

Link building strategies for your website

You get a beautiful website built and you want (many people even expect) to be at the top of the search engine results because that way you will get 'loads of business'.
Simples!

Well..... not quite. First you have to get the traffic. That depends on Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and SEO has a number of factors:

1. Technical (how well can it be crawled by the search engines)
2. On page (what's on the page being crawled)
3. Off page (mainly building links)

You can find out quite a lot about the first two with our [search engine optimization guide](#).



But why is building links important? Well just look at: [Google's own introduction of its view of Paid Links](#) (our bold and italics).

"Google and most other search engines use **links to determine reputation. A site's ranking in Google search results is partly based on analysis of those sites that link to it.** Link-based analysis is an extremely useful way of measuring a site's value and has greatly improved the quality of web search. **Both the quantity and, more importantly, the quality of links count towards this rating.**"

Of course Google does not just use links; it uses over 200 indicators such as:

- alt tags
- directory names
- domain name
- filenames
- heading tags
- link popularity (how many links back to you there are)
- link text (anchor text indicating the subject of the link)
- page title
- PageRank™¹

OK, sorted. We'll just go and buy or get a whole load of links and then we'll be top.

Well..... not quite. As the article on paid links makes clear: "Buying or selling links that pass PageRank™ is in violation of Google's webmaster guidelines and can negatively impact a site's ranking in search results". So, paid links need a "nofollow" tag which

¹ PageRank™ is a Google patented method to assign a numerical weighting to each element of a hyperlinked set of documents that provides a rough estimate of the overall importance of a web page.

means that Google does not transfer PageRank™ or anchor text across these links. This does not mean that Google does not know about or keep details about the link but that it does not pass 'credit' for the link in the PageRank™ algorithm. It still, however, counts it as a link to your site.

So, what you need are good quality links and lots of them.

But what is meant by good quality links?

Link quality

The three most important factors for link quality seem to be:

- **One way contextual links.** One way is obvious and contextual just means appearing within the natural flow of a page's text like the links in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this article. If the link is reciprocal, Google probably discounts some of the value of that link.
- **High authority websites.** So getting one link from the Adobe or Apple is probably worth more than 10,000 links from your new site. Authority does not just mean high PageRank™ but a site that is also well established as one of the most important sites for a topic.
- **Relevant / related links.** If you have loads of sites that are irrelevant / unrelated to your sites 'topic' you will probably lose out. In natural linking by people, they tend to link to one another within the same topics and industry. Spammers don't care as much.

There are also other factors that seem to be important.

- **Diversity of link sources.** Having many links from another site is good but it's probably better to have one link each from many sites. The former could be spammy. The latter is harder to achieve.
- **Deep links.** If you only have links pointing to your homepage and no deep links to other pages in your site then you will probably have less success than with a proportion of deep links.
- **Different anchor texts (the text of the link).** For example 'ECRM brilliant website' is something we might be able to place with small variations, but hundreds and thousand of individuals who may link to us will vary the text they use just because they will as they all think slightly differently.



- **Different link types.** Having all “follow” links has been shown to be less likely to get you higher rankings. Only people who are really interested will comment on a blog, for example, and almost all blogs use a “nofollow” tag. Just because PageRank™ is not passed does not mean the link has no value!
- **“Constant” link growth.** Link building is a marathon, not a sprint. Acquiring 20,000 links on one day – unless you have the latest ‘craze’ or fad on your site is unlikely for the vast majority of sites, so any search engine will, rightly, be suspicious.

Getting links

So how do you get links?

Well the best way is great content that people naturally want to link to. So if you have a great list like ours on [social media sites](#) (a little old now) or write a fantastic blog or have great images or a really interesting newsletter then people will, naturally, link to that content. Of course, it’s not easy.

Otherwise, here are some other ways you can get links:



- **Research your top competitors.** Start with competitors 1-5, then 6-10, then 11-15 etc. for their usable links. Not all will be usable but many will. i.e. links from their customers etc. you won't be able to get but you will get a better list of directories, blogs etc. which will be usable and which you want to ‘replicate’ by getting links from them and making comments on them.
 - **Get local links for local rankings and category links for category rankings.** Obtain links from other local businesses or similar category businesses. For example, a link from the local chamber of commerce is likely to be helpful in ranking for local search terms. There are many other similar sources, such as local business directories, local businesses and local clubs. Ditto for categories.
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- **Blog Commenting.** Find quality blogs related to your own category and make relevant comments. Not only do your comments add value to the blog, you now have a chance of getting your comment approved and staying on those blogs.
 - **Forum posts.** Forum posts with a link back to your site in the thread or in a signature can help especially if the forum is related.
 - **Article submission.** You can publish in article directories. Publishers will give you a backlink and you may well get some relevant traffic too. In addition others

may republish your article with another backlink credit and so on.

- **Directory submission.** Submission to good quality (quality = number of sites listed, number of backlinks the directory has, PR, age of the directory, etc.) directories both paid and unpaid can help. There are literally thousand of directories and some are very valuable for backlinks and traffic.
- **Social Bookmarking.** If your site is bookmarked on quality bookmarking sites like Digg, Mixx, etc. then it helps – but you need to find a way to get lots of people to do it for your page to get real value.
- **Press Releases.** Submitting press releases to press release sites can get you some backlinks.
- **Social media and Web 2.0 pages.** Write articles that are relevant to your site and publish them on social media and Web 2.0 sites with your keywords hyperlinked to your own site. Some sites to think about using are Squidoo, Hubpages, Blogger, and Wordpress.com.