

LINK BAIT

Also known as viral marketing, link bait is anything on a site (content, tools, video, a diagram about link building strategies, etc.) that makes people want to link to it. For ranking purposes, the link bait should have some association with the keyword you want to rank for, so people linking will naturally use that keyword. www.SEOBook.com and www.TropicalSEO.com both have very insightful and detailed information on link bait campaigns. Once you have your link bait set up, you can use a lot of these other methods to spread the word about it: putting it on social media sites, blogging about it, writing an article and submitting it, etc.

Content Submissions

Press Releases

Submitting press releases online not only helps build links, it also can keep your website in the news and Google has begun showing news results in the SERPs. Write and submit press releases at least 1 or 2 times a month. Some submissions are free, some you must pay for, so do your research.

Check out: www.PRElite.com, www.PRZoom.com, www.WebPR.com

Article Writing

Many SEOs are divided on how useful article writing and submission to multiple directories may be for rankings. While not the most effective link building method in terms of link juice, submitting 5-10 articles per month to several quality directories is a good strategy to add to your link building playbook.

Quality article directories: www.EzineArticles.com, www.ArticleCity.com, www.Buzzle.com, www.Articlebiz.com, www.EasyArticles.com

Cherry Picking Links

A few things to keep in mind as you begin link building:

1. Make sure you have a site worth linking to! You must have valuable content or provide a useful service to attract links.
2. It's best to spend a few hours a week on link building. Manual link building may be a slow process, but automating the process just doesn't get the same results (and may wind up hurting more than helping!) The search engines are smart enough to be suspicious when your site suddenly acquires 200 backlinks over night.
3. Vary your anchor text somewhat as you request links so it appears more natural looking to engines. They'll notice if every single one of your backlinks reads "SEO guru" or something.
4. Do not comment on forums and blogs just to throw your link there - actually add something of value to the discussion, or you'll just wind up getting banned.
5. Links within ACTUAL content on the page look the most natural to search engines. For example, if you come across a blog post that is older, but has a decent Google PR AND uses your keyword at least once within the text, you'd want to request that your link go on that page right as the text within the content.

Suck it up, sit down and get ready for some intense research to find relevant sites to get links from. Having high trust, high ranking sites linking to you should give you a major boost in the SERPs. Here's 3 ways to research highly relevant and trusted links:

1. Search for your keyword on Google and look at the top 100 listings. You want to get as many of those sites to link to you as possible. To find the page on that domain that is MOST relevant to your keyword, search Google with 'site:domain.com keyword'.
2. Use a tool like Hub Finder (<http://www.linkhounds.com/hub-finder/hubfinder.php>) to run an analysis of those sites and find ADDITIONAL sites that link back to 2 or more of your "top 100 competition." Getting links from sites that link to your competitor's is always a good bet.
3. If you can't get links from your top 100 sites, examine each site's backlinks and try and get some links from those pages. Go to Yahoo and search with 'link:domain.com'. This will usually list their backlinks in order from most trusted to least. Pick some of these sites, find the most relevant page for your link (using Google and the "site:domain.com keyword" search.)

Once you know where you'd like to request a link beg, borrow or steal (not literally) to get a link from that page. Send them a personal email and be straight forward about what you want. Personalize each email you send, do NOT automate this process. Offer a link to their site from another one of yours, offer a one time payment, a gift certificate, or whatever it takes to get that link.

Jim Boykin of JimBoykin.com has coined the term Link Ninja to refer to those who use this research-intensive method of link building. Go to his site to get even better information on these tactics.

Networking Sites:

Not to be confused with Social News sites, Networking sites (www.LinkedIn.com, www.Facebook.com, etc) often allow links in their profile pages. While it may not carry much link juice, it wouldn't hurt to have some set up for your website.

Comment On Blogs:

While not as effective as it once was (thanks to that pesky "nofollow" tag), blog commenting on a regular basis still holds some weight. If you want links on .edu and .org pages, look for blogs on those type sites (same goes for forums). Surf blogs and comment on a regular basis.

Wiki Sites:

Many major sites today have added wiki pages with user-edited content. Some may use nofollow, so do your research before spending a lot of time to get a link on a wiki page.

Forum Participation:

There's a forum for every niche out there, get involved in discussions and link back to quality content on your site that visitors will find useful. Whenever commenting on a forum (or blog) have something VALUABLE to add to the discussion. Don't just drop a link and run - in case you didn't know, that's called SPAM!

Join Communities Relevant To Your Niche

LINK BUILDING 101

Social Media/News Sites

Very popular today - getting your content on quality social media sites help rankings and traffic! (Some do use the nofollow attribute). Here's a list of SM sites that don't use 'nofollow' as of 2/08:

- www.Digg.com (PR8)
- [Technorati Faves](http://Technorati.com/faves/) (PR6) <http://technorati.com/faves/>
- www.Slashdot.org (PR8)
- www.Furl.net (PR5)
- www.Listable.com (PR5)
- www.Propeller.com (PR7)
- www.Flickr.com (PR9)
- www.Searchles.com (PR6)
- www.Socialogs.com (PR3)
- www.Fluther.com (PR5)
- www.Sk-rt.com (PR5)

Other sites that do use nofollow are:

- www.Reddit.com
- <http://Del.icio.us>
- www.StumbleUpon.com

Paid/Trade Links

PAID LINKS

Obvious paid links, like banner ads, text links in the footer of the page, under a 'sponsored listings' category, etc. may help traffic, but probably not rank, since many search engines frown upon them. If you're going to buy a link for ranking purposes make sure it is surrounded by content and doesn't look like an obvious paid link or advertisement.

Trading Links

Trading or reciprocal linking is pretty much dead, as are spammy-looking link pages that have a "link then description, link then description" pattern. Three way linking is still useful, in which you request a link from Site A to your Site B in exchange for putting a link to their Site A on your Site C. Sounds confusing, but it's not - just always make sure you're getting links from sites relevant to your own niche.

Link Directories

Submit to link directories at your own risk. Submitting your site to hundreds probably won't do much for your ranking and you run the risk of getting links from bad neighborhoods, but submitting to a few quality directories definitely won't hurt. Some directories are free, some are paid.

Try:

- www.DMOZ.org
- www.Business.com
- www.JoeAnt.com
- www.BOTW.org
- www.Yahoo.com

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