

the affiliate method

guide 7: give the website away and let the platform pay you

the concept

the usual way to sell websites is to build one and charge the business, and this is the same pipeline with the money coming from the other direction. you build the site on a platform that has an affiliate program, give it to the business for free, and the platform pays you when the owner signs up and goes paid.

the owner was always going to pay someone for hosting and a domain, so this way they pay the platform's normal subscription, which they'd need anyway, and you collect the referral commission. it's the easiest close there is because there is no invoice from you at any point, and "the site is yours, free" gets through to owners that a price never would. every step below comes with the exact prompt to paste in.

step 1

join the programs

wix pays a flat 100 dollars for every first time premium signup that comes through your link, with a 30 day cookie, and pays out monthly once your balance crosses 300. base44 pays 100 dollars per referral that converts to a paid user within a month of signing up, with the same 300 minimum. both approve normal applications, and both give you a dashboard and your links.

read the terms before you build anything, because on wix only first time premium users count, the referral has to stay past the 14 day refund window, and commissions are one time rather than recurring. the terms decide how your handoff works, so this isn't optional reading. once you're approved, save your links somewhere the agent can reach them.

step 2

set up the agent

the whole pipeline runs on an agent, and there are two good options for it. hermes agent at hermes-agent.nousresearch.com is open source and free and runs on your own computer or a server, and grok bot at x.ai/bot runs on its own computer in the cloud, so it keeps working when your laptop is closed. either way you message it the same way you'd message a person, so

pick whichever one you like because everything in this guide works the same on both.

to set up hermes, open a terminal and run `curl -fsSL`

`https://hermes-agent.nousresearch.com/install.sh | bash` or download the desktop app for your platform from the site, then sign in through nous portal when it asks. you talk to it from telegram, whatsapp, or discord, and if you want it running all day without your computer on, you can put it on a server like railway.

to set up grok bot, sign up at `x.ai/bot`, create a bot, give it a name and tell it what its job is, then message it from the desktop app or your phone. it comes with its own browser and terminal and picks the model for you, so there's nothing to install.

hermes needs one more step, which is connecting a model, because the model is what does the thinking. the simplest route is pasting in an anthropic or openai api key when setup asks for it, and the nous portal plans also come with monthly model credits and access to hundreds of models. use a strong model, because this pipeline involves judgment calls and a weak model makes expensive mistakes with real mail.

after that, give it the keys for the job. in chat, tell the agent which accounts it's working with and paste the credentials when it asks: your wix and base44 affiliate accounts with their referral links, a google places api key from google cloud console with the places api enabled and a budget cap on it, and a postcard api account with lob, postgrid, or stannp. on grok bot you can also log into a website once in the bot's browser and it stays logged in.

then just talk to it. there's no dashboard and no workflow builder, you describe the job in plain language the way you'd brief an employee, and the agent writes its own scripts, saves what works as a reusable skill, and can put itself on a schedule, which grok bot calls a routine. the exact brief to paste in is at the end of this guide.

step 3

scrape and filter

the agent pulls every business in your niche in a city through the places api and filters for no website listed, 10 to 200 reviews, and a rating above 4.0, which leaves a list of businesses that are real, reviewed, and invisible online, usually around 50 to 150 per city. every owner who would never pay for a website is still a candidate for a free one.

```
use my google places api key to pull every [niche] in [city]. save name, address, phone, rating, review count, reviews, photos, and whether a website is listed. filter to no website listed, 10 to 200 reviews, and rating above 4.0. put it in a google sheet called "[niche] [city] free sites" and wait for my approval.
```

step 4

pick the platform per business

wix works for standard business sites, like a plumber or a landscaper that needs a page with their services, reviews, and a phone number. base44 fits when the business benefits from something more app-like, such as a booking flow for a salon, a quote calculator for a cleaning company, or an ordering page for a bakery. the agent can decide this per business from what they do.

```
for every business on the approved list, decide whether it should get a wix site or a base44 app. use base44 when the business would clearly benefit from booking, quoting, or ordering (salons, cleaners, bakeries, caterers), and wix for everything else. add a "platform" column with the choice and one short reason, and show me the split.
```

step 5

build the sites on the platform

the sites get built inside wix or base44, in your own account, as unpublished drafts. it's the same template per niche approach as guide 1, with the same real data per business, meaning their name, phone, reviews, and photos. on grok bot, log into your wix and base44 accounts once in the bot's browser, and on hermes, give it a logged in browser the same way.

```
in my [wix / base44] account, build one template site for [niche] first: business name and what they do at the top, a call button, services, 6 google reviews, photos, and service area. for base44 apps, add [a booking form / a quote calculator / an order form]. send me the template to approve. then build a copy for every business on the list with their real data, keep every one as an unpublished draft, and save the draft link in the sheet.
```

step 6

the handoff is the whole game

this is the step that decides whether you get paid, so get it exact. the commission only tracks if the owner creates their account through your affiliate link and upgrades within the cookie window, so the flow is that the postcard's qr leads to a preview of their site with one button that says "claim your website", that button is your affiliate link, they create their account through it, you transfer the site from your account to theirs, and when they upgrade to connect their own domain, the commission locks.

if the owner likes the site, googles the platform, and signs up on their own, you get nothing, so the claim button has to be the only way in. put it on the preview page, in your follow up

messages, and everywhere else they might act from.

for every business, host a preview page that shows screenshots of their site on desktop and phone, with the headline "[business name]'s new website is ready. it's yours, free." and one big button: "claim your website". that button must go to my [wix / base44] affiliate link: [link]. underneath, one line: "after you create your account, i'll move the site into it within a day. [your name], [your number]". no other link to the platform anywhere on the page.

step 7

the postcard

the postcard carries a screenshot of their finished site on the front and a qr to the preview on the back, sent through a postcard api like lob, postgrid, or stannp, with the line "we built [business name] a website. it's yours, free. scan to claim it." free plus already built plus their own name is about as much pull as a postcard can carry.

design a 6x9 postcard per business. front: a screenshot of their site on a phone. back: "we built [business name] a website. it's yours, free. scan to claim it." with a qr to their preview page and my name and number: [your name], [your number]. show me 3 samples, then send the batch through my [lob / postgrid / stannp] account after my approval and log every send.

step 8

claims and transfers

when an owner clicks claim and creates an account, you need to move fast, because the cookie window is running and an owner who waits a week for their site forgets about it. the agent watches your affiliate dashboard, tells you the moment someone signs up, and walks you through the transfer, and then it reminds the owner to upgrade so they can connect their own domain.

check my wix and base44 affiliate dashboards every few hours. when a new signup appears, match it to the business on my sheet and message me right away with their name and the email they signed up with. prepare the site transfer to that email for my approval. after the transfer, draft a text to the owner: "your site is in your account now. once you upgrade, you can connect your own domain and publish it." then track whether they upgrade within 30 days and log the commission.

step 9

where this fits

the commission is one time, so this is a volume method. what makes it work is that each extra site costs you almost nothing, because the agent builds them in bulk, the postcards are a dollar or two, and twenty owners claiming their sites is twenty commissions from work the pipeline did.

it also doesn't have to be your only model. if you sell builds directly too, lead with free when a niche or city isn't responding to the paid offer, and a claimed free site makes the owner a warm client for everything else, whether that's review automation, tap cards, or voice agents.

every business that claimed a free site is now on my client list. once a month, check each one's google review count and whether they have a phone line that goes unanswered after hours, and suggest which of my other offers fits them best: review automation, tap cards, or a voice agent. give me the list with one line each, don't contact anyone.

the full prompt

once every step above works on its own, this is the whole pipeline in one message. paste it in, fill in the brackets, and the agent saves it as one skill you can rerun on a new city with a single line.

you are my free-website affiliate agent. run this pipeline and check in with me at the marked points.

niche: [your niche] city: [your city] affiliate link: [paste your wix or base44 affiliate link]

1. use my google places api key to pull every [niche] in [city]. save name, address, phone, rating, review count, and whether a website is listed.

2. filter to: no website listed, 10 to 200 reviews, rating above 4.0. show me the list and wait for my approval.

3. for each approved business, build a site as an unpublished draft in my [wix / base44] account from my niche template, filled with their real data: name, phone, google reviews, photos.

4. host a preview page per business showing their site with one button: "claim your website". that button must be my affiliate link. this is the only signup path anywhere, never link the platform directly.

5. design postcards: front is the site screenshot, back says "we built [business name] a website. it's yours, free. scan to claim it." with the qr to the preview page and my number: [your number].

6. show me 3 samples, then send the batch through my [lob / postgrid / stannp] account after my approval.

7. the moment a business claims through my link, alert me so i can transfer the site to their account, and track which claims upgrade to a paid plan within 30 days.

rules: no mail without my batch approval. never let any claim path skip the affiliate link.
cap api spend at [\$x] without asking. save this workflow as a skill.

guide 7 of the local business series. next up: chasing overdue invoices for local businesses.