THE 2012 MARKETER'S
SEO Guide *to* LINK BUILDING

What is Link Building?

LINK BUILDING is the process of encouraging and establishing relevant, inbound links to your website which help your website achieve higher ranking with the major search engines while driving targeted referral traffic to your site. Search engines generally look at backlinks (inbound links) as votes of confidence for the websites they point to.

3 REASONS
to Deploy a Link Building Campaign

1 Inbound links account for up to 42% of a website's ability to rank on Google's Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs).*

2 Successful link building campaigns can substantially increase a website's referral traffic.

3 Link building can increase the number of brand mentions on the internet which accounts for up to seven percent of a website's ability to rank in Google's SERPs.*

According to SEOmoz's 2011 Search Engine Ranking Factors Report

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Link Building *Glossary*

301 REDIRECT

A method of telling web browsers and search engines that a web page has been permanently moved to a new location. Warning: Links pointing to redirected pages can lose up to 25% of their SEO impact.

404 ERROR

The HTTP error message returned to the browser by the Web server when a requested Web page is not available. The error occurs because the page no longer exists or is restricted.

ANCHOR TEXT

The actual words which make up the hyperlink is the anchor text. Ideally, the word or phrase you wish to rank for should be the anchor text.

ALTERNATIVE TEXT

This attribute is assigned to images so the visually impaired can use their text readers to determine what is in the picture. It also serves as anchor text for images which link to other websites or pages.

BLACK HAT

These are techniques used by some SEO practitioners to trick the search engines into ranking their websites higher. These tactics go against the recommended guidelines of the search engines. If a search engine catches a black hat website it can be pulled from the index and not show up at all.

FOLLOW LINK

Links with the follow attribute are considered the best inbound links because Google actively tracks them to the receiving website.

INTERNAL LINKS

An internal link is a hyperlink that is a reference or navigation element on a web page to another section of the same website and domain. Links placed in a blog post pointing to internal web pages helps ensure that Google will index those pages.

LINK BAIT

Is any content or feature on a website designed specifically to gain attention while encouraging others to link to the website.

NO-FOLLOW LINK

Links marked as no-follow signal to Google and the other search engines not to index the link. In theory, these links should not count as votes of confidence from one website to another. However, Google reserves the right to follow a no-follow link.

PAGE RANK

Is a link analysis algorithm, named after Larry Page and used by Google to assign a numerical weight to a web page or website with the purpose of "measuring" its relative importance (authority) on the Internet. The algorithm assigns a number from zero to 10, with 10 being the highest authority.

WHITE HAT

SEO tactics that abide by the recommended guidelines of search engines.

Top Link Building *Resources & Tools*

HubSpot Software

SEOmoz Software

OpenSiteExplorer.org
by SEOmoz

Google Webmaster Tools

Wordtracker

Raven Tools

18 White Hat Link Building Techniques

Content Marketing
By creating lots of high quality, viral, educational and/or entertaining content on a regular basis a website will have many more opportunities to capture inbound links. This is the most holistic and natural way to do link building.

Competitors
By using some of the applications mentioned in the Top Resources & Tools section a webmaster can inventory competitors' inbound links and mimic them where possible.

Guest Blog Posts
By inviting others to guest post they will promote their original content to others in social media and on their web properties resulting in inbound links for the publishing blog. Also, by actively seeking out opportunities to guest post on others' blogs an author can include appropriate links back to their web properties.

Press Releases
Free wires like PRLog.org and paid wires like Marketwire.com and PRWeb.com allow links to be included with the release. These websites syndicate releases to hundreds of websites which publish the release and the accompanying links.

Local Directory Listings
Always include company websites on Google, Bing and Yahoo's local directory. It is also a good idea to submit to Localeze.com. These are powerful brand signals and links for the search engines.

Social Profiles
Have a company LinkedIn profile and make sure employees' profiles link to it. Use Namechk.com to set up the rest of the company's social media profiles. While many of these links are no-follow, remember, Google reserves the right to follow a no-follow link and social signals account for up to seven percent of a website's ability to rank.

Partnerships
Strategically partner with similar companies and share links and content.

Client & Vendor Sites
If prudent, ask clients for links. A good way to solicit links from vendors is to offer up a testimonial for their website. Just make sure it includes a link.

Real Simple Syndication (RSS)
Links included in content that can be syndicated by RSS will turn into inbound links when other websites and blogs syndicate the content. This is a good reason to include multiple tags on blog posts or any other web property which contains an inbound link. The more tags the more internal and potential inbound links.

Presentations & Webinars
Submit presentations to SlideShare.net and include links in the slide deck. Also, host webinars for live blogcast coverage, tweets and blog reviews.

Article Sharing
Write original articles with links that point back to the appropriate website and submit them to Ezinearticles.com or Suite101.com. Article sharing websites recently took a hit from the Google Panda update so don't expect to get the same results as the pre-Panda days. However, article sharing still creates inbound links and should still be considered as a viable strategy.

National Directories
Submit the appropriate web properties to dir.yahoo.com and dmoz.org. If associated with any national organizations make sure to solicit a listing containing a link in their online directory or website.

Badges, Widgets & Plug-ins
Companies and brands can easily create a WordPress plugin, offer up badges to website visitors, and create and share widgets using WidgetBox.com.

Product Reviews & Interviews
Give away free products or services to bloggers in exchange for a review. Review content almost always links to the website containing the product or service. Solicit interviews from bloggers. Bloggers who publish interviews almost always link to the interviewees website.

Communities, Blogs & Forums
Monitoring keywords and brand names on blogs, forums and in social media will create opportunities to engage in the conversation. Leave links which add value to the conversation and are prudent. There's a fine line between adding value and spamming. If the line is crossed or traversed, members of the community will communicate their displeasure.

Donations
Many charities and non-profits will include a link to a donor's website. Depending on the page rank of the charity's website the link can be a really good added bonus in addition to feeling good about contributing to a positive cause.

Buying an Existing Website
If a company or organization is just getting started with a new website project they should consider buying an existing website that relates to the products or services being offered and already has thousands of backlinks.

Broken Link Building
Once a competitor's inbound links are inventoried find out which links point to broken pages (404 page errors), contact the webmaster of the website and offer up an equivalent page to link to. This is a win/win for both parties. A popular tool for broken link building is Screaming Frog.

(Example: If a website links to a widget manufacturer, the link is broke and you manufacture widgets too, then let the website know they can link to your website instead)

Black Hat
Link Building

🚫 **Link Farms**
Any group of websites that all hyperlink to every other site in the group.

🚫 **Comment Spamming**
Is done by automatically posting random comments or promoting commercial services with links on blogs, wikis, guestbooks, forums or other publicly accessible online discussion boards.

🚫 **Automated Bookmarking**
Is done through the use of software that automatically submits website pages to hundreds of bookmarking websites with the intent of creating backlinks. Also known as bookmark spam.

🚫 **Paid Links**
Paying a company, agency or person to create 'X' amount of backlinks on spammy websites.

🚫 **Social Media Spam**
Can be automated or done manually. It is the act of leaving valueless comments on social media profiles containing a link.

🚫 **Reciprocal Links/Three-way Link Exchange**
A reciprocal link is when two parties agree to insert a link on each other's website. Three-way link exchange is similar, but with three parties involved in the transaction. This is an attempt to hide the link reciprocation from Google.

🚫 **Website Hacking**
Some black hat link builders will go so far as to break into others' websites with the intent of inserting a link back to the link builder's website.

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