – or to visitors.
- Informational posts establish authority and trust by showing visitors that you have more than just a pile of links that lead to Amazon or other merchants.
- Informational posts give you a chance to show your visitors the other resources on your site.

The Content Finding Strategies

You may already have understood the benefits of this kind of content on your site but the real challenge is finding the topics to write about!

I just saw a post on a popular internet marketing forum that basically said "There's nothing more to write about in my niche. I've stalled."

It can sure feel that way sometimes. Writing the product reviews is the relatively easy part because you have a product, you follow a template, you write about that product and you're done. (It's a bit more complicated than that but the process is the same for each review so it becomes routine. This was covered in [The Reviewer's Edge](#).)

After that, what kinds of content should you add to your review site?

There are two main ingredients for a good informational post topic:

-  Targets potential buyers, not owners.
-  Important to the shoppers in your niche.

If your end goal is to help shoppers make a buying decision, you won't get too far targeting people who already own the products. For example, if your site is about lawn mowers, writing about "*how to mow your lawn*" might be more interesting to someone who already has a lawn mower than to someone who doesn't. A potential buyer would be more interested in a post about "*which lawn mower is best for a small lawn*".

The second requirement is important because you don't want to write just for the sake of writing. You want to write content that will be useful and that answers questions buyers are already researching. Someone shopping for a new microwave may not care about "*the size of screws used to hold microwave exteriors together*".

What you need are strategies that you can use to quickly come up with ideas for topics that meet both of these requirements. Following are a variety of such strategies.

Top 3, 5, 10 Lists

These are some of the most powerful informational posts you can add to your site. Depending on your niche, these posts can explode around the holidays. I have one such post that sold over 40 of the same \$100 item in just one day leading up to Christmas.

Why 3, 5, or 10? They're common groupings of "best of" kinds of lists. People like a selection but not such a large selection that they become overwhelmed.

Lists with 3, 5, or 10 products are a reference guide for shoppers who want to narrow their list of choices.

After completing a number of reviews on your site (even if you outsourced them), you should be familiar with the best sellers in your niche. You should understand why the best sellers are so highly rated.

Being able to create a post about the top 3, 5, or 10 products requires you do some analysis. Here's my approach:

- Start a spreadsheet and list the top 20 bestsellers in your niche as determined by Amazon.
- For each product, note the number of reviews, the average star rating, and the price.
- Go to other large online merchants that might list your products and find their top 20 bestsellers (if they don't have a bestsellers category, look at number of reviews or the average star rating).
- Choose a filter you're going to apply to whittle down your list. If you were doing vacuums, it would be hard to get a list down to five and say these are the absolute best vacuums in the market because there are so many different kinds and styles. If the list showed mostly vacuums under \$200, then you might decide to whittle your list down to only vacuums under \$200 and that would become the title of your post. "Top 5 Vacuums Under \$200". Instead, you might see that most of the vacuums are upright vacuums and you could whittle the list down to just those models. The post would be "Top 5 Upright Vacuums".
- At this point, you may still have more than five items on your list AND you still have to rank them from 1-5 so the next step is to read as many actual user reviews of the remaining models as you

think are necessary to get a good feel for the differences between all the models.

- List out five of the most important things a buyer should consider when buying one of these products.
- Assign a rating of 1-5 for each product on your list for each of these five categories.
- Add up the ratings for each product and put them in order. The product that got the highest total rating becomes #1 on the list; the second place finisher is the #2 choice on your list, and so on.

The final step is to write the post. In the post, list your top 5 winners along with a small summary of what made that product rank as well as it did.

Below your list talk about the steps you took to rank the products. When your reader sees how much work went into the list and what resources were considered in evaluating the products, you should earn a great deal of trust.

If you have the opportunity, test out each product either at a local store or through any friends who have the products. Adding that kind of feedback to your post will go a long way in convincing buyers that you really know your stuff.

These top 3/5/10 posts are the ones you really want to keep updated, too. Going in every six months or so and redoing the work to make sure the list is accurate will keep the post fresh and relevant to your site visitors.

Some niches have so many new products regularly entering the market that you may want to write a new post specifically targeting each year. Nothing wrong with an annual Top 5 List.

Compare and Contrast Product Options

There are lots of niches where you can get a product with THIS or with THAT, but not with both. The best example that comes to mind is televisions where the display types these days are LED, LCD, or plasma screens (and there are probably others but it's too confusing for me!).

If you're trying to promote televisions in your niche, you better have an information post called "*Compare LED vs LCD vs Plasma*" and/or

"Understanding Television Display Types". It's simply a natural research item for anyone buying a television.

Any time there's a niche where consumers have to make choices between features, a review site has a place in helping consumers understand the different choices.

There are many niches where this comes into play:

- Vacuum cleaners: Bagless or Bag
- Coffee makers: Drip or French Press
- Wine Coolers: Single Temp or Dual Zone
- Lawn Mowers: Gas or Electric

To come up with these topics, you need to understand how the buyers in your niche make decisions. You should have material on your site that discusses each of those kinds of decision points.

For vacuums, you might end up with multiple posts. The first decision a customer must make is whether or not to get a vacuum that uses a bag or not. That's one post. Next, they must decide if they need a vacuum that can handle pet hair or not. There's another post. Some come with HEPA filters and some do not. There's a third post.



Accessories fit into this category, too. When comparison shopping for my carpet shampooer, one shampooer had a set of three attachments while another came with only two. A post explaining the benefits of the different attachments would have helped me decide whether that third attachment was necessary.

Compare Bestsellers or Competing Models

Have you ever shopped for something and narrowed your choices down to two products but then couldn't choose between the two? It happens all the time. This is particularly common when a new model of an old product comes out. Consumers want to understand the differences between the two.

This also happens with competing best sellers. Brand X may have a product that is the same price as Brand Y but they don't have the same features. Choices like these can stump a buyer. No one wants to be ripped off and no one wants to be disappointed with their purchase later.

A great review site anticipates these questions and discusses them in terms readers can understand.

Analyze the top bestsellers in your niche. Write a post that compares one product to another. To make the post meaningful, you'll need to dig into the detail, understand **exactly** what is different about each product and highlight those differences in your post.



If you've studied your niche, you know the most important features people should consider before making a buying decision. Take a spreadsheet and list those features across the top.

Go through each of the products you want to compare and make a note about how each one deals with the features in your spreadsheet.

Turn your spreadsheet into a post where you talk about each of those features, discuss your ratings of those features, and then recommend one product over another.

Buyer Decision Flow Chart

Lots of affiliate marketing sites have what's called a Buyer's Guide. Some aren't really a buyer's guide at all but simply an explanation of features that leave the potential buyer hanging about what product decisions they should make.

Some, on the other hand, do a great job and almost take the reader by the hand to walk them through the decision making process until they come up with the final best product choice.

That second example is what you want to have on your site. A great way to lay that out in a user friendly manner is by way of a flow chart in an informational post. You can do this with graphics and/or text.

This takes a bit of critical thinking and I often have to resort to old fashioned pen and paper to map out the flow chart. Remember when I mentioned decision points customers have to make when they're considering getting a product that has THIS (LED screen) rather than THAT (LCD screen)?

You have to think of all those questions as they relate to the products in your niche and then map them out in the order the potential buyer should walk through them.

The simpler and yet more accurate the flow chart is, the more effective it will be in helping people come to a decision about which product to buy.

If you want to get really slick, make the page interactive (which might require a programmer) so that as they answer questions, they're shown a set of products that meet their needs until they come to the final question and they have only one or two choices that are just perfect for them.

If you've seen those car finder sites, they're a great example. They ask you first if you want a new car or a used car. You check one. Then they ask you what body style you want. You check one. Then they ask you if you have any manufacturer preferences, etc. At the end of a few questions, you're shown only the selections that fit your answers.

In the case of a product review site, the presented solutions would include an affiliate link to the product and an internal link to your review of that product.

Dominate the Product

The trouble with getting into review sites is that the most popular products in the niche may already have a lot of competition. Look up "carpet cleaner reviews" or "carpet shampooer reviews" and the front page of Google is littered with affiliate marketing sites.

How do you get reviews of the most popular products to rank well in Google when there might already be so many of them out there?

First, it may take time but having the best quality, most honest and factual review you can write will give you a great head start.

Second, you can **dominate the product** by writing informational posts just about that product and using them as internal backlinks to boost your review post.

You don't want to go too hog wild. A site where every post is about only one certain model number can't really be an authority in the niche. However, there's no reason you couldn't have around five informational posts that are all targeting one, particular product.

Besides your review post:

- Write the comparison post we discussed earlier where you compare the product to a competing bestseller.
- Make sure the product shows up as a recommendation in one of your top 3/5/10 lists (you shouldn't have to force it into a list if it's really a bestseller).
- Figure out why the product is a bestseller and write a post that clarifies the products' place in the niche. If it's a bestseller because it's the best value under \$200, then write an informational post called "Best (my niche product) Under \$200" and talk about why that product deserves that title. A post called "Best Upright Vacuum Under \$200" would be a great informational post to boost your review of the noted product. The post should include a hyperlink to your original review post. Maybe the product is a bestseller because it's recommended for beginners or for small homes or for health reasons. Call that out in a post.
- Write a post about what that product can do that makes it different from other products. For the vacuum, it might be "Best Edge Cleaning Upright Vacuum".
- A product that sells well around a particular holiday can be promoted with a post about that holiday. For a table saw that sells well around Father's Day, you could write "Hottest Table Saw Gift for Father's Day".

Don't do these all at once. Ranking well for a popular product is not a race. If you ONLY talk about one product, you're not really doing your entire target market a service because you'd be missing out on content that would promote products that best suit someone else's needs. Space these posts out, though, and you'll find they can help you gain more recognition for your original review post.

Explain Product Terms

One way to help shoppers in your niche is to explain important product terms - one term per post.

I just recently bought a new carpet shampooer. I've owned only one in my lifetime and that was a gift from my parents so I had no experience whatsoever in buying one.

I started with the bestsellers on Amazon but soon had more questions than answers:

- What did "SpinScrub technology" mean?
- What do they mean by "automatic rinse"?
- What does a "crevice tool" do?
- What is "brushed edge" cleaning?
- What is "clean surge"?

Some of the product descriptions gave more detail than others. Several times, I found myself searching for more explanation. That's where a product review site would come in handy.

Of course, it's hard for me not to look at any product and not start thinking about how I'd approach it in a review site. The following informational articles would be things I'd write based on the terminology I found in my search for a carpet shampooer:

- How SpinScrub Technology Improves Carpet Cleaner Performance
- Getting a Carpet Shampooer with Automatic Rinse
- The Job of the Carpet Cleaner Crevice Tool
- Carpet Cleaners with Brushed Edge Cleaning Systems
- Get Tough Dirt Out with Clean Surge Carpet Shampooers

The next step is to write the article and make it very relevant to the topic. Do some homework. Truly dig to understand the terminology yourself and then interpret it in easy-to-understand language for your site audience.

Sure, some of these topics are probably not going to attract a ton of views, but remember that the informational post has a couple of jobs. First is to help with traffic but second is to help boost your existing reviews by interlinking the post to reviews of related products.

We all know that backlinks help your content rank better in Google. Some of those backlinks can – and should – come from within your own

site to other pages on your site. It spreads link juice from one part of your site to another.

While talking about SpinScrub technology, for example, you would include a link to the review on your post of the bestselling carpet cleaner that came with SpinScrub technology.

Discuss a Problem Solved by the Product

A popular suggestion on any internet marketing forum is to find a problem and offer a solution. The same advice can be used in finding content for sites promoting physical products.

I live in the dry desert of Phoenix, Arizona. It's so dry, that when I moved here, I could almost feel my skin turning to paper.

It doesn't help that the air conditioner must run almost non-stop in the summer months just to make the house tolerable. All of that dry air inside and out does a lot of damage to skin, hair, and lips.

I didn't know what I needed to fix the problem – a humidifier, as it turns out. All I knew was that I needed something to help counter the dry air in the house.



My searches for solutions would have looked like this:

- How to get more moisture in the air in my house
- How to stop dry skin
- How to deal with dry desert air

None of those searches have anything to do with "humidifier reviews" or "Crane Cool Mist Humidifier Review" but I'd be just as much a potential customer of a review site as if I were searching for a specific product.

You could turn the problem into a post by writing "Healing Dry Skin with a Home Humidifier".

Here's another example. Our neighborhood was recently the target of a burglary ring. (For a solid two weeks, every alarm company on the planet had installation trucks in our subdivision!)

The way our houses are designed, the living quarters are towards the back of the house and the garages are towards the front. There's almost no floor plan where you can see outside your front door from the kitchen or living room, where families spend most of their waking time at home. All of us were eager to find some way of knowing when someone was approaching our front door.

Our searches would have looked like this:

- How to watch your front door from the back of the house
- How to tell when someone is approaching your house

Again, none of our searches mention the word "review" or a product name.

We didn't know what we needed. We only knew we had a problem and we wanted a solution.

Think about the reasons people buy the products on your site. Do they solve a problem that many people experience?

For ideas, you can try the following searches in Google:

Problem solved (your niche)

Did the trick (your niche)

All better (your niche)

Example: *problem solved humidifier*

Example: *did the trick humidifier*

Example: *all better humidifier*

Check the pages that come up and see what problems are discussed where the solution was your product.

For some products, all that will come up are trouble shooting guides. Those aren't going to give you ideas. Those guides will only tell people how to fix something they already own and those are not your target market. Keep trying a variety of search phrases to see where your product was the solution.

Now, you want to be careful with this strategy and not get too carried away. The problems some products solve are just too obvious for you to write about. For instance, ovens let us cook food inside our homes but a post like “Tired of Cooking on an Open Fire? Buy an Oven!” might just come across as pushy and irritating.

This is critical – Inside these kinds of posts, you want to make sure to recommend the best product to solve the problem. Include a link to the product with both an affiliate link to your merchant site and a link to a review on your site about that product.

Enhance a User Comment from Amazon

Actual user reviews from those who have bought and used the products in your niche are filled with ideas for informational posts you can write for your site.

While reviewing a particular baby monitor, one woman had commented that her baby had a higher risk for SIDS based on his medical condition. The monitor she used not only let her hear her baby from any room in the house but it also had a movement sensor. If her child rolled over or moved, an alert was sent to the parent unit.

Just this little bit of information can be turned into a post about the best kind of baby monitor for babies at risk of SIDS with a recommendation to that particular baby monitor.

With a little practice, these ideas will pop out at you from even the slightest mention in a comment. There’s an air compressor on Amazon where a reviewer has mentioned that they bought this particular model because of how quietly it operated.

That comment represents a need that is important to buyers. You need to be able to read comments like that, understand why the person mentioned the comment, and determine whether or not that situation would have value to a large number of people in your niche.

A little research revealed that people use air compressors in their workshops and the noise can be too much if it is used a lot. They may be using it near other parts of their home or business where the noise needs to be kept to a minimum.

The realization that some buyers have an interest in the noise level produced by the air compressor can be turned into a post about “*The Quietest Air Compressor You Can Buy*”.

While the idea for a post may come from a comment that was connected to a certain product, you need to do independent research to decide which product is **really** the quietest. This is the part that will distinguish your site from the others in your niche.

This means that you shouldn't always take what you read from someone else as fact. We have no idea how many air compressors that person tested or what made him decide this model was the quietest choice. If you want to write the best post on the topic, you'll go to a local store and test out some air compressors. You might talk to the salesman at the store and ask him which models are known for being quiet and why. You might search for other comments where people mentioned air compressors that were quiet and use all of the gathered feedback in constructing your post.

Forum Finds

You'd be amazed at the kinds of products that get mentioned in forums. Name a topic and there's probably a forum around it somewhere or a forum of people who use the product to do something that they all like to talk about.

As a test, I typed the following into Google:

Clothes iron forum

Guess what? Several forums have mentions of clothes irons and I learned a great deal! Reading through the forum threads that came up was very enlightening.

Did you know:

- There are people who run clothes ironing services out of their home and that they often use more commercial style ironing systems?
- Snowboarders sometimes use regular clothing irons to apply wax to their boards?
- Irons come with a stainless steel sole plate or a non-stick sole plate?
- One iron might be better for wool fabrics than another?

I didn't know any of this. (Thank goodness I don't wear a lot of wool.) All of these inspire some interesting informational article ideas for a site relating to clothes irons:

- Best Clothes Iron System for a Home Business

- Cheap Home Iron for Snowboard Wax
- Stainless Steel or Non Stick Clothes Iron
- Best Clothes Iron for Wool

See how bits of information you can collect about any product can be turned into articles that will be of interest to some portion of **potential buyers** in your niche?

The more you see a topic mentioned on the forum or the more posts that were in the thread, the more you know that the topic is of interest to your niche and that's one of the triggers for a good informational post.

Be an Info Leader

If you really want to be an authority figure in your niche, be an "info leader". Post about new products coming out on the market, changes being made to current product lines, or new manufacturers entering the market.

If you mention new products first, you'll have a bit of a head start in Google ranking. When the product is finally available on Amazon and you write your review, you can go back to the post that mentioned it was going to be coming out and add a link to your new post and affiliate links to the product.

To stay on top of this kind of information, subscribe to manufacturer newsletters, RSS feeds and email lists, and set up Google alerts for certain phrases in your niche. You don't have to publish a ton of these kinds of posts. Be selective. Choose to write about the things that you think will interest buyers.

You can also do a search in Google for news related to your products and a manufacturer's name.

The search would look like this:

Manufacturer (product niche) news

Example: bosch router news

Example: dyson vacuum news

These examples would give me recent news items related to Bosch wood routers or Dyson vacuum cleaners.

One thing buyers often like to know is if they have a chance to save money when they're making their purchase. Set up a Google alert to notify you anytime the word "rebate" and your products gets mentioned on the web. If you're alerted to an upcoming or existing rebate, make sure to mention it on your review post and maybe even write an informational post about the rebate. Amazon sometimes includes a link to the rebate form right in the product listing. If so, it's very easy to encourage a reader to click over to Amazon.

Strategy Guidelines

You'll get the most out of these posts if you follow a few guidelines.

Don't go too broad with your posts. Don't try to tackle EVERY feature or EVERY possible problem that can be solved with your products in one post. The more specific you get per post, the more content you'll be able to produce and the more targeted the traffic will be to that post.

Most importantly, make your information as good as you possibly can. Check your facts. Don't just rehash the same old stuff. Research is IMPORTANT! Remember, there are people behind these buying decisions and they're relying on you to help them spend that money wisely and effectively. The more you can do that, the better your results will be.

We're talking about content so well explained that the reader is fully informed to use that information in making a buying decision.

Relate to the people on your site by including your own voice in your writing, by relaying some personal story related to the product, and by acting as an interpreter of the facts.

How to Title Informational Posts

Throughout this guide, I've tried to give some examples of how I'd title these posts. Some of you will have been screaming inside about the lack of keyword research. The thing is, not many of these phrases are going to have a ton of keyword search volume.

Instead, it's more important that the title relay exactly what you're going to share in the post.

If you're writing about the topic, sticking to facts, explaining terminology and keeping your writing on point, it will be nearly impossible for you to not have a lot of related, long-tail keywords in your writing.

The sum of the traffic you get from these long-tail keywords is what will add up over time.

As long as you've followed the requirements for these posts – that they target buyers and that they are important to your niche – then people will find these posts.

Remember, though, that these posts are serving a couple of other purposes, too. They're helping you establish your site as an authority in the niche and they're helping to promote your "money pages" – your review posts.

Posting Schedule

How often should you add informational posts to your site? A lot depends on your niche and the amount of content already on your site.

When I'm first building a site, I try to keep the number of reviews and informational posts equal. If I have ten reviews, I'll have ten informational posts. As the site gains traction in Google, I'll focus on only reviews for awhile until I have about 30 products reviewed. Once that's done, I'll switch to about one informational post for every four or five reviews.

At some point, though, you may have reviewed the bulk of the top sellers in your niche. Your niche might have 100 choices on Amazon and you've reviewed 80 of them. When you reach that kind of saturation, you might **only** want to add informational posts so that you can tap into those other traffic opportunities – the buyers who don't shop by looking for reviews.

How and When to Put Links in Your Informational Posts

There's no hard and fast rule about how many links should be in your informational posts. I can't tell you that every post should have only two links. Some informational posts may end up with as many as 20 links. A top 10 list, for instance, could have 10 links to internal review posts on your site and 10 affiliate links – one for each product.

Other informational posts might only need one link to an internal review post on your site.

The last ten informational posts I wrote averaged four links per post. Almost half were to internal pages of my site, almost another half were affiliate links, and a small sliver were links to manufacturers' sites because the manufacturer's content was just something my visitors needed to see.

If your site navigation is very strong and visitors can find information readily on your site, you may have some informational posts that don't need any links at all – they simply pull people into your site, give them the information they need and allow them to explore your site through your very intuitive navigation menu.

Think about the natural flow of the traffic that will be coming to each informational post as you write it and consider where it would be best to send those visitors next. For that post on "SpinScrub technology", it would be natural to send the visitor to a review on my site that discusses a highly rated product that has SpinScrub technology.

Including an Amazon link might not be beneficial because explaining a term may not be enough for someone to have made a buying decision. They might, however, very much want to read a review about a product that used that technology. They can be guided to Amazon from the review post.

Following are some general rules of thumb you can use for adding links to your informational posts.

Internal Links

Internal links are the ones that point to other pages on your site. Posts that explain terms or features are great for pointing people to specific reviews on your site or to other informational articles that will help them make a buying decision.

Posts that mention specific products should include a link to your review of that product.

If the chances are slim that someone will be ready to buy after reading the content of the informational post, then it would be best to send the reader to other pages of your site that will bring them closer to a buying decision. Lean towards internal links in these situations.

Affiliate Links

Include an affiliate link anytime you mention a specific product IF you think the post could encourage the reader to buy the product. (This means that mentions of specific products could result in both an internal link to your review page and an affiliate link to the merchant.)

Posts describing how a product solves a problem and recommends a specific product are good places to put affiliate links.

The higher the chances that the material in the informational post will help someone make a final buying decision, the more you should lean towards using affiliate links.

Top 3/5/10 lists are good buying keywords so you would want to include affiliate links.

Posts that compare two competing products help people make a buying decision and should include affiliate links.

How Long Should Informational Posts Be?

This question comes up all the time and not just for informational posts. How long should any piece of content be?

Just as long as it NEEDS to be to get the job done.

At the end of your post, you want the reader to have a very clear understanding of the topic. For some topics, that could take a thousand words or more. For other topics, it might just be a couple of paragraphs.

If you're describing a single feature, like the difference between bag and bagless vacuum cleaners, it's pretty easy to explain that in a single paragraph. Add the benefits of each and what people should think about when choosing between the two and your post is complete.

If, however, you're comparing two competing products and they are different in 10 unique ways, then you'll need at least one paragraph for each of the 10 differences. Add an intro paragraph and a summary of how those

differences impact the reader's buying decision and you could have over a thousand words.

Don't add words just to hit a post count. Add value. Add meaning. Get the job done inside the post but don't stretch things unnecessarily.

Example Topics

The test of any strategy is to see if I can choose a product I know almost nothing about, apply the strategies and come up with the intended results.

Tools. I know very little about tools other than my husband loves them. My dad loves them even more. (He even tried to work with me on a tool site but I quickly lost interest. I just can't stomach those manuals!)

So, if I can come up with a list of informational post ideas for a tool found on review sites, then I know the strategies work. Using each of the content-finding strategies, I came up with the following topics for a review site about wood routers.

Content Strategy	Topic Idea	Post Title	Links to Include
Top 3/5/10 Lists	Under \$200	Top Five Routers Under \$200	Affiliate links to each product. Internal links to the review of each product.
	Compact routers	3 Best Compact Routers	Affiliate links to each product. Internal links to the review of each product.
	Variable speed routers	Ten Bestselling Variable Speed Routers	Affiliate links to each product. Internal links to the review of each product.
Compare and Contrast Product Options	Fixed depth routing and plunge routing	Difference Between Fixed Depth Routing and Plunge Routing	Internal link to a review of the best selling router with only fixed depth routing. Internal link to a review of the best selling router with both fixed and plunged routing. Internal link to a

			buying guide to help choose the right router.
	12 amp or 15 amp motor	Should You Buy a 12 or 15 Amp Router?	Internal link to a review of the best selling 12 amp router. Internal link to the best selling 15 amp router.
Compare Bestsellers or Competing Models	bosch 1617evspk vs dewalt dw618pk (Google Suggest showed me this was the highest searched comparison phrase for the bosch 1617evspk)	Comparing the Bosch 1617EVSPK vs the Dewalt DW618PK	Affiliate link to each product. Internal link to the review of each product.
	Bosch 1617evspk and the bosch 1617evs (they both show up in the popular list on Amazon and have very close model numbers)	What's Different Between the Bosch 1617EVSPK and the Bosch 1617EVS	Affiliate link to each product. Internal link to the review of each product.
Buyer Decision Flow Chart	There are lots of decision points in choosing the right router – motor, style, soft start, accessories, brand, and price.	Simple Buying Guide for Choosing the Right Router	Internal links to top sellers in the niche or to a page of the best selling routers under a certain dollar amount.
Dominate the Product	Bosch 1617EVSPK is the #1 most popular router on Amazon	Why the Bosch 16171EVSPK Rates So Highly	Affiliate link to the product. Internal link to the review of the product.
	Lots of reviews mention that it's a great value buy	Best Value Combo Router for Your Workshop	Affiliate link to the product. Internal link to the review of the product.
	Only router with holes for an edge guide on each side	Benefits of a Router with Edge Guides on Both Sides	Affiliate link to the product. Internal link to the review of the product.
Explain Product	Palm grip	The Importance of	Internal link to a

Terms		Grip Type in Choosing a Router	review of the best selling palm grip router and internal link to the best selling router with handle grips.
	Fixed based cuts	Which Routers Provide the Most Accurate Fixed Based Cuts	Internal link to the review of the most accurate fixed based router.
Discuss a Problem Solved by the Product	Helps make cornice trim	Which Shop Tool Do I Need for Making Cornice Trim?	Affiliate link to best selling router for the job. Internal link to review of the best selling router for the job.
Enhance a User Comment from Amazon	Someone mentioned using a single speed router because they had another piece of equipment that would control speed – something called a Super-PID controller. It controls the speed of the router (and other power tools).	Which Router Should I use with a Super-PID Controller?	Affiliate link to the best router that works with Super-PID Controller. Affiliate link to a Super-PID Controller. Internal link to the review of the best router to use with a Super-PID Controller.
Forum Finds	Routers can be mounted to tables	Best Router Table for the Bosch 1617EVSPK	This is a great opportunity to cross sell related items. Affiliate link to the best table to use with this router. Internal link to your review of this router.
Be an Info Leader	Bosch coming out with a new plunge router	Bosch's New Plunge Router Due in 2012	Internal link to your buying. Update the post with an affiliate link and an internal link to your review when the product is released on the market.

In just under an hour – and knowing nothing about wood routers! – I’ve come up with 17 ideas for informational posts. This would easily cover a month or two worth of additional content mixed in with reviews of more products.

When you run out of ideas, use the strategies again to come up with more.

Backlinking Informational Posts

Once you’ve published your informational post, it’s important to backlink it just as you would your review posts.

Uh-oh, Erica, backlinks? That’s such a touchy subject these days. With Google deindexing blog networks that gamed the search algorithm and people reporting all kinds of nasty messages from Google about unnatural links having been detected, what is a webmaster to do to promote their posts?

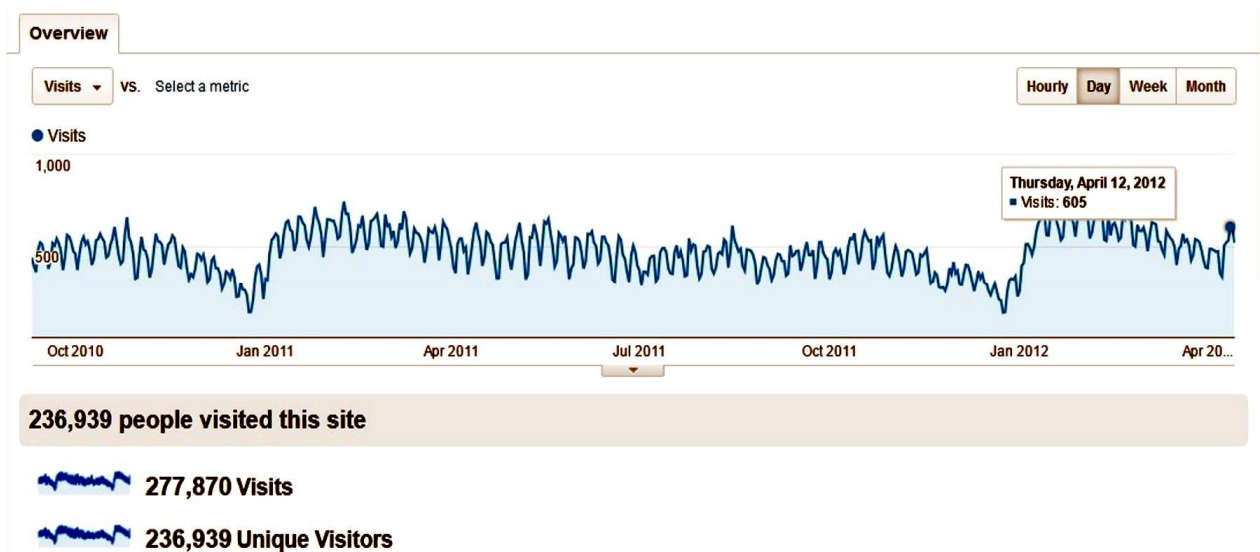
First, the backlink methods I recommend have been around so long they’re considered old-school, yet, they still work.

I swear by a few good bookmarking sites, ping.fm, some web 2.0 sites, RSS feeds, and using your great content on article directories to attract backlinks through article syndication.

Building 10-20 links for your informational posts should be plenty:

- Bookmark it in 2-3 places
- Send the link through your ping.fm account as a status update
- Share the link on Twitter and Facebook
- Build a Squidoo lens and and/or a Hubpage around the same topic with links to your post (make the content unique from your site posts on those web 2.0 sites)
- Turn the post into an article and submit it to 5-10 article directories (ezinearticles.com is my favorite)
- Do a short video on the subject, submit it to YouTube and embed it on your related post

I have an Amazon site that I have not touched since September of 2010. Nothing. Not a post, not a backlink. It was an Amazon/Clickbank experiment. I’ve only logged in to update WordPress and any plug-ins. But look how consistently it delivers traffic:



It continues to average over 500 visitors a day because the rankings have simply held firm all this time. It ranks #1 for the main keyword and has for two years.

The secret formula is really no secret at all. **Quality content** designed for visitors, **appropriately optimized** for Google (good on-page SEO) and healthy backlinks that **share** the content.

Not that my backlinks haven't grown. My visitors are building backlinks for me by linking to my content, sharing it on forums, and discussing it in their own sites.

That has to be your goal. Assemble such helpful content that readers feel very sure your site exists to help them – not to sell products. When you do this, a funny thing happens along the way. Your commissions improve. Isn't that the ideal scenario?

It's not out of reach. It's not impossible. It's not fool's gold, or Koolaid you shouldn't drink or even extraordinarily difficult. It's the age old concept of putting others first.

When you start to round out your review site with informational posts, you're putting Google on notice that you're not just another affiliate site. You'll also be reaching out to search engine traffic for phrases that your competitors, especially those with thin affiliate sites, often ignore.

Even if you're having a hard time busting into the top 1-3 spots on Google for your site's main keyword, you'll be building up content that grabs at lots of little streams of traffic along the way. All those streams working together make for a powerful flood.

Now, it's time for you to get to work. Pull up a blank screen, a spreadsheet, or a Word document and get busy going through these strategies. I bet you can come up with ideas for ten new posts before breakfast tomorrow.

Sincerely and wishing you great success,

Erica Stone

erica@extremereviewer.com

PS – Want more how-to guides for Amazon sites? Scroll to the next page!

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Affiliate Marketing Strategy Guides

[Extreme Review](#) – The Amazon super-book! **Step by step** instructions for setting up your own Amazon review site - everything from finding great niches to doing competitive analysis to growing your affiliate marketing site so it dominates the search engines.

[The Reviewer's Edge](#) – A complete product review writing system to help you create the perfect review for any niche. Use the templates with outsourcers to keep the feel of your site consistent review after review.

[Squidoo Niche Blaster](#) – The fastest way a beginner can get started online. Can be outsourced easily with included step by step instructions you can hand to your team. Video tutorials included!

[Holiday Sales Hijacker](#) – 11 powerful strategies for preparing your sites for the online holiday rush! Includes calendar of events and activities so you'll know exactly when you need to add information to your site ready for the November & December RUSH of online spending.

[Product Niche Arbitrage](#) – New ways you can expand your existing product review sites. Find products most of your competitors completely miss. Whether you have an Amazon Associates account or not, you can benefit from the tactics in this arbitrage guide.

[Commission Gold](#) – How to find double-digit commission programs on physical products through affiliate networks like ShareASale, Linkshare, and Commission Junction.