ULTIMATE LINK BUILDING

The Ultimate Guide To Building Links For Top Search Engine Rankings

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Chapter 1: Link Building Basics

For a long time now search engines have been using links as votes, which represent the web's opinion on what pages users find relevant and useful based on popularity. After years of programming development, the search engines have mastered and refined the use of link data, where complex algorithms are put in place to create nuance evaluation of websites based on this information.

Links are not the entirety of SEO, but most search experts agree that huge portions of search engine algorithms are designed around link-based factors. By using links, the engines can determine a site's popularity in a specific niche based on the number of pages linked to it and when this information is combined with other metrics like trust and authority, the search engines assign a rank for the website.

Trustworthy sites usually link to other trusted sites while spammy sites get the fewest links from trusted sites and links are a great way to establish the validity of documents on any given subject.

What is Link building?

Link building refers to the process of getting external pages on the internet to link to your own website. The more important and popular a website is, the more the links from that website matter. A popular site such as Wikipedia has thousands of different websites linking to it which means it's

probably an important and popular site. In order for you to earn popularity and trust with the search engines, you need assistance from other link partners. The more important the site, the better.

The Basics

Link building is one of the most challenging parts of SEO but also the most important to success. In order to succeed in link building you will need a decent budget, hustle, and more importantly, creativity. Each link building campaign is unique and the way you choose to build your own links will depend largely on your website as well as your personality. Your strategy should fall under one/or more of these types of link acquisition:

- Natural or Editorial Links: These are a type of links which websites and pages give naturally in order to link to your own content. Natural links don't require any specific action from SEO, apart from the existence of quality content and the ability to raise awareness about it.

- Outreach or Manual Link Building: Outreach links are created through personal effort by contacting bloggers for links, spending money for listings and submitting websites to popular directories.

- Self-Created Links: Many websites encourage visitors to create links through blog comments, guestbook signings, user profiles and forum signatures. While these links only offer small value in the long run, they still have an impact on a number of websites. But generally, search

engines tend to devalue these types of links and they've been known to penalize websites that use these links aggressively.

As with any successful marketing effort, you need a strategy and realistic goals. But before you embark on a link building effort you should probably take time to read and understand the many elements of a link as used by search engines and how those same elements factor into the valuing and weighing of your links.

Many search engines exist today and those search engines use links in a variety of ways. We might not know all the attributes considered by the engines but through proper analysis and hands-on testing we can draw some informed assumptions that hold up in the real world.

Here is a list of the most notable factors worthy of your consideration. Professional marketers consider these factors when measuring the value of a link and a site's link profile.

Topic-Specific/Local Popularity

This concept of "local" popularity was first used by the Teoma search engine and it suggests that links originating from websites within a topic-specific community carry more weight than links from other general off-topic sites. Let's say for instance your website sell car parts, and you earn links from the Society of Automakers; the links would matter more than earning links from an off-topic, dog breeding site.

Anchor Text

It's one of the strongest signals used by search engines when ranking sites. If a high number of links point to a specific page with the right keywords, then that page will have a higher probability of ranking well for the keyword used in the anchor text. This can be observed with searches like "Click here", where a significant number of results rank mainly due to the anchor text of inbound links.

Trust Rank

The website is filled with spam. As much as 60% of web pages are in fact spam, so search engines have to find a way to weed some of this content out. They do this by measuring a site's trust with the link graph. When a site earns links from high-trust domains such as government websites and non-profit organizations it boosts their score in this particular metric.

The Link Neighborhood

Spam links mostly link to other spam sites. Spam goes both ways and search engines look at the totality of these links in aggregate so they can understand which "neighborhood" the website falls under. Therefore, it's a good idea to be selective when you choose sites to link to and also when you attempt to earn links from a site.

Social Sharing

Social media has seen an explosion in the amount of content moving through different platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The rise in social sharing has led Google to incorporate social signals in search results in an effort to serve personalized results. Some of these personalized results are not included in the first page but they still get promoted because of the surging social influence.

Individuals who share a lot of material across different social plat
Search engines don't treat socially shared links the same way they do other links but that doesn't mean they don't notice them. There's been heavy debating over how exactly search engines factor in social links into their algorithms but its obvious social channels are of great importance.

Freshness

You may not have known this but link signals decay over time and websites that were once hugely popular go stale, eventually failing to earn new links. Because of this, it is crucial to keep earning new links over time. Search engines use the "FreshRank" feature to determine a site's freshness and judge current relevance.

An aside on backlinks

Bing and Google have been trying to discount the use and influence of paid links on their search results. Obviously it's not possible for them to detect all paid links, they have been putting in a lot of time and resources into formulating ways to detect and discredit the practice. If you get caught

buying links you risk severe penalties that will probably kill your rankings and send your site to oblivion.

Importance of Backlinks

When you look at it in terms of building your site or blog, you will find several important factors which play a part in your overall SEO plan:

- Search engine ranking: It's the main goal for most marketers and one of the ways this is achieved is by creating quality links to your pages. The key here is to create a variation of anchor texts and get it from niche blog or high quality blogs.

- Fast indexing: After creating a brand new website, the next challenge is getting indexed quickly by Google; but having backlinks from an active website tends to expedite this process.

- Page rank: If you get linked back from good quality PR sites then quite possibly you will get a decent page rank in subsequent updates.

One of the many ways to find out how well your site ranks on a search engine is to search for one of the key phrases targeted by the page. For instance if you want to rank well for a phrase such as "diet pill" then it would help if you earned links from pages that already rank well for that particular phrase.

It takes a lot of practice, effort and experience to establish these variables as they affect your ranking but you can always use one of the many web analytics to find out whether your campaign is gaining traction. You know the strategy is working when you see an increase in search traffic, frequent search engine crawling and better rankings, among other things. If you don't see a rise in these metrics then its possible you need to work on your on-page optimization or pursue better quality link targets.

Chapter 2: Search Engine Optimization Basics You Need To Know

At its most basic level, SEO is the practice of enhancing and promoting a website in an effort to boost the number of visitors coming through. Majority of visitors are expected to be directed by popular search engines and SEO configuration seeks to boost visibility on related search queries. SEO comes in many forms, and there are relevant factors such as the words used on your page or the way other websites link to you: in some cases SEO simply means the designing and structuring of a website in a way that search engines can understand.

But in addition to discovering specific phrases and terms for the engines and building proper links, SEO isn't just focused on the engines; it's also about making sure the sites are better for people. If you're trying to figure out the whole SEO thing but find yourself more confused, don't stress, you're not alone.

Why Does My Site Need SEO?

This is because of the simple reason that majority of web traffic originates from a search query and the major search engines are people's favorite

method of navigation. This fact doesn't change whether your website is meant to provide a specific service, product or simply provide useful information about a certain topic.

What makes search engines so unique is the fact that they can provide targeted traffic, which means that you can directly draw in people who are looking for what you offer. Once you understand that search engines are the roadway that facilitates all this, and learn how to make sure your site is found by popular search engines, you won't miss out on the many marketing opportunities made possible by search.

A search query is the phrase you type into a search box in order to find information about something and your website needs to be configured in a way that its anchor text aligns with relevant search queries. For example if the website deals in stock trading then it would be in the owner's interest to make sure the website gets displayed on the search results when someone types in a query relating to stock trading.

When site owners invest in SEO, it leads to an impressive ROI so whether having time or finances- or both- has the potential to boost your rate of return when compared to other forms of promotion and marketing.

Is it true that search engines can't "see" my website without SEO?

Modern search engines are pretty sophisticated and use advanced algorithms to search for sites when queried but they still need assistance in order to crawl the web more deeply and provide users with the best results

for each query. Remember that while there are proven SEO strategies to make sure your site gets thousands of visitors every month, the wrong SEO can get your site buried deep in the search results where no user will ever come across it.

Aside from making sure content is available to search engines, good SEO also enhances site rankings in order to make sure content is placed only where common searches will locate it. You might have noticed how competitive SEO marketing is, and companies that invest in SEO will have decided advantage over their peers.

How do I do SEO for myself?

SEO is fairly complex but once you understand the basics, it makes a huge difference. Information is free for the most part so education about SEO is available and can be accessed for free on the Internet through guides such as these. When you combine that will consistent practice on the same, you are well on your way to writing your own SEO marketing plan.

Depending on the time you have for learning this information and the type and complexity of your website, you may find you need an expert to handle things more smoothly. There are hundreds of experienced firms out there practicing SEO, and each one performs specialized SEO, where the efforts to raise visibility on the search engines is geared toward a specific target audience.

Some firms choose to take on a more specialized approach; other firms rely on a broader strategy to tap into the masses. In order to optimize the site for the search engines you may have to look at more than one angle and explore the different avenues available on the market.

How much time should I invest in learning SEO?

If you are serious about improving your search rankings and be familiar with SEO then it would be advisable to put in time and effort into it. There are three main factors you need to pay attention to:

- On the page SEO
- Off the page SEO
- Violations

As you will learn, within each group exist subgroups and each of these subgroups contains individualized SEO factors that you as a site owner should pay attention to.

Effective SEO factors have to work in combination. No single factor will be successful so it wouldn't make sense to focus on creating a great HTML title if the content on the page is low quality. Likewise having hundreds of links can boost rankings significantly but that only works if they are quality links. Establishing multiple factors can increase the chances of success just as negative factors make it harder to achieve success.

On the page ranking factors

On-page search ranking factors are those types of factors that fall under the publisher's control. Consider the type of content you publish, perhaps you provide a number of HTML clues that make it easier for people and the search engines to 'see' your website, and perhaps you've spent time creating effective site architecture to help the search engines. All these factors fall under on-page rankings and are within your control.

Off the page ranking factors

These are the factors that publishers do not directly control. A long time ago search engine developers learned that relying entirely on publisher controlled signals wouldn't work so in order to yield the best results they had to gain more control. For example, some publishers may try to make themselves appear more relevant that they actually are.

Due to the high number of web pages in existence, search engines cannot rely on 'on the page' clues. The engines need to go through more signals in order to yield the perfect result for any specific search.

Violations and penalties

Understand that search engines want publishers to perform SEO on their pages because it can improve their search results. Major search engines provide assistance in the form of simple guidelines, videos and how-to posts as a way to encourage SEO practice.

But with all this training, publishers still engage in "black hat" techniques as a way to get to the front of the line and for this they get punished. Engaging in spam or black hat SEO tricks can get your pages penalized and the ranking dropped; in some cases the website can get banned from the search engine entirely.

These violations are basically little tricks that web developers use to exploit search engines into giving a higher ranking, usually by manipulating the search engine's understanding of true authority and relevancy.

"Missing" SEO signals

If you're an experienced marketer you might be wondering why other factors like bolding words or ALT text are not included. While these factors play an important role in the process, they are not, relatively speaking, as crucial. You can't possibly go over the entire list of possible signals when trying to understand the search engines.

Google has over 200 possible signals and over 10,000 sub-signals, so with all that information the best approach would have to be one focused on the more relevant signals. The goal of this guide is to help those new to SEO focus on the bigger picture; and that's why we're deliberately avoiding addressing issues such as keyword placement or how much weight an H1 header carries when compared to an H2 tag.

Being extra specific on such factors can sometimes distract and pull you down the rabbit hole. So in order to gain more understanding, remember

that pages need descriptive titles, and indicating page structure with the use of header tags is a good idea, and if possible top things off with well-structured data.

If you do this things well you will have addressed the main factors in HTML. On the same note, remember that it's not about having a good reputation on Twitter as opposed to Facebook; instead, the focus should be on having reputable social accounts in general, which would attract a good following, generate significant social shares, and ultimately drive you to success.

Chapter 3: 10 Ways To Build Backlinks

By now you know that Google optimization is based on the premise that the more people like a website, the more important and valuable it must be in that niche, and the more it deserves higher rankings. For over two decades since Google was devised, beneath the complex mathematics, the dozens of MIT experts swallowed into the RD department, and the billions of dollars created in revenue, beneath all this lies a simple truth, Google optimization works.

Popularity will give you a pretty accurate idea of a website's value. But what exactly constitutes popularity at least as far as the search engines are concerned? From Google's perspective, the number of quality backlinks your site has from authority websites is a meaningful vote of confidence.

I'd like us to break down 10 simple but powerful ways you can build quality backlinks that will send you real traffic.

1. Watch your competitors' backlinks

It's one great way to find out what your competition is up to and the great thing is you have a lot of online tools to help you with that. Tools such as Open Site Explorer, which is a backlink tool created by the folks at SEOmoz and you can use it to monitor links and find out where they're

coming from. Are your competitors getting linked to from blogs/publications that cover your niche? Contact the author and introduce them to a piece of content that you wrote, and avoid begging and pleading.

If you're writing emails with the intention of having websites link to you then the most effective approach would have to be the one where you offer to fix a problem they have. For journalists this would mean ideas for new stories, and for bloggers it would mean new posts. Find out other sources where your competitors are linking from; this could be resource pages, relevant sites, etc. Whatever the source, if they are getting linked, then so can you.

2. Remember to design your website for readers

I know this may sound counter-productive, but stay with me for a moment. Search engines have been exploring ways to follow people, as opposed to following links, and while backlinks still play a huge part in search, there has been an effort, particularly from Google, to get more in tune with people. What this means is that the more you spend time creating a site that makes absolutely no sense to a person and is meant to be read by search engines, the more you will have trouble being taken seriously by the same engines.

Google has set in place measures to pick out and penalize sites for 'over-optimizing' content so that should give you a pretty good idea where they're coming from. Websites that build content aimed at a real audience has a better chance of surviving rank drops because it takes more than search traffic to maintain a thriving following.

Also creating a site with useful content leads to more interaction and more natural links because the content creates discussions and links tend to follow discussions.

3. Contribute to other blogs

You probably already know the power of guest posting and its triple effect which comes in the form of

- Traffic
- Brand exposure
- Links

If you can contribute regularly to a large blog, whether paid or in an effort to gain exposure, it will give you an opportunity to generate links more consistently, even linking to some of your older content. When you write for other blogs, it gives you the opportunity to link to some of the deeper pages on your site, and when combined with regular guest posting, the result is abounding links. This form of exposure creates a lot of buzz around a brand and also generates direct links.

4. Design a great blog

Now you might be wondering what in the world blog design has to do with SEO, but it's more than you think. Among other things, a great design plays a huge role in increasing conversion and a good design reduces your

bounce rate significantly. There has been a lot of argument over whether blog design affects SEO directly, but one thing is for sure, people won't stick around to read your content if the blog isn't appealing.

Also, marketing trends suggest that people innately trust a well-designed website than they would a low-quality website. This matters because a site with trust and good reputation generates more links and that in turn affects SEO.

Direct linking on the other hand, can be explored through sites that allow submission of well-designed sites. TheLogoMix is one such avenue, and they let you submit any site logo and receive backlinks for it. In addition, you can get plenty more design sites that will allow you to turn in your site design to a showcase, where most of them will agree to link back to your own site.

5. Set in place resource pages

Resource pages, in addition to reducing your bounce rate, also work well as link baits to boost your rankings on tough topics. One good demonstration for this would be Copyblogger. They have comprehensive resources which link back to some of their best posts on the same subject, and those links target difficult keywords.

Considering they rank somewhere on the first or second pages for terms such as SEO, Copywriting and Content marketing, you have to conclude they are doing something right. Consider the major topics covered by your

blog, and research a few keywords around the same topics using the Google Keyword tool; that way you will find out which terms have higher search counts. Select the terms you can realistically rank well for.

6. Employ embeddable widgets/images

Are you familiar with the comic site TheOatmeal? Well, the owner, Matt Inman, once worked as a consultant at SEOmoz, and he knows a few things about getting links. When he started a project for a dating site called Mingle2, he managed to beat industry giants such as Match.com for terms such as "online dating" and "free online dating". So how does that happen?

One way smart people do this is by creating embeddable content which people showcase on their own sites. You see, those embeddable widgets contain a link to your site. Aside from widgets, folks such as Mint.com also use infographics at the bottom. This helps them rank for tougher terms.

7. Do an interview with a well-known figure

While you probably know about the power in interviewing industry influencers, chances are you haven't actually done so. Interviews are great, and more so for blogs and they are pretty simple to arrange because everyone loves being interviewed. It's a tactic intended to let you feature names bigger than yours, and if you do a good job with the interview, the interviewee is likely to share your post with their own following, further pushing you into the limelight.

They don't even have to link directly to the content itself. What matters is you interviewed someone perceived as powerful in a specific industry, and the result will be a growth in links from lots of people in the same industry.

8. Create round-up posts

Round-ups are basically collections of resources, articles, products, that cover a specific topic in great detail. Round-up posts are effective because they usually link to a large number of people and those same people are likely to Tweet and link back the article. For this reason, they tend to become powerful bookmark havens and people just have to share and save them because of their quantity of value.

You could create your own round-up and check out a few keywords you think would be okay to rank for, and then publish. It helps to do a little research before publishing large pieces such as this so that you build links and pull in traffic.

9. Crowdsourcing

In case you hadn't noticed, crowdsourcing is all the hype these days. It's a more dynamic take on the traditional form of interviews. Instead of posting one interview containing loads of information, you collect small bits of information from different authority figures and publish small bit of each interview.

One example of this is the round-up feature most blogs utilize to gather a bunch of experts talking about a given topic. You can do something similar, perhaps by gathering small bits of interviews from SEO experts where they talk about their predictions for the coming year.

10. Create products

It's an area where many bloggers get lazy and resort to the 'build an audience build products later'. It's true you might not actually need a product to begin with, but you can't argue that having a product to promote and sell can definitely lead to more brand awareness.

Implementation

At the end of such a list, you might have too much information to process, and that can make it harder for you to implement the strategies. The trick here is to choose one or two strategies to implement this week, and work your way up from there.

Chapter 4: The Difference Between Black, Grey and White Hat Link Building Techniques

Marketers use various techniques for SEO purposes and these can be categorized into one of three techniques: white hat SEO, black hat SEO and gray hat SEO. What this really means is some of those techniques are accepted by search engines, and some, not so much. White hat SEO is what everyone considers ethical and black hat is what everyone considers unethical. Gray hat walks the line between the two.

White hat SEO

Techniques in this category are accepted by search engines and the techniques are beneficial to both the search engine and site visitors as well. The goal of any white hat SEO plan is to improve a site's result position by using methods that won't cause any blowback from the search engines in the form of penalties. White hat methods tend to take longer before results can be observed, and therefore it's an ongoing process, unlike black hat methods which promise quick results.

Examples of white hat SEO

The content

- This involves researching all relevant keywords, long tail and short tail

- Inclusion of relevant keywords in headings, page titles, anchor text, etc.

- Fine-tuning of content and close examination of analytic reports to optimize site for targeted keywords

- Regular addition of new content

Coding

- Use of proper HTML markup in an effort to simplify search engines' task of identifying headings and other content

- Taking care to ensure that the code is valid

- Linking every page to search engine bots and creating site maps

- Separating content from markup by using CSS as a way to boost keyword density

Linking

- Creation of good relevant content that people find useful and link up to

- Seeking links from popular directories and other websites

- Ensuring pages are properly optimized for social media in order to pull in more social links

- Exchanging links with other relevant website

Black hat SEO

Now that you know what white hat SEO is, you can probably guess what black hat is. This is the use of SEO methodologies that are meant to manipulate search engines into ranking websites higher than they ought to be. The goal here is simple; get to the top of the rankings whichever way possible.

Of course there's always the risk of the search engine picking up on your tricks and penalizing you, but many people still use this tricks to get ahead. Black hat tricks are used for these reasons:

- They actually work- for a while until the search engine catches up with you and tosses you to the back of the line

- A large number of people haven't yet identified which tricks are black hat so they end up outsourcing SEO to firms that utilize such methods, and the site gets penalized for it.

Keep in mind that even if the search engine doesn't immediately pick up on your tricks, your competitors will and they will not hesitate to report you. Here are some examples of black hat SEO:

Content

- Keyword stuffing: lots of websites overuse their keywords, meta tags and alt tags

- Using keywords in hidden text- usually done by manipulating colors, where the font color is made the same as the background color

- Using too many keywords in visible text, which makes it overly repetitive to the average reader

Deceptive content

- Good examples include doorways or gateways which get stuffed with keywords visible only to search engines but which redirect people to the page with actual content

- Cloaking or display of varying content to search engines while displaying different content to people

Linking

- A link farm is a page that gets loaded with completely unrelated links for the purpose of creating dozens of links for different pages

- Spam can be used on blogs, forums, and social media sites through links, which the search engine might choose to ignore but is considered unethical

Gray hat SEO

These techniques usually take some risk but they're not likely to cause any serious penalty from the search engines. They are what you'd call questionable link building but they don't fall under black hat techniques.

Examples include:

Links

- Persistent link building without consideration of relevance

- Strategized three-way linking

- Use of unpaid links

Content

- Use of stuffed keywords but not at the level of black hat

- Publication of duplicate content on different sites

How many links do you have on your page?

The value assigned to a link can get diluted if the page happens to be crammed with other links. Therefore, it would be ideal to get linked to a page with fewer links on it. The degree to which this varies to a search engine is unknown, but testing shows that it matters, just not overwhelmingly so. It's definitely something to think about when building links.

Earn potential referral traffic

The only way to do this is to not focus entirely on search engines. You will over time figure out that the types of links that send out good direct click-through traffic are better in the long run because in addition to giving your site improved value for rankings, they also give you targeted valuable visitors to your site, which should be the goal.

You can learn more by observing the number of page views/visits as showed by site analytics. In case you can't access these services, then tools such as Google Trends for Websites would prove most useful. Although not always accurate, it can give more information on domain-wide traffic.

Pointers

When you engage in activities for the sake of building links, remember that the formula you use will largely depend on the type of website you own. For example small sites can do with manual link building, which may include link requests, directories and possibly link exchanges as a part of the SEO strategy. When working with larger sites, these types of strategies are ineffective and usually fall flat. Effective strategies call for more scalable measures in order for the effort to be fruitful.

Internal link building

Do you know how you'd go about creating great internal links? It's not difficult; you can easily set up a system where your pages get interlinked. Here's how:

- Keyword research: when used for link building, a keyword research tool can offer numerous suggestions for relevant keywords

- Assign the keywords: the next step is to group the keywords in a logical and strategic system, which will result in a search friendly avenue for information

- Use targeted anchor text to link pages: the last step is to utilize the keywords by interlinking them, which happens when you link to content using the new keywords

That last step is quite crucial. You need to make sure you are using the anchor text right and linking to the right pages. A couple of tips to help you interlink:

Use your site search

You can do this for different purposes. Start by finding pages on your website that contain relevant information and which can be linked to other pages on the website. You can also create an internal link building wire frame and all you need to do this is to map the keywords you're targeting into logical pages and assign each keyword to a specific page.

Chapter 5: How To Avoid Being Slapped By Google Updates

Ever heard of the phrase "Google slap"? The phrase has been misused a few times and quite a number of people assume it refers to any perceived punishment by Google such as de-indexing or a drop in rankings but it has nothing to do with that.

The slap refers to a situation where Google reviews and concludes that your ad and associated landing pages are of such poor quality that the search engine endeavors to get your ad removed from the paid listings and the way to do this is to lower its position and raise the current bid price so that the campaign ceases to make economic sense.

A Google slap is not pleasant at all, particularly when it hits your PPC. There are quite a number of horror stories relating to websites that got smacked by Google and never recovered, many of them choosing to abandon their domains and start all over.

In the interest of self-preservation, websites should attempt to avoid engaging in poor ad campaign that triggers the sabotage. Here are some of the ways smart markers stay safe:

1. Multiple page website

Back in the day people linked their ad to a single-page site but that doesn't work at all. It won't matter to Google how important your single page is, if it doesn't operate as a component of a bigger, more established website, then the search engine won't see it as being of any use to a visitor. So basically, your website should have at least 10 pages of quality content, and an additional Privacy Policy, and of course a Contact US/About Us page.

2. Avoid excessive advertising

A lot of people get tempted into trying out alternative avenues for boosting revenue aside from the paid traffic. While AdSense might make sense as a separate revenue stream, it raises the chance of your page being viewed as irrelevant.

3. Link to pages on your site

When a visitor gets to your landing page you don't want them distracted. You want them completely focused on what you're selling, and so you might have to remove the menu sidebar you have posted on your landing pages. It is important though, that you ensure to keep links to other parts of your website posted on the page; the bottom of the page is a good place to place them.

4. Bouncing visitors to affiliate links

Google does not view it as reasonable user experience when you send your visitors directly from your landing page to an affiliate website. The way around this is to convert the affiliate links into redirects, whereby the visitor will go through a page on your site, then finally direct them to your Clickbank hoplink.

5. Skimming on landing page content

As a marketer you will be tempted to send each visitor to your affiliate link as quickly as possible but try not to. Instead, consider that when you keep your landing page unique with relevant content to the visitor, it keeps your overall PPC costs down.

Most engaging pages contain a good amount of text, images and embedded video which all keeps the visitor glued to the page. Google doesn't "see" some of these elements so it's always a good idea to mention the keyword in the image name.

6. Optimize your landing page

You can do this by making sure that the content you create for the landing page is uniquely geared on the keyword. This is one of the main reasons it's a good idea to keep two separate landing pages for two separate ad groups. The point here is to make sure the visitor gets the feeling that they found exactly what they're looking for when they get to the page, and that's harder to do when you combine ads.

It won't be the end of the world if you get slapped but it will be the end of your campaign so if you don't want to wait for months as Google reviews your case, and you don't want to move to MSN or Yahoo, then your best move would be to avoid getting in trouble.

Marketers combine a bunch of techniques to ensure their ad campaigns don't raise any eyebrows. Here are a couple more ways smart people protect their ads:

Become an authority

You may have heard this before that the more value a website provides the more traffic it gets. The more people read your website and like the content, then link it to their own social web copy via social media, the more Google takes you seriously. It grows over time and the more authoritative you get the higher you get ranked, and you never have to worry about your ads being whitewashed.

Obviously this involves a lot of work and it makes perfect sense that Google would reward websites that undergo this kind of work in an effort to become an authority figure. If you don't update your blog or website regularly, chances are you'll lose your connections and people will start to forget about your brand.

This will happen whether or not you post green information. If you go for six months without updating your site or blog, then most search engines will overlook you and rankings will drop as a result. Think of it this way, who

would you rather affiliate yourself with- the person who works hard every day, learning new things and sharing them, or the guy who sits quietly at the corner, watching everybody else work and not doing anything?

Promote your content via social media

It doesn't matter how much of an authority you are on a given subject. If you don't let people know what you're up to, you'll be missing out. Let's say you publish a new blog post, how do you let people know there's new material? The best way to do this is through your social platforms. That's why they exist, so you can establish a more personalized and direct form of communication with your audience.

Promotion is an essential element in online business but keep in mind there's a right way and a wrong way of doing things. Social media is available to any business for the purpose of creating relationships that make it easier to learn tons about your audience and use it to grow the business.

Have you ever come across social handles from notable brands where posts are always perfect, and the stories in the posts feel as if the company is "one upping" the audience by being right and perfect about everything? Lots of people lose connection with their audience by constantly talking about themselves and it's a sad situation.

In order for the social media experience to be meaningful to the followers, there needs to be a kind of give and take situation going on there, and it

would be great if that give and take happened naturally. Take a look at your social media rants and count how many times you mention your brand or your website. If the only thing you do all day is talk about yourself and your website, try mixing things up a little bit by engaging your followers or recommending interesting topics from other websites (do that sparingly).

The social media aspect is an excellent way for you to build backlinks to your own website. This happens every time you publish links to articles online. You end up creating backlinks, which are invaluable in search engine algorithms.

Duplicating content

It's actually the third most common reason for websites getting penalized by search engines. Sometimes this happens innocently such as in situations where you restructured your site recently but other times people have malicious motives and will find ways to duplicate content strategically in order to manipulate search engines.

If you are engaged in site reconstruction, and you plan to set up a new domain for existing copy, ensure you set up 301 redirects, where your old text won't show up in search. That way, users won't be sent to the old URL, instead they will get redirected to the new one with the same text copy.

Affiliate disclaimers also get people in trouble, when used across different affiliate offers on the same website. It doesn't matter if you copy paste the

full disclaimer, or just a couple of small paragraphs; it could still get read as duplicate content.

In order to avoid this, don't copy the same paragraph to different affiliate offers; instead, write a single page with the disclaimer and have other affiliate posts link to that page.

"Scraping" is the practice of copying material from one website to another, with complete disregard to the quality or relevance of content and its use to the reader. Some people scrape one paragraph and others copy entire websites, page for page, word for word.

Whether you do this manually or through a computer program, there is no actual value to scraping and it's only a matter of time before you get banned from Google. Cases where you want to use a citation from specific content from the internet is certainly fine, provided you quote it and link the source article.

Another way to link that kind of information is through anchor text on the body of your site text. Aside from that, it makes no sense to copy-paste information from other sources. Besides, that constitutes plagiarism and that could get you sued for copyright infringement.

Chapter 6: Creative Link Building Techniques

You can't compare link building to that painting done by Michaelangelo "The Creation of Adam" on the ceiling at Sistine chapel, but when you consider the makings of good linking, the end result can pass as an art. By this time you've probably gone through dozens of content talking about link building and most of them seem to offer the same suggestions, and while guest blogging and web directories serve a purpose, some of the concept can seem vague and at times, inapplicable.

In this niche you will come across a lot of bystanders and some of them will be okay with the older strategies because they've seen them in use and are more comfortable with the result. If however, you are not the type of person who operates on the concept of "if it ain't broke don't fix it", and prefer to stay on the lookout for smart creative solutions for getting links, then by all means, read on.

1. Ego baiting

Obviously this is not an approach for everybody and it wouldn't work on everybody so you need to tread lightly here. If you're new to the industry and want to carve out your own strategy and you appreciate the power of influencers, well you can make them work for your benefit by baiting their

ego. You may choose to flatter or threaten; whatever you feel will work. There are some immediate benefits to using a power player. These include:

- Visibility: as you can probably testify, it's very hard to get noticed in certain industries, especially when coming up as a newbie and its more challenging to create relationships. By adjoining yourself with an influencer you can connect with thousands of people all in one move, and before you know it, you're the talk of the town.

- You have a wider reach: once you publish the content involving the influencer, people will spread because of the influencer's popularity, and if the content is really good, then you will have your break. If you stroke their ego, the influencers will do everything to spread the content because they were involved in it. But again, this is a delicate move so proceed with caution.

How to ego bait influencers

This is done by writing about top performers in an industry, posting the content on your domain and posting links leading to them. It's fairly straightforward and it works, because most people pay attention to mentions and will feel compelled to comment on your articles.

Another strategy is to locate well-known influencers in your industry and have them voice their opinions about a subject matter. Your only job would be to put everything together and when you're done you will have a team of industry giants promoting your content.

One other way to do this is to mention people directly when writing content. Be specific. Instead of "I liked what that guy from X designed" you could go with "I liked what Charles from X designed."

2. Refurbish Infographics

Just because you didn't create something it doesn't mean you can't modify if and use it to create something better. If you can learn how to add value, then you should be using outdated infographics to your advantage. You can do this by making use of infographics that relate to your market and find a way to restructure them so they can be useful now.

Start by contacting any website linked with the old infographic and let them know of the modification. There are several backlink checkers you can use for this, and at this step you could encourage them to update their link and have it point to the new one.

Visual content tends to be more appealing to visitors so let your creativity lose and find other successful campaigns that you think could work for you, then leverage them with your new content.

3. Old content

You know that old expression, "another man's junk..?" Well that's true at least in this context. For smart webmasters, old links that point to deleted or long forgotten pages are a real treasure. Can you locate content that has

been outdated and build something out of it? If yes, then contact the owner and ask them how they feel about redirecting that old link to the new page.

4. Answer questions

Established brands have a system of creating customer persona. This means understanding your customer and tracing them online to see where they hang out. Track their hangouts and answer relevant questions where you find them clustered whether in groups on blogs or on popular forums. Make sure you answer questions clearly and honestly, and don't come off as salesy.

This will require solid work on your part but the advantage is that it will set you up as an authority on those subjects and lead to great traffic as well.

5. Make use of evergreen content

The word Evergreen is used by editors in reference to content that is always interesting to readers. You can find the evergreen concept in virtually every domain and if you know what to do with it, then that would be great. Look at that song by Queen "The show must go on", that record is still relevant to audiences years after it was recorded.

Whatever you industry, there's always something audiences find timeless and every once in a while a clever marketer comes around and makes a bang out of it. You can do the same.

With these type of articles, try to build and sustain natural traction: although it would be okay to ask other people to link to you as your content is that much smarter and fresher.

6. Get more press

One great thing about getting press is that it will create more links to your site. If for instance you got featured on Forbes as an industry expert, they would most certainly include a link to your site. Failure to do so wouldn't be user friendly.

This is one of the reasons reporters will always link to you if they cover your company. If you're having trouble building solid links, why not start by getting press coverage and see how that works out for you? Your local PR guy might have something in mind.

In case you don't have a lot of money to work with, you can still do a number of things to get your own press, or alternatively, contact the type of PR agency that chargers on a pay-per-performance model. It's fair for both parties because if they fail to get you press, then you don't have to pay anything.

You may not have realized it but curiosity can fuel some of the most effective link building strategies so never stop using your natural creativity. It's a bad idea to rely completely on old techniques because of the fast paced evolution that characterizes SEO.

Link building might be a straightforward process on some level but if you throw in a little creativity you can explore great innovation. Start by putting to use the information on this guide and see how far that gets you, and then try implementing your own strategies, that way you will remain one step ahead of the competition.

Chapter 7: Untapped Backlink Sources

You might be surprised to know that there are dozens of quality, effective backlink sources which for some strange reason remain completely untapped. Some of these sources you might have thought of and perhaps you're actually using one or two of them, but the fact is you will learn to explore more options with this list.

1. Charity

Most people get that warm fuzzy feeling when they donate to charity but if that little feeling isn't enough for you, then perhaps you should try getting a backlink from there. You'll be shocked at the number of dead broke site owners who will happily offer to post your link on their site in exchange for a few bucks.

For as little as $10 you can get linked to a charitable foundation with great link profile, and getting some of these sites would only require you to use a couple of common search strings like "donate to us" or "sponsors".

2. Purchase expired domains

It's one of the many tricks few people are aware of but you can use it to grow a network of links. If you're currently buying new domains every time you launch a brand new website then you are missing out on a lot of

opportunity here; and also you're making your life more complicated than it has to be.

How about this, every time you launch a new site, head over to GoDaddy and see what aged domain you can get from there. I understand that your first instinct is to get a domain that fits perfectly into your niche; but it's not the most important thing.

Provided the domain has authority, you will find yourself surpassing your competitors in links because they have to create new ones from scratch.

3. Establish a blog network

Quality blogs are among the most effective SEO tools you can use. The best thing about establishing a bog network is the fact that you are in complete control and decide on the amount of links you're going to post. The fact that you'll be putting out links at will gives you great control over your visibility.

So what do you need to start popping off blogs? In order for this to work, you will need to purchase a number of expired domains and have a little extra cash for content creation.

But try to minimize your network footprint by keeping an eye on these areas:

- Whois information

- Content management systems

- Hosting plans

- Designs and themes

- Permalink structures

These factors are important because failure to differentiate them from the search engines could mean the entire de-indexing of your blog network.

4. Testimonials

All companies love customer testimonials. It doesn't matter if they are big or small, whatever type of product or service they offer, they will appreciate new testimonials- especially if they are positive. If there's a product you use and genuinely like, then consider sending the company a testimonial and see them add a link to your site.

This is a grossly underused trick and it could get you a large number of quality backlinks. It's perfectly fine if you purchase a product just for the sake of posting testimonials.

5. Dominate directories

No matter what you may have heard, directories are still around and they are not going anywhere, at least not this year. Two years ago Google de-indexed several hundred free directories. Now, if those directory links didn't work, why in the world would they de-index them? The truth is, they wouldn't.

If you pay close attention, you will realize that posting links in the right directories will have a great resource. Also, most of these directories look old and outdated to some people so you can actually get great PR domains for close to nothing.

6. Help a reporter out! (HARO)

This is one of the best ways to get yourself killer backlinks from great news authority sites. This is how it works;

· You sign up for a HARO account

· Every day you get three emails from reporters who want sources

· You respond to the emails with your credentials and whatever useful tips you may have

The trick is to keep active. Don't get lazy on the site, and you will see great results.

7. .Edu links

In case you live under a rock and have no idea, .edu links are some of the most powerful. The challenge is to get a legitimate .edu institution to link to the average Joe. It's not impossible, it's just challenging. If your website looks decent enough and it hasn't been monetized to death then chances are you can get a couple of links simply by asking nicely.

This can be done on the resource pages covered by most universities where they link out to other websites with helpful information to the students and faculty. When you contact the sites, keep in mind that only around 5% of them will post your link, but remember that those few links could make a huge difference for you.

8. How to grab expired domains

As an SEO(er) you need to learn how to grab domains when they expire. Think of a situation where you buy a domain from ten years ago; what you're doing is basically going back in time, hiring an expert to promote a website and then paying them something in the range of $100 for the decade of solid work they've put into promoting the site.

Aside from auction sites, there is another method you can use to acquire these domains, but it'll take up more of your time. What you're looking for are pages with a considerable list of links going to other sites, but that haven't been updated for some time. You can get these at GoDaddy for as little as $10 and the best part is the process won't involve any auctions.

So basically you need to find pages with many links but finding them isn't simple at all. You could search for them by date, where you set the timeframe around several years. This will ensure you get pages that have gone a long time without being updated.

When you find one of these pages, you can use a tool like Domain Hunter Plus, which can be accessed from Chrome extensions. This little program will let you know of any broken links on that particular page and whether or not the domains are up for registration.

9. Guest posting on Twitter

Guest posting can be one of the trickiest businesses to engage in because most sites have strict list of guidelines which you must adhere to. Because of this, it can take you a long time to utilize this option. Another more effective way to guest-post would be through Twitter.

The reasoning here is, the websites that tweet their posts regularly must also be posting regularly, so they could probably use your services.

10. Software submissions

This is a somewhat old schools tactic for getting links but it still works like magic. Why, you ask? That's because these sites tend to have high backlink profiles. Websites such as CNET.com and other authority software sites are perfect and the good news is you don't have to create your own open source OS to get your link and software posted on their directory.

Anyone can do this but it takes time so if you'd prefer to hire someone on Fiverr then that would be fine too.

Additional backlink sources

- Google+: your profile on Google+ does in fact allow contextual follow links. If you establish significant interaction within the platform and utilize direct linking, you can end up with a fairly powerful link base.

- Blogger reviews: if you sell something of value; this includes software, information, etc., you can create backlinks with that. Contact bloggers that might be interested in what you're selling, and once they post the links, you will end up with a mixed bag of all sorts of websites, at which point you can filter out any authority websites and news sites. Now contact the quality websites and sell them on the quality of whatever you have to offer, and if a few of them link you, then it's a win.

Chapter 8: Summary

Link building is a challenging feat in 2014 because, among other things, Google is relentless in its pursuit of un-editorial links. The truth is, link building is alive now and still as powerful as it ever was and so getting and keeping a large variety of quality links should be your pursuit. Before April 2012, anyone could get away with creating low quality 300-word articles and then attaching hundreds of unnatural links to it and linking to spammy sites.

SEO was fairly easy back then. In fact, it was so easy that large scale link building was actually dictating Google's SERPS by manipulating how Google worked and taking advantage of the many loopholes in their algorithms. But just when bloggers had turned up the spinning software, Google struck with Penguin Algorithm and a lot of low quality websites went under.

If you are not a spammer, the only way to rank on Google is through hard work, patience, reputation, relevance, trust, and lots of other factors. Google tends to focus a lot on trust but if you focus on these signals then you should be on your way to establishing quite a powerful network.

If your link building campaign is devoid of quality material, or if it fails to be of use to any audience, then it's not the type of backlink profile you should be working on. By definition, you'd be creating spam and Google would not

hesitate to make an example of you. Of course this doesn't stop those clever spammers, but the chances of you being a master spammer are minimal and even if you were, that wouldn't keep you invisible to Google forever.

Keep it clean and maintain consistency. That will get you through most challenges. Here are some additional tips to keep you on track:

- Acquire links from real websites in order for you to build real authority

- Remember that links from authority websites are the most effective

- Don't focus too much attention on website themes linking to you

- In order to get your content noticed across the board, join more social networks

- Try not to go with seasonal trends. The more people abuse links, the more they turn toxic

- About automated link building, if what it turns out is an unnatural link which you place yourself, then it won't be counted by Google

Advice from search engines

Google Plus counts may be a big deal but they are not the number one factor in ranking. The most productive thing you can do for your site is build

high quality links and create relevancy for the page. Yahoo and Bing offer a number of link building guidelines which you can follow in an effort to rank in Google but even so, you will need to refer to Google Webmaster guidelines if you're keen on attaining success.

You can build links easier if you have content worth linking to

You'll find it a lot easier to get sites to link to you if you spend time working on good material. When writing the content, aim at originality. The articles don't really need to set the internet on fire, but they should have their own unique appeal. If you do this you will find you get links from content you created years back, so the first step is to actually create content worth sharing.

Don't beg for links!

Google views this as a clear indication that you want to manipulate rankings. It's true that the key to getting high rankings and traffic is to get authority sites to link to you but you have to be subtle in your attempts.

Links are the power of the internet and that's actually why Google dominates the web. Get your site linked from various sources and even if you're just aiming for good Pagerank for certain keywords, don't let it be too obvious.

Don't link to sites that exist for the sole reason of linking to other sites

It can be challenging trying to explain to people what a quality link is, but as of the moment, Google wants you to operate on the knowledge that a decent link is and can only be a natural link. The links don't necessarily have to be relevant to your specific industry in order for them to boost your authority, and the site you link from doesn't have to be a major authority in its niche. Basically, it doesn't matter what the site is about; if it's a good quality website, and you manage to get a link in, then it's fine with Google.

Editorial links are good links. Ideally you want links form pages that exist in Google's index on quality websites.

You can go off-topic occasionally

As a rule, most trusted marketing blogs or guides will encourage you to create content that is relevant, work on building a resource on a chosen subject, and then work on the details. I encourage it and Google does to, because it works; but sometimes in order to get more links and boost traffic, you might actually need to go off-topic. You can build new content around a newsworthy topic, or anything that is fresh and relevant to any audience.

It's a trick many bloggers have had great success with and you can as well, if you can find a way to jack the news and get more visitors on your site.

So what is a good link?

Generally, any link that gets you traffic could be viewed as a good links, but you might need more information about what a good or bad link would be. You should know that the quality of any link depends largely on the page and site it's on. As a general rule of thumb, links from these sources pass as 'good' links:

- Internal links: these are not the most powerful but it's a fine place to start. Organize your site before you go chasing links.

- Mainstream news sites: these and other authority sites provide a good source of quality links. In essence, links from Brands, are quality links.

- Related or non-related industry sites: this is basically the aim of SEO although you have to consider the website, its niche and so on.

- Social media: they're not the strongest in terms of ranking signals but they have a place in the broader campaign

What you need to avoid are self-made links, even if they successfully manipulate Google. If you can be honest about why you want a link, then that would help. Don't say it will help instead talk about how you're offering a more updated source of information. If you spot a problem on a site, be sure to point it out but be friendly about it. It's not really rocket science and it works, so go out and get quality links.