

Cheat Sheet

Link Publicity Tactics

Link Quality vs. Quantity

Mass link building generally does more harm than good

More often than not, mass link building associates your site with “bad link neighborhoods,” such as:

- **Link farms** – Large networks of sites that link to each other in hopes to artificially boost PageRank. Link farms can provide thousands of links, but Google will instantly recognize that they are not legitimate and devalue all links from these networks.
- **Sketchy, general directories** – These may have high PageRank and are easy to obtain links from, but they tell Google nothing about the relevance of your site. All these directories tell Google is that you have a lot of money to waste on [worthless links](#).

In addition, mass link building almost always requires blog comment spam, forum spam, and other tactics that Google easily detects & frowns upon.

Determining Quality Link Sources

High PageRank does not always mean high trust. Google’s internal PageRank metrics are far more complex/mysterious than the Google toolbar PageRank. One thing we know for sure is that .edu, .gov, .mil sites are the most trusted sites. Period.

Which site do you think Google values more? A library website with a tool bar PageRank of one or two and a [photography resources page](#), or a site that is obviously set up solely to be a camera and photography accessory affiliate with a page rank of 5? It is possible to get .edu, .gov or .mil links in [almost any niche](#), so long as you have something high quality and/or unique to offer.

A good litmus test to determine whether or not a site is worth pursuing a link from is to estimate how high its barrier to entry is. Almost universally, the higher the barrier, the more link power that site has to pass. Google recognizes that library, university and government sites scrutinize EVERYTHING they link to in order to maintain their authoritativeness.

Google also recognizes that there are .com sites that have a high barrier to entry and are leaders in their industry. For example: CNET, Engadget and ZDNet are industry leaders in tech reviews & news. Their links can be powerful both in terms of organic ranking boosts and direct traffic, but they’re probably not going to link to the site of a fly-by-night, low-end digital camera manufacturer.

A hypothetical example of a bad site with a low barrier to entry: an online poker site that will link to *anyone* in *any industry* (usually for a price). Sometimes a site will link to anyone for profit, sometimes it is just the webmaster innocently (but naively) [linking to everything he or she likes](#). The point is, Google recognizes when a site consistently links to pages outside of its niche, and it has zero trust for these kinds of sites. Links provided by these sites have no positive impact on your rankings.

What about buying links?

Google never said “don’t buy links,” it said “don’t buy PageRank.” Buying links can be a good or a bad practice, depending on how you go about it. If you buy a link that helps the search engines reach their goal of delivering the most relevant results possible, buying links is a good thing. Look for directories, blogs and other sites with sponsored links specifically within your industry. For example, if you sell baby-related products, [Baby Shower 101](#) is a paid directory you should seriously consider listing your site in.

On the other hand, if you buy a link from a site outside of your industry solely because it has a high PageRank, prepare to face the consequences...

The most important questions you can ask yourself:

Would I want a link from this site if search engines didn't exist? There are two ways to determine which sites would be useful in a Google-free world:

- Is this site maintained as a legitimate, useful resource for the audience I am trying to reach? For example, if you are selling a revolutionary new digital camera, your audience would be flocking to tech review/news sites and photography blogs written by those with a true passion for the subject.
- Does this site have an authoritative resource page related to my industry? Again, an example would be a library or government page about your niche.

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” pursue the link. If No, don’t waste your time.

Link request best practices

After you have determined the quality sites you want links from, find the right contacts. Always find contact information for an actual person. This can be a time consuming process, but if you send an e-mail to the first info@thisbusiness.com type address or general submission form you find, you are almost guaranteed not to get a response.

If you are unsure who is in charge of updating the page, make a phone call or send an e-mail asking for guidance to the find right person. Phone calls are especially beneficial, if you can find a number to call. The person on the other end will almost always be happy to direct you to the right person to contact.

Though it is a rare event, if you can reach the page’s curator directly on the phone (no, leaving a voice mail doesn’t count), do so. This is the quickest way to build trust with the right people and get a

response to your request. Be prepared to follow up with an e-mail reiterating what you spoke about on the phone and providing supplementary information requested by the curator.

Wording an e-mail link request

There are a few things you can do to maximize the likelihood that you will get a response from your chosen link sources:

- Always address the curator of the page by name.
- Be transparent. Let them know that you are requesting a link on a certain page.
- Make it apparent that you have looked at their site by commenting on some of the content.
- Explain to them why you think your site would be a good resource for their visitors if they link to it.
- Make it clear that you are a real person and not an automated e-mail system. This is easily accomplished by including your name, phone number, Skype handle, etc.
- NEVER ask for specific anchor text. Most people will take this as you telling them how to do their job, which is never appreciated.

Following up when you don't receive a response

Always allow some time between the first, second, and all subsequent contacts. Chances are the moderators of these sites receive hundreds of e-mails per month, many of which are link requests from spammers. Wait about a week between e-mails. Maintain a polite, no-pressure demeanor. Make it seem as though you are checking in to see if they have reviewed your site, and briefly restate your case for why it would be beneficial to share your site with their audience.

Above all else, continue to make it apparent that you are a real person who sees a real value in their site. Praising new content that has been posted on their site since your last attempted contact will usually score you a few points and increase the likelihood of acquiring a link.

For more information, or to request a consultation, visit <http://www.rocketclicks.com/request-consultation.php>

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