POINTBLANKSEO

LINK BUILDING COURSE

Beginner's Guide to Link Building

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This is THE beginner's guide to link building. I will teach you everything I know so you can stop spending time reading endless articles and blog posts online and start building real, legitimate links.

The goal of this course is to teach you the most about link building with the least amount of fluff, because your time is valuable. Therefore, I'm going to dive right into things.

Introduction

Search Engine Optimization (**SEO**) is the practice of improving the visibility of your website in a search engine's organic results.

SEO is divided into two sections: on-page and off-page. **On-page SEO** consists of making sure your site is search engine friendly as well as relevant to your different targeted keywords. **Off-page SEO** is about building authority, trust, and relevance for your website on other pages of the web.

Off-page SEO used to be the same thing as **link building**, the practice of pursuing backlinks for your website, but as search engines have evolved, they now use other factors besides links to tell a website's authority, trust, and relevance. Some of these factors include social media metrics and authorship.

Why We Are Building Links

According to the 2011 edition of SEOmoz's Search Ranking Factors study[1], 42% of the metrics search engines uses to rank pages comes from links. This means that a large portion of SEO is based solely off the links you obtain to your website.

What Is A Link?

A **link** (or hyperlink) is a reference to a page that a user can follow. Links help search engines evaluate the content of different pages on the Web. Links help search engines identify two things: authority and relevance.

Evaluating Authority

When someone uses a link to reference a page on the Web, they pass authority, or

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link juice, to that page. Think of it as a vote. If Page A is linking to Page B, it's vouching for it, and therefore, passes some of the authority Page A has to Page B.

However, all of the authority Page A has does not pass to Page B. Page A's authority is divided up to all of the different pages it links to. For example, if Page A's authority is measured numerically with 10 votes, and it has 5 different links on the page, then each of those links passes 2 votes to those pages being referenced (see below).
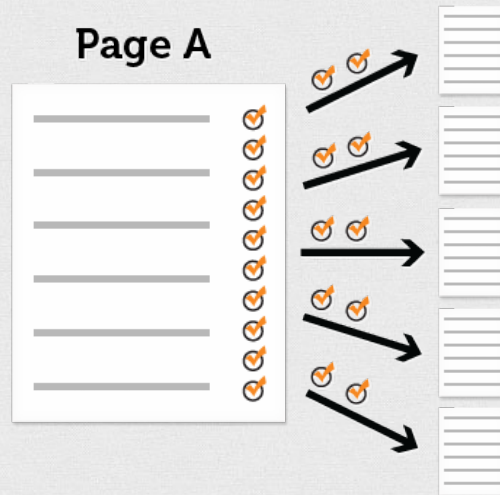
This means that you want to obtain links from pages that have a low number of outbound links and a high amount of authority.

Not every link passes the same authority though. In general, links towards the top of a page passes more link juice than those at the bottom.

In conclusion, you want to obtain links from highly authoritative pages with the least amount of outbound links on the page, and if possible, have the links be towards the top of the page.

Evaluating Relevance

To determine relevancy with links, search engines utilize (1) the anchor of the link, (2) the content of the page the link is on, and (3) co-citations.

(1) The **anchor** is the clickable text that is being hyperlinked. In this link: **click here**, the anchor is "click here". For example, lets say you wanted your business to rank for "pool supplies". To show Google your site was relevant to this query, you would try and obtain links with the anchor "pool supplies" and those similar to that such as "top pool supplies", "pool cleaning supplies", and "pool supplies on sale".

(2) The content of the page a link is on includes not only the words on the page, but also the meta data of the page, such as the title and description. Going back to the pool supplies example, you would want to obtain links from other pool supplies websites & articles about pool supplies.

(3) To help you understand what a **co-citation** is, I'll use this definition from Sourceforget.net[2]:

> " If A and B are both cited by C, they may be said to be related to one another, even though they don't directly reference each other. If A and B are both cited by many other items, they have a stronger relationship. The

more items they are cited by, the stronger their relationship is. **"**

Going back to the example of pool supplies, you'd want to obtain links from others pages and websites that link to your competitors.

In conclusion, in order to rank for Keyword A, you want to obtain links with the anchor "Keyword A", that are on pages about Keyword A, and that are on pages that link out to other websites that are also about Keyword A.

Domain Authority & Page Authority

There are two types of authority: **domain** level and **page** level.

CNN.com has a higher domain authority than PointBlankSEO.com. This means that with all else equal, a link from CNN.com would pass more authority than a link from PointBlankSEO.com.

To explain page authority, let's take two pages that are equal in every way besides the links to their page. If Page A has obtained 10 links that pass a total of 100 votes, and Page B has obtained 15 links that pass a total of 150 votes, then Page B would have a higher page authority. But take another example: if Page C has 10 links that pass a total of 100 votes, and Page B has 20 links that pass a total of 90 votes, then Page A would be more authoritative, despite having less links than Page B. This is because **not all links are created equal**.

Note:

Votes in the way I described above is just a hypothetical way of putting it. There is no actual vote system that you can check to see how authoritative your page is. To help best estimate this, there are link analysis tools that help you analyze the links pointing to your pages. I'll get into those tools later.

TrustRank

Another factor that is very similar to authority is trust. Called TrustRank by many, this metric helps determine how trustworthy your site is based off **who** is linking to you. If a lot of trusted sites are linking to you, then you have a high TrustRank. But which sites are trusted in Google's eyes?

To best demonstrate this, I'm going to reference a search patent[3] by Yahoo! that, even though Google hasn't publicly claimed to be doing exactly this, is extremely similar to how the idea of TrustRank works. See the image below.

1st Layer	2nd Layer	3rd Layer	4th Layer
0%	0.01%	1.2%	14.7%

% spam
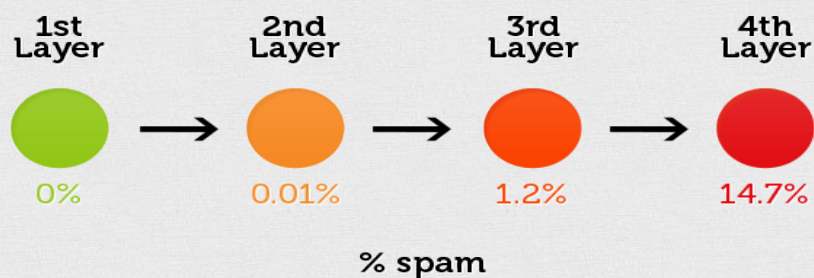
The 1st layer of sites above is known as the seeded layer. These are handpicked sites that are known to be highly trusted – websites like WhiteHouse.gov, CNN.com, NYTimes.com, etc.

The 2nd layer is the websites they're linking to. As you can see in the figures below, only about 0.01% of these sites are spam.

The 3rd layer is 1.2%, the 4th is 14.7%, and so on (note: the numbers are not exact. They're just used to help demonstrate my point).

Therefore, in order to have a high TrustRank, you want to pursue links from sites that are in the seeded layer or as close to them as you can get.

Anti TrustRank

Search engines also use the method of TrustRank in a reverse order. For example, if you're linking to trustworthy sites, then you will have a higher TrustRank because you look as though you belong in one of those first layers. But on the other hand, the idea of Anti TrustRank is introduced to help find spam sites in this same way: if a site is linking to spam, then they're probably spam themselves.

The moral of the story is that who you're linking to is just as important as who's linking to you.

Specific Concepts

Here's a list of quick concepts that you need to familiarize yourself with.

Link diversity

In order to be seen as non-manipulative, your **link profile** (all the links pointing to your site) needs to be as diverse and natural as possible. If every single one of your links came from a certain forum with the same anchor text, then you would be seen as very unnatural and manipulative in the eyes of search engines.

Here are a variety of ways to make sure your link profile is as diverse as possible:

Obtain links from as many sites as possible – Don't just stick to one or two you know you can always get a link from. One of the most effective link building tactics is to increase your number of **Linking Root Domains**, or the number of different domains linking to your site.

Obtain links from different types of sites – You don't want to obtain links just from blogs or web directories, you want to obtain links from all different kinds of