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

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