

# 85 Link Building Strategies You Need to Know



Link-building strategies tend to get a bad reputation these days.

The term is attached to nasty words like “scheme,” “spam” and “shady” whenever Google adjusts its algorithms and hits us with an update. But link building isn’t inherently bad. In fact, good link-building strategies are the backbone of any solid SEO campaign.

The Google algorithms take into consideration hundreds of factors when ranking your site but assign different weights to all of them. Link building is still generally considered to be one of the most heavily weighted factors.

This is easy to see when you look at your competitors' back links. Generally speaking, the better and larger the link profile of a site, the higher it ranks.

## **Warning: Not All Links are Created Equal**

While back links are the keys to the SEO kingdom, not all links are the same.

There is a ton of different ways to get back links, but the quality of links varies greatly. Building bad links can set back your SEO efforts and get you in hot water with Big G the next time it trots out a cute yet devastating update animal.

Stay in Google's good graces and keep that traffic rolling in by building the best links possible. Here's what to look for:

- **Authorities in Your Niche:** These are the experts in your space and are worth following.
- **Trustworthiness:** You want links from sites that are free from spam, that aren't keyword slammed or crawling with ads.
- **Do You Want to be Associated with This Site?** If one of your potential visitors saw your link on this site, would you be happy? If not, run for the hills!
- **Popular with Competition:** How is your [competition getting back links](#)? You'll want to get links from these sources too, to beat your competitors at their own game.

## White- and Black-Hat Links

Link building, SEO and Internet Marketing in general are all complex things. But people don't like complex so we try to boil it down as simple as possible.

Enter the colored hats...

Black-hat link building is usually associated with spammy, automated, high-quantity/low-quality links.

White-hat link building is considered to be the most natural, most in line with what Google expects from a high-quality site.

These terms are thrown around a lot in the SEO world, but things aren't always so... black and white. (Sorry, I couldn't resist!) A white-hat technique pushed to extremes could easily become black hat. Just think about Google's recent change of policy on guest posting and press releases. And there is a wide range of link-building tactics and strategies that fall in the very large middle.

If you like the whole color thing, you can call it gray-hat link building.

## Link-Building Philosophy

Before we dig into the specific link-building tactics, it's good to have a framework setup that guides your actions. Consider these your link-building commandments:

### Use Black-Hat Links Sparingly

You should try to avoid sending black-hat links directly to your main "money" site. You're not smarter than Google. The Warrior Forum junkies aren't smarter than Google. In the end, you'll end up paying for it. But that doesn't mean they don't have a place in the link ecosystem. We'll cover that more below.

## Variety is the Spice of Life

Mix up your link building and don't put all of your eggs in one basket. If you go overboard with the strategy of the day, it's going to make your link profile beg for Google's closer review.

This variety will also give you the right mix of quality and quantity links that you'll need to smite your competition.

## Be as Natural as Possible

Google sees billions of web pages; it knows what is natural and what isn't.

So yeah, 50,000 forum profile links created in one day is fishy.

Emulate a natural link profile as much as possible but building links in a steady, methodical manner. Yes, link profiles will have spikes and drops but the worst thing you can do is build 10,000 links one day and walk away.

Got your bearings? *OK, let's dive in!*

## List of Link-Building Strategies

1. **Ask a Webmaster:** The more you actually know and interact with the person, the better your chances are to get a link. Try asking in person (gasp!). Use your professional connections and others you actually know and who know you.
2. **Find Quality Sites and Emulate their Back Link Profiles:** They don't have to even be in your niche, although that always helps. See what sites are ranking for high-competition keywords (Forex, gold or weight loss for example) and try to figure out their secret sauce.
3. **Social Media Profiles:** Links from social media sites help convince Google you are real, your content is worth consuming and you're trying to be a go to source in your niche.
4. **Social Media Posts:** Google and other search engines are getting better at indexing and counting social media posts. It's not all the way there but it will only get better. *\*Hint\** Google definitely can index Google+ posts.
5. **Create Viral Content:** Make a great infographic, meme, video or anything else that links back to your site. If it goes viral, you're going to get a ton of links coming back to you.
6. **High-Traffic Sites:** They must be doing something right. Figure out what and copy it. Also try getting a link yourself. Maybe they are breaking some rules small sites can't. Store that knowledge away for later.
7. **Authority Sites:** Mimic and improve upon on what authority sites are doing in your niche, in your industry and in general.
8. **Analyze Competition:** SEO is like you and another person running from a bear. You don't have to be faster than the bear — you just have to be faster than the other person. Likewise, your back link profile doesn't have to be perfect — it just needs to be better than your competition. Research their back links, do your best to mimic their profiles and then get more on top of that.

9. **Learn to Deal with “No's”:** Your site probably is not as important/smart/cool/funny/awesome as you think it is. Don't be surprised if other people don't flock to give you links. You'll hear “no” a lot, or nothing at all. Learn to deal with it.
10. **Sponsor Something:** Find a charity, sports team or event to sponsor. Make sure they have a website and ask for a link. You'd be surprised how much link juice a Little League website can have!
11. **Stop Caring About No Follow/Do Follow:** If the link you're building is “no follow,” that's OK. Google expects to see a certain amount of these links and it's unnatural if they're missing. There is a lot of research that says link juice still gets passed regardless of the link tag.
12. **YouTube:** Google owns it. Google trusts it. Build links here.
13. **Create Infographics:** People love simple, and it doesn't get more simple than changing boring data into pictures. Infographics will be shared and linked to, and thus help your link building.
14. **Break a Story:** If you have the means and ability, get out there and tell the world something new. People will be throwing links at you like beads at Mardi Gras if you break some news.
15. **Create a Blog:** If you don't already have one, create a blog. Fresh, quality content will attract links like moths to flames.
16. **Create Good Content:** Simple but true. People won't link to garbage.
17. **Create Evergreen Content:** Make content about something that isn't going to change in your niche anytime soon (The 10 Most Important..., Why You Should Never..., etc.). This will go a long way to boosting your authority.
18. **Become an Expert:** Tim Ferris talks about becoming an expert in the 4 Hour Work Week. It's not as hard as you think and will help you build links like a boss. *\*Hint\** You're an “expert” to anyone who knows less than you on a subject.
19. **Consistently Create Content:** Stay consistent with your content creation. Don't publish a ton of content and then go away.
20. **Partner with Another Site/Author:** Find someone who has what you're missing (connections, traffic, charm, wit...) and partner up with them. Bring something to the table they don't have and they will be itching to help.
21. **Moderate a Forum:** There's no better way to build links and become an expert at the same time.
22. **Answer Questions on Yahoo Answers, Quora and Other Sites:** People have questions. Answer them. Instant expert status!
23. **Find Something Missing in Your Niche and Create It:** Is there not an authoritative blog, forum, or other content platform in your niche? Be the one to make it happen!
24. **Put Together a Curated List:** Find the best and brightest out there and put it all together in one place.
25. **Publish at the Right Times:** Look at your analytics and what others are doing. Do posts get more traction on certain days? Certain times of the day?
26. **Email Signatures:** Often overlooked, but don't forget about adding your link to an email signature. Make it easy for people to link to you.
27. **Business Cards:** Yeah it's old school — but it works.

28. **Word of Mouth:** Be helpful, nice (or at least civil) and go out of your way to provide people with a service and they will tell others about you.
29. **Leave Comments:** Yes, this tactic has gotten a bad rap due to spammers, but it has value when done right. Comment on high-quality, relevant pages. Even if they don't let you link back in the comments, consistent commenting can endear you to a webmaster.
30. **Guest Posts:** Again, don't go all black-hat spammy on this and pay for guest posts but link up with real people and offer to bring some value to their site.
31. **Interviews:** Create a great interview with someone more important than you. Other less-important people will link to you.
32. **(Honest) Testimonials/Reviews:** Leave your real thoughts about a product or service and leave out the selling and affiliate link.
33. **Write Local Reviews:** Want to connect with local businesses? Find ones you like and actually support and write a review. Let it simmer for a bit and then drop them a line. You've already provided value for them, so you've got your foot in the door.
34. **Rewrite an Old Post:** Put a new spin on a famous or well-known post/piece of content in your niche. Or dust off some of your own classic stuff and update it.
35. **Disagree with Someone:** You don't have to be mean, but sometimes playing the Devil's Advocate and disagreeing with someone will get you noticed faster.
36. **Use/Create Images:** People love pictures, and they always want them for free. Submit your images to sites like Flickr that allow for creative commons usage.
37. **Participate in Forums:** Not as good as moderating them but you can build your reputation in a community and still build back links.
38. **Speak at Local Events/Conferences:** Yes, this requires real-world interaction but nothing marks you as an expert more than teaching other people stuff.
39. **Tap your Suppliers:** You do business with them, they know you and they probably have websites.
40. **Tap your Customers:** It's not uncommon to leave a link on something you create for customers. Plenty of website designers, SEO professionals and others get a link on their customer's websites for the work they have done.
41. **Create Software/Plugins/Themes:** Give the world something valuable and throw your link in there for credit.
42. **Use Contests:** Who doesn't love something for nothing? Create a contest on your blog, social media or other platforms to get others linking back.
43. **Make THE Definitive Guide:** Create the ultimate authoritative work (or at least something super helpful) and give it away.
44. **Online Business Directories:** If you are able to list your business on a directory, do it. You'll almost always get a backlink.
45. **Join Local Business Groups:** The BBB, Chamber of Commerce and local networking groups almost always have a place where you get a link back to your site. Google likes these a whole bunch.
46. **Make a Donation:** Get listed on a donor page.
47. **Link in Pyramids:** When building links, use a pyramid shape with your main site at the top. Link only the best and most Google-friendly links to your site. Link to those with lower-quality links and focus on volume. This insulates your main site from Google's wrath.

48. **Be Genuine:** Fakeness can be universally sniffed out. If you're only in it for the link and not to help, then don't be surprised when you get limited results.
49. **Be Nice:** Given a choice, people want to work with other people they like. There is no reason to be mean, difficult or nasty even when you disagree with other people.
50. **Link Out:** Link to others first and it will come back to you eventually. You can't be stingy with link love and expect others to be generous.
51. **Try New Things:** What new things? I don't know, that's why they are new! Solve a need, answer a question or provide something in a way no one else has or a way in which you really like.
52. **Articles:** Yes, these are a little "5 years ago," but if you don't go all spammy with them and create quality content, they will help your quest.
53. **Forum Profiles:** Those forums you're participating in? Well they usually have profiles that allow users to link out.
54. **Document Sites:** Turn your content into documents (presentations, PDFs, etc.) and submit them to these well-respected and trusted sites.
55. **Web 2.0 Sites:** WordPress, Squidoo and many other Web 2.0 sites are out there and will let you post a whole lot of stuff.
56. **Social Bookmarking Sites:** Better used for building links to your links, these handy links get indexed quickly and can help your content get found.
57. **Create RSS:** Syndicate your content and watch it go.
58. **Press Releases:** Google may have devalued these backlinks recently, but that doesn't mean they don't still bring something to the table.
59. **Create/Contribute to Wikis:** Again, create content people want to read and they will beat a path to your door.
60. **Buy Them:** Not exactly on the up-and-up, but it's a way to build links. If you depend on your website for your living, steer clear. If you're looking to boost content on other massive sites (YouTube videos, web 2.0 pages, etc.) that won't get dinged, then this is something you should be looking into.
61. **PPC:** You're not buying a link, but you're sending more people to your site and the end result could very well be more links. If you're going to go this route, make sure you set up the right tracking so you know you're getting a good ROI.
62. **Auto/Mass Build Links:** Tools like Scrape Box are extremely powerful and can literally build hundreds of thousands of links very quickly. You're playing with dynamite here, so you better know what you're doing.
63. **Paid Directories:** While this may seem to fall on the Dark Side of link building, it's not necessary all bad. Yahoo has a very powerful business directory that costs ~\$275 a year to join.
64. **Relevant Government Sites:** Google loves .gov links because they are so hard to get legitimately. If you can find a way to get a link back from one, you've hit gold, my friend.
65. **Library Sites:** Guess who runs most libraries? The government! Even if it's not a .gov link, these are trusted and usually not too hard to get. Poke around your local library's site to find out how.
66. **Affiliate Programs:** By setting up an affiliate program, you'll get tons of links back. They may not be considered the best quality-wise, but the quantity will make up for that.



67. **Colleges:** Google loves educational links almost as much as it loves government links. Colleges often have student-run blogs, tons of organizations to support and many more opportunities. Offer a free seminar on your area of expertise and opportunities will open up.
68. **Craigslist:** Yup, you can post links here back to your site too. Just make sure to stay within the terms of service and don't be spammy.
69. **Swap Links:** Direct link swaps may not be the most valuable, but you're still diversifying your link profile.
70. **Makes News:** Why break news when you can make it? Do something newsworthy and get your links on all kinds of syndicated news sites.
71. **Create a Free Tool:** Calculators, estimators and other free tools people and other sites can actually use will get you backlinks as well.
72. **Hold Webinars/Google+ Hangouts/Skype Conference Calls:** The online version of speaking engagements breed link-building opportunities as well.
73. **Create an App:** Turn your (or someone else's) free tool into a free app.
74. **Write an E-Book:** Again, give and you shall receive!
75. **Contribute to Crowdsourcing Projects:** There are people and businesses out there that need your input, help and time. Contribute and see if you can squeeze a link in somewhere.
76. **Quizzes:** Who doesn't love quizzes? Don't think quizzes can make you a back-link titan? BuzzFeed disagrees!
77. **Research Papers:** A little more specialized and fancier than e-zine Articles, but it's the same ideas. Start with a need for information and solve it, academic style.
78. **Case Studies:** People love to hear a success story, so give it to them. Even if you don't succeed, post about the process. People learn even more from failure than they do success.
79. **Create Controversy:** Get noticed and turn some heads by being controversial. Of course, don't be fake. People can smell trolls coming a mile away.
80. **Offer Help:** In your great link-building quest, if you find someone in need of help, give it to them. Helping people fix website errors, getting rid of malware or solving other problems can lead to great relationships. I once saw an AdWords ad for a business 300 miles away. I contacted the business owner and let him know he should readjust his ad settings. Today, he's a client and I have a link on his site.
81. **Offer Discounts for Links:** While this is technically buying links in some way, it can be very useful. Maybe a client, customer, supplier or other business partner isn't 100% about giving you a link. Make it easy for them by giving them a discount on your product or service in exchange for a little link love.
82. **Scholarships:** You don't have to have millions to set up and promote a small scholarship.
83. **Trade Associations:** Join trade groups in your industry (non-relevant ones would be silly and spammy) and see if they have website listings for members.
84. **Event Recaps:** If there has been a big event in your industry or that your visitors would care about, do a recap or live updates. You're making yourself stand out as an authority.
85. **Offline Marketing:** Newspapers, radio, TV and many other offline channels can get more traffic to your sites and get you more links if you play your cards right. Example:

Run a promotion to generate traffic to your site. Have a large call to action that leads to a page

## Endless Possibilities

As you can see, the possibilities for building links are virtually endless when you combine them together into a solid, methodical and well-defined link-building program.

Be aggressive with your SEO but cautious when it comes to variety, speed and quantity of the links you build. Try new things and don't be afraid to be told "no" or to fail. That is how you learn the most!

When you think about what is best for your users first and what Google and you want second, you'll find that success doesn't follow too far behind.

And remember, link building is all relative to your competition. By knowing what your competitors are doing you give yourself a road map to how to beat them. Stay on top of your link building and your competitors by tracking everything with [Traffic Travis](#) or a similar tool.

You have to know where you have been and where you want to be when it comes to link building. Otherwise, you'll never know when you've made it to your destination.

Written on March 25th, 2014 by [Simon Slade](#)

### **About the Curator:**

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