

Top 9 Link-Building Tips for New Websites

When building your online presence, it's easy to get immersed in the "me" factor—my content, my products, my services, my copy. But to create an effective website that generates results, the value of sound link-building strategies cannot be ignored. Inbound and outbound link tactics should be a core component of your online marketing strategy, right up there with choosing a web design and crafting quality content.

It's a proven fact that a vast majority of web traffic is driven by the ubiquitous Googles and Yahoos of the world. If you want to reach a high volume of potential consumers, you simply must find ways to make your website appealing to search engines. If your site is deemed fresh and relevant, engines will "crawl" it more often and more thoroughly, boosting its ranking in organic search results. One of the most effective ways to attract search engines to your website is through well-placed interlinking.

Below, we've outlined 9 effective tips and tricks for building strong and value-adding links to your site:

1. **Ask other sites to link to yours.** The more inbound links coming to your website (often referred to as "link popularity"), the more reputable you will look in the eyes of search engines. With every external link you have out there in cyberspace, you gain a little more credibility. Often, you can establish reciprocal link agreements, where you agree to include an outbound link to another website if they do the same for you.
2. **But, make sure you're asking quality sites.** In addition to tallying up the number of pages linking to your site, search engines also evaluate the credibility and quality of those websites. Avoid forging relationships with sites that function solely as "link catalogs". These types of sites are quickly flagged for what they are—search engine manipulators—and are discounted by spam filters. Having your link on these disreputable sites can actually hurt your rankings, and make you seem "spammish" by association.
3. **Make a targeted list of viable linking candidates.** As a starting point, focus on existing clients, vendors, and industries that nicely supplement (but don't compete with) yours. For instance, if you're a reseller of scented candles, ask your candle manufacturers if they'd mind including a link to your site on theirs. And if you're a home inspector, you might want to reach out to local realtors and request that they list a link on their websites. You can also find out who is linking to your competitors' sites and target those same domains.

4. **Monitor your link popularity.** You can regularly check your progress by going to any search engine (i.e. Yahoo or Google) and typing in the URL link: <http://www.mydomain.com>. This will return the number of pages that have outbound links pointing to your website.
5. **Use strong keyword phrases.** The combination of an inbound link and a carefully targeted keyword phrase can mean a big boost in your search ranking. For instance, “Click [here](#) to shop more great pet products” is much less effective than “Visit our sister site for more great [pet products](#)”. Links should always be text-based rather than image-based.
6. **Monitor your inbound links.** Each month, check to make sure the sites with which you’ve established reciprocal relationships still have your link active on their page. If not, take their link down from your site. It’s a two-way street.
7. **Submit your URL to search engine directories.** Target major search engines, such as Yahoo or Google, but don’t overlook the smaller engines.
8. **Invest in link advertising.** Although it obviously requires a bigger monetary investment than free reciprocal linking, purchased links can be a highly effective way to quickly increase search engine rankings, especially for brand-new websites.
9. **Remember that content is king.** As a final consideration, keep in mind that while links are important, you’ve got to have the good stuff to back it up. If you land people on your site but repeatedly disappoint them with lackluster content or a poorly designed interface, even the highest of rankings won’t translate into more sales or repeat visits.