

"The Unfair Advantage" SEO Playbook

(Condensed)

GOOGLE PAGERANK ALGORITHM

Most important ranking factors - in order of importance:

E.A.T.

Expert. Authority. Trust.

Study Google's [Quality Rater Guidelines](#) - website quality, popularity, and BACKLINKS

BACKLINK STRATEGY: 1. Identify the TOP trusted sites in niche – 'seed sites'. 2. Analyze their links and sites those pages link to. 3. **Get links from those sites, respectively.** >> This is how a small site with fewer links can outrank large sites with lots of links.

Source: <https://Searchenginebook.Com/Chapter-5>

VALUABLE AND RELEVANT CONTENT

Google considers valuable and relevant content as high-quality, informative, and useful to its users. While Google's algorithms are complex and constantly evolving, the company aims to prioritize content that provides genuine value to searchers. This includes content that is well-written, comprehensive, accurate, and trustworthy.

Google provides guidelines for creating quality content through its [Search Quality Evaluator Guidelines](#).

CORE WEB VITALS - PAGE EXPERIENCE

Loading Speed

[First Contentful Paint](#) (FCP) <1.8

[First Input Delay](#) (FID) <100 ms

[Largest Contentful Paint](#) (LCP) <2.5 sec

User Annoyance

[Cumulative Layout Shift](#) (CLS) < .1

[intrusive interstitials](#) (pop-ups)

Gauge Your Metrics

Use [PageSpeed Insights Tool](#) - Free

Tools to Improve Page Speed

<https://developers.google.com/speed>

Security & Privacy

Use https.

Accessibility

Optimize for mobile first, desktop second.

Developer Tools

- [Page Speed Insights](#)
- webpagetest.org
- [Lighthouse](#)
- [Chrome DevTools](#)
- [Web Vitals Extension](#)

See advanced Page Experience insights: [17 Pro-Tips You Need to Know About Core Web Vitals](#)

TAKEAWAY:

Google now uses AI, so “updates” are n/a. Just focus on great content, pay attention to metrics, get great links, and link to great sites - with no ranking upsets.

Source: <https://searchenginebook.com/chapter-5>

BUYER KEYWORDS

‘Buyer’ keywords refer to search terms or phrases used by individuals who are actively searching online to make a purchase. These keywords typically indicate a higher level of commercial intent, as they reflect the specific products, brands, or services that potential customers are interested in acquiring, making them crucial for businesses aiming to attract and convert prospective buyers.

Example Buyer Keywords

Buy, Best, Pricing, Best Price, Free Shipping,
long tail keyword phrases

Brand and model specific (research completed, ready to buy)

- *where to buy [product/service name]*
- *[product/service name] suppliers*
- *[product/service name] discounts*
- *[product/service name] **coupons***
- ***best** [product/service name]*
- *[product/service name] reviews*
- *[product/service name] promo codes*
- *[product/service name] **on sale***
- *where can I buy [product/service name]*
- *[product/service name] **near me***
- *[product/service name] for sale*
- *[product/service name] in stock*
- ***Best** + [product/service name] + [year]*

In summary, any keyword phrase that includes your product or service and an action word should bring you visitors closer to the end of the sales funnel.

Source: <https://javalogix.ca/buyer-intent-keywords-for-ads/>

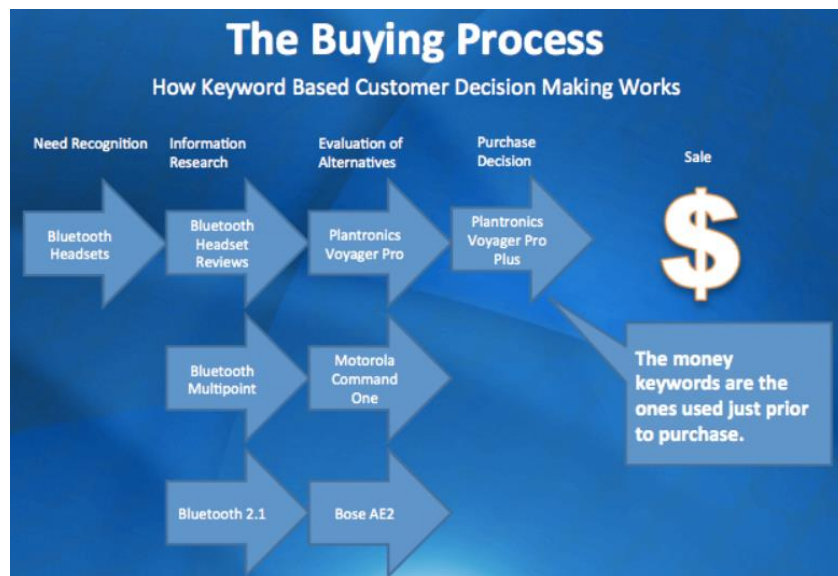


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INTERNAL RANKING SIGNALS

Title Tag

The <Title Tag> has always been, and still is **the #1 most important internal ranking signal**. Within the source code of your webpage the title tag looks like this:

<title>Your title tag keywords go here</title>.

The title tag tells the search engine what the page is about. **Put your most important keywords in the title tag.** Limit your title tags to 65 characters.

Below is an **example of the title tags** used by a real-world company that **managed to rank 5 of their webpages in the Top 10 search results for the keyword *steel rebar*.** ***Notice that NONE of the title tags are identical:***

```
<title> Steel Rebar - Steel Reinforcing Bar | Harris Supply Solutions </title>
<title> Steel Rebar Sizes - Steel Rebar Stock | Harris Supply Solutions </title>
<title> #4 Rebar - #4 Reinforcing Bar | Harris Supply Solutions </title>
<title> Steel Rebar Supplier - Steel Reinforcement Supplier | Harris Supply Solutions </title>
<title> #6 Rebar - #6 Reinforcing Bar | Harris Supply Solutions </title>
```

The Meta Description Tag

Not nearly as important to ranking as the Title tag. Think of it as the enticement for clicking. your keywords in the meta description tag are NOT a ranking signal. However, they ARE important in regards to getting click-throughs.

You should also know that, if the keyword used in the search query is missing from the meta tag, Google will often grab a snippet of text from the webpage to better match the search query.

Exact Match Keywords in the Domain Name as a Ranking Signal

The importance dial has been turned to almost zero in regards to generic keywords in the domain name.

Headline Tags

It's important to place your best keywords in your <H1> (headline) tag because Google looks for keywords in the <H1> tag and oftentimes pulls your snippet from this area of your page.

We recommend using the <H1> tag only once per page — and to place it somewhere near the beginning of the body text. Ideally your keywords should appear early in the headline but **create your headline to attract attention to your product first — and to please Google's algorithm second.**

While the <H1> tag can help your ranking, <H2> and <H3> tags are less effective. Regardless, it's ok to use them, they might help a little and they certainly won't hurt. But you shouldn't expect a boost of any significance from keywords in headline tags other than the <H1>.

On-Page Anchor Text

The keyword text within your on-page links — the *anchor text* — provides a bit of help, ranking-wise, provided that you do not abuse the strategy. Limit your keywords within your anchor text to only a few per page.

Keywords in Body Text

In regards to on-page ranking signals, keywords within page content are typically a *medium* to *strong* ranking signal. It's best to sprinkle in your keywords naturally in ways that sound comfortably conversational when you read it out loud. Otherwise your page's quality score will suffer and its ranking will be hurt.

Place your keywords toward the beginning of the body copy. It can also be beneficial to place them toward the end of the text as well.

Images

Images are an often overlooked ranking factor. It's recommended that you describe what a sighted person would see when viewing the image.

```
<img src='/images/Z4M40i.jpg' Alt='White BMW Z4 M40i Roadster Convertible with 3.0-liter TwinPower Turbo inline 6-cylinder, Rear-Wheel Drive and black leather interior'>
```

Keywords in Alt text can be chosen to help your images rank better in image search. Try to use keywords that are different from the file name and the image captions so that screen readers aren't repeating the same text over again — something that can be annoying to site visitors who are visually impaired.

Sitemap

Help search engines index your images more completely by using an XML image site map.

For in-depth information on this topic, take a look at these articles (requires SEN Membership):

- [The Webmaster's Guide to Advanced Image Optimization](#)
- [The Ultimate Guide to XML Sitemaps](#)

Keyword Density

Keyword Density is a ratio that is calculated by dividing *the number of times your target keyword appears on the page* by *the number of total words on the page*. **EXAMPLE: (10/500=0.02) = 2%.**

Perfect keyword density ratio is no longer an important ranking factor.

Our best advice is to simply make it higher than any other word that appears on your page. Remember to keep it natural.

URL Structure

Using a simple URL that includes your targeted keywords will typically provide a *slight* to *medium* boost in ranking. Looking at our *rebar* example, we see the keyword is used in all five of the **Harris Supply Solutions** URLs in the top 10 as such:

- <http://www.harrissupplysolutions.com/steel-rebar.html>
- <http://www.harrissupplysolutions.com/steel-rebar-sizes-stock.html>
- <http://www.harrissupplysolutions.com/4-rebar.html>
- <http://www.harrissupplysolutions.com/steel-rebar-supplier.html>
- <http://www.harrissupplysolutions.com/6-rebar.html>

Uniqueness of Content

Having unique content is *critically* important. That's because search engines tend to view *duplicate* content as a waste of their indexing resources and counter to what their searchers are looking for. **The key to overcoming the challenge is in the product *descriptions*.**

While it's true that many websites have **hundreds of merchants listing the same products** in their shopping carts, you will find that...**only pages with unique product descriptions will typically rank well** ...while those that use the brand-name-suggested descriptions are either filtered out or buried in the rankings.

And, by the way, this **applies to images as well**. So, **if you are selling something that a lot of others are also selling then you must rewrite the product descriptions and rename the product image files**

Mobile Compatibility

If there's one ranking dial that's turned all the way up, it's *Mobile Compatibility*. **Mobile "friendliness" is the most important 'on-page' dial of them all.**

It's critically important that your webpages display properly when viewed on ALL devices but *especially* on mobile devices.

Check your site's functionality on as many devices as possible. That includes Android and iPhone as well as tablets of all sizes.

Using the Chrome browser you can do a quick check by right clicking on a webpage and selecting **Activate the mobile view on this page** as seen in left panel of the image below...

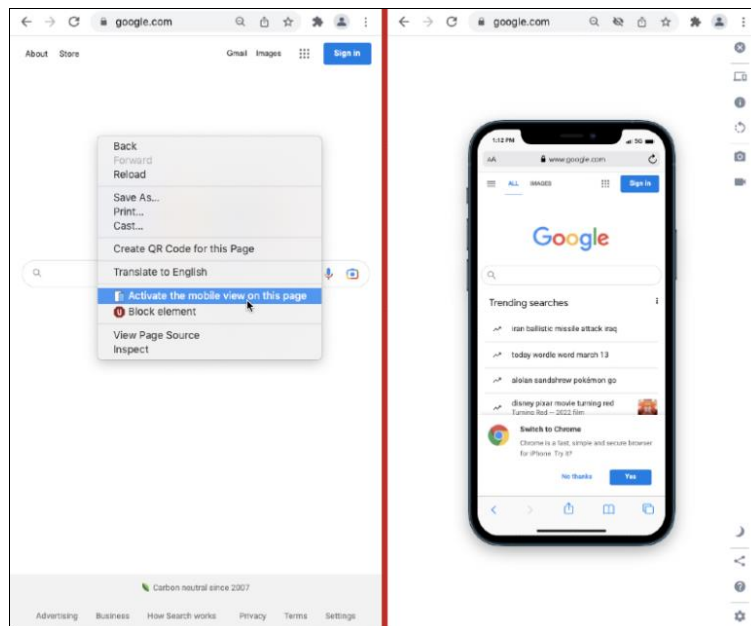


Image Attribution: searchenginebook.com <https://searchenginebook.com/chapter-7>

Once activated, as seen in the right panel of the image above, you have a fully functioning mobile phone simulator which enables you to tap the links and see what you'd see if you were looking at the webpage with a mobile phone.

Page Content Freshness as a Ranking Factor

Query Deserves Freshness (QDF) search results relate to hot topics. Search engines love new content, so newer (i.e., *fresh*) content will have a ranking advantage over older "stale" content.

Therefore it's always to your advantage to **update your best pages** as often as is practical based on the type of content you're presenting. **The more up-to-date your webpages, the better you can expect them to rank.** On the flip side, the reverse is true.

You should do everything in your power to **avoid having stale, out-of-date content** on your site because that will definitely hurt your rankings.

Pay very close attention to dates. Copyright, articles, reviews, and product **pages that reference dates can be a problem** if they indicate anything other than the current year or recent months.

Your credibility and your rankings will suffer if you're touting *the best widget for 2021* if we're already in 2022.

SEARCH-FRIENDLY WEBSITE ARCHITECTURE

XML sitemaps

XML (Extensible Markup Language) is a type of markup language where tags are created to share information. **An XML Sitemap tells the search engines what content you want indexed.**

Theoretically the search engines should find all of your content by following links. But an XML sitemap can help speed up the process and reduce the chance of spiders missing some content that isn't easily indexed. This is especially true for getting content like *images*, *videos*, and *product pages* indexed.

Suggested Reading: This 2019 article-tutorial provides step-by-step directions that are still the same today.

To learn how to create and feed your XML sitemaps, take a look at: [The Ultimate Guide to XML Sitemaps](#)

Robots.txt

There is a lot you can do with a robots.txt file to improve the efficiency of getting your site indexed. We highly recommend that you study and bookmark the following tutorial so that when the time comes to implement the various functions of robots.txt you'll be able to easily create the perfect file that will give you the results you're looking for.

[Robots.txt Primer: Get Your Pages Indexed Faster](#)

[How and When to Use 301 and 302 Redirects](#)

Canonical URL

Canonical simply means *preferred*. Your *Canonical URL* is your **preferred** URL.

Both of these URL's serve visitors your home page's content, Google sees them as two different URLs:

- domain.com
- www.domain.com

That's why **you must choose your preferred URL** — your canonical URL. Unless you tell Google which one is the canonical, they'll guess at it — and they might not guess right.

If you neglect to choose a canonical, and other sites point their links to both versions, your *PageRank* will be diluted because it's divided instead of combined. This will hurt your rankings.

Furthermore, **Google will see two different URLs** with the same content. This creates a potential *duplicate content* problem. They won't know which URL you want indexed — and this puts your site at a disadvantage in the rankings.

The solution is to log into your [Google Search Console](#) account and choose your Canonical URL — it doesn't matter which one you choose. Google doesn't care whether you use the **www** or not, but **you must be consistent**.

Then you simply redirect the traffic from the one you're not using to the one you've chosen to use. In addition, you must do your best to **encourage sites to point their links at your canonical URL**. That way you maximize your link juice (i.e, PageRank).

Source: <https://searchenginebook.com/chapter-7>

OFF-SITE, EXTERNAL RANKING SIGNALS

Opportunities to rank higher by focusing on the following *external* ranking signals which, collectively, **can have a huge impact on the success of your website.**

- External Links
- Anchor Text in External Links
- Link Diversity
- Domain Trust
- Domain Authority
- Geolocation Signals
- Traffic and Quality Signals
- Citations / Reviews
- Social Signals

External link anchor text is more important, ranking-wise, than any of your on-site ranking signals.

Natural incoming link profile will look something like this:

- [Green Canyon Whitewater Rafting Adventures](#)
- [Whitewater Rafting](#)
- [Rafting Adventures](#)
- www.greencanyonrafting.com
- [Green Canyon](#)
- [Green Canyon Adventures](#)
- [Green Canyon Rafting](#)
- [Rafting Green Canyon](#)

If most or all of the links were: [Green Canyon Whitewater Rafting Adventures](#) then Google would believe the beneficiary site (i.e., Green Canyon) was in control of those links and would therefore **discount them or even penalize** the site for having an unnatural incoming link profile.

Google attaches relevance to domain names and LOVES company names and brands.

Link Diversity

If your site has a *variety* of external sites all pointing at your site, with many of the links pointing at sub pages, then your rankings will be helped considerably.

The more diversified your incoming links, the more Google is likely to trust your site. Therefore you should:

- acquire a diversified incoming link profile from a diversified variety of sites.
- make sure your links are coming from a diversified variety of locations.
- encourage those linking to you to vary (diversify) the anchor text whenever possible.
- attempt to diversify the sources and content of those who reference you — social media, news sites, reviews, directories, blog posts, trade articles, etc.,
- diversify the authors and publishers who link to you.

As you can see, the more diversity, the better.

Search engines really like diversified incoming link structure. It fosters trust and is therefore a very strong relevance indicator.

Domain Trust

Domain Trust is a very important element of the ranking algorithm. Your goal should be to acquire links from domains with a high *Trust-rank*. Conversely, you should avoid getting links from sites with a low Trust-rank. Obviously, you need links, but even more important is getting links from the right places.

Linking to bad sites can decrease your own site's trust.

Domain Authority

Domain Authority is somewhat like PageRank, but on a domain-wide level. Signals that contribute to Domain Authority include:

- High Link Diversity
- Rate of Link Acquisition
- Lots of Deep Links to a variety of pages

A domain with high Authority can quickly get a new page highly ranked using only a few internal links. For example, CNN.com can rank a fresh page immediately based on their Trust and Authority.

Traffic Factors and Quality Signals

Google and Bing determine relevancy based on:

- **Time On Site** — The more time a visitor spends on a site.
- **Bounce Rate** — If a searcher clicks a link in the search results but quickly returns from the site (bounces), then Google assumes the result was NOT relevant to the search
- **Click Through Rate (CTR)** — If a particular search result is frequently clicked.
- **Conversion Rates** — If visits consistently lead to conversions (i.e., sales, sign-ups, registrations, etc. as measured by Google Analytics).
- **Return Visitors** — High percentage of visitors return to a page.

Social Signals

Social Media (i.e., Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) can be a very powerful traffic generator and brand building tool. Although Google has made it clear they don't use social signals within their algorithm, evidence shows that increased traffic to a page coming from social media sources does indeed boost a site's overall authority.

Source: <https://searchenginebook.com/chapter-8>

Negative Ranking Signals

As we've discussed throughout this book, there are situations, errors, elements, relationships, and strategies that can work against you, ranking-wise. Collectively, we call them *Negative Ranking Signals*.

The most common Negative Ranking Signals include:

- Broken Videos and Faulty Redirects
- Bad Spelling, Grammar, and Readability
- Hidden text and/or links
- Keyword Stuffing
- Cloaking
- Buying links from link networks/brokers
- Getting links from bad sites
- Linking to low quality or bad sites
- Over-optimized anchor text
- Low-quality content
- Redirecting the user with the intent to mislead
- Server down or connection problems with website

Source: <https://searchenginebook.com/chapter-9>

Link Building

The general rule of thumb is:

If the link is visible it will be taken into account by the search engines unless it is excluded in *robots.txt* or assigned the *nofollow* attribute.

Google can read, index and will likely count links in all sorts of file types like: .html, .swf, .pdf, .ps, .dwf, .bas, .c, .kml, .gpx, .hwp, .java, .xls, .ppt, .docx, .odp, .ods, .odt, .pl, .py, .rtf, .svg, .txt, .css, .ans, .wml, .wap, .xml.

Link locations matter as well. The illustration below maps out the prime locations for your links.

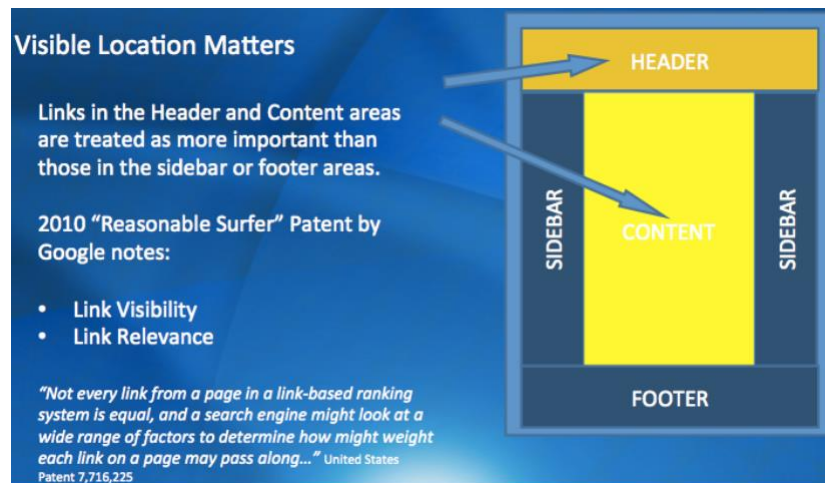


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As the graphic shows, links found within the *Header* and the *Body Content* are assigned more importance than links found in sidebars and footers.

The location of a link within the HTML code of a webpage matters. Specifically, it is **ONLY** the first link to a site that passes PageRank.

The rest of the page's links to the same site, whether they are in a list (as seen below) or scattered throughout the page, usually do not pass PageRank.

```
</div>
<div id="fb-root"></div>
<ul>
<li><a href="http://www.outlawtenfiveracing.com">OT5R Home</a></li>
<li><a href="http://www.outlawtenfiveracing.com/forum">Forum</a></li>
<li><a href="http://www.outlawtenfiveracing.com/race-schedules.html">Race Schedule</a></li>
<li><a href="http://www.outlawtenfiveracing.com/rules.html">Rules</a></li>
<li><a href="http://www.outlawtenfiveracing.com/membership.html">Membership</a></li>
<li><a href="http://www.outlawtenfiveracing.com/points.html">Points</a></li>
<li><a href="http://www.outlawtenfiveracing.com/records.html">Records</a></li>
<li><a href="http://www.outlawtenfiveracing.com/racer-profiles.html">Racer Profiles</a></li>
</ul>
</div>
<div id="wrap">
```

Only the first link matters

After the first link, multiple links to the same site are ignored unless the link includes a hashtag like page.html#name

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As the screenshot above suggests, PageRank will pass to the page listed in the first link.

Based on the various patents that Google and the other engines own, there is every reason to believe that the following **list of factors** either **do** or **soon will** influence the value of outgoing/incoming links in the eyes of the search engines.

FOR INSTANCE:

- **Font Size**
Normal font size looks right while super-tiny font does not. If any link font-size is considerably smaller than the text surrounding it, that link will probably be discounted.
- **Location**
The page location of a link is important. As previously mentioned, links found in **headers** and **body content** are viewed with more importance than links found in sidebars and footers.
- **Position of Link (top/bottom) within a list ()**
You should expect that links found at the top of a bullet list will be the most valuable. The rest may be ignored in terms of PageRank and anchor text.
- **Font Color as compared to background**
If the font color matches the background too closely the link will likely be discounted. This is because the link will be invisible to people and only seen by spiders — a strategy used in the past to spam the search engines.
- **The number of words in anchor text**
Stuffing too many words into your anchor text can make it look unnatural and will likely work against you.
- **Actual words in anchor text**
Over-optimizing with too many targeted keywords can also work against you.
- **How commercial the anchor text is**
Words like *Buy*, *Shop* & *Cheap* tell the search engines that your content is commercial rather than informational and may cause the link to be somewhat devalued.
- **Type of link**
Typically a text link will carry more value than an image link.
- **Aspect Ratio of image link**
If the aspect ratio (the size of the image) looks suspicious, then the value of the image link will be discounted. An example would include a 1 pixel square image that would effectively be invisible to people and seen only by spiders.
- **Nearby word content and topical cluster associated with the link**
The context and topic cluster of the text that the link is associated with can influence the weight given to the link. Topically associated text is good, topically unassociated text is not good.
- **The URL of the linking page**
Having the keyword in the URL of the page that is linking to you can boost the importance of that link.
- **Number of links on the page**
If a page links to you with their only link out, then your page will benefit from 100% of the available link juice (PageRank) being passed. However, if that page also links out to 10 other pages, then your page will receive only about 10% of the available PageRank. The fewer links on the pages that link to you, the better.
- **Content found in specific places on a page**
The content found in the *title* and *headline* tags, as well as the *body content in the upper portion of the document* (i.e., above the fold), helps determine how important an outgoing link will be viewed.
- **User Behavior (Toolbar Data)**
Behavior like bookmarking, revisiting, page sharing, etc. influences the importance assigned to a link. And whether or not people actually click the link, matters.
- **Language**
can also be a factor inasmuch as outgoing/incoming links would be expected to match the language of the page they're pointing toward.
- **Click Rate of Link**
As previously indicated, how often people click a specific link matters. The more the link is clicked, the more important the link.

- **Page Authorship & Social Authority**

Links coming from well known, registered, and socially networked authors are likely to be given more importance than links coming from unregistered, unknown and/or socially unconnected authors.

- **Link acquisition rate is also an important factor.**

Google figures that natural link profiles are built gradually, over time.

- **Remember also that your incoming anchor text must vary** in ways that make your incoming link profile look natural.

- **Anchor text varies naturally, but there are exceptions. Deep links are a sign of quality content.**

Artificial Link Profile	Natural Link Profile
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	Plantronics Pro Plus Headset
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	Plantronics Headsets
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	www.store.com
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	Plantronics Model 575
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	www.store.com/cart/filename.php?id=23&cat=headset
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	www.store.com/cart/filename.php?id=2....cat=headset
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	Headset Discount Warehouse
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	Headset Discount Warehouse
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	Headset Discount Warehouse
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	www.store.com
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	www.store.com
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	www.store.com
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	www.store.com
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	www.store.com
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	www.store.com
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	www.store.com
Plantronics Pro Plus Headset	www.store.com

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Links that point deep into your site's subpages lend the appearance of quality content and help make your incoming link profile look natural.

Be sure to focus on Canonical URL consistency.

The graphic below illustrates how PageRank can be needlessly diluted when using more than one of the many different versions of your home page URL, **even though all of them will land a site visitor on what is *apparently* the same page.**

- **Canonical URLs & Consistency**

PageRank Diluted 7 variations	PageRank Consolidated
http://yoursite.com http://yoursite.com/ http://yoursite.com/index.html http://www.yoursite.com http://www.yoursite.com/ http://www.yoursite.com/index.html http://www.yoursite.com/index.html?trackingcode	http://www.yoursite.com/
	<p>Canonical (best representative URL)</p>

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The graphic above shows SEVEN URL variations of the same page — all of which others could be using to link to you.

The **ONLY** way to avoid such PageRank dilution is to choose one canonical (preferred) URL and see to it that you and others **consistently** link only to your canonical URL.

Your BEST Link Building Strategies should include:

- **Trust-rank and Authority.** Ideally, you want links coming directly from trusted domains. If that is not (yet) possible, then your goal should be to get your links from sites that have links from trusted domains. The closer a site is, link-wise, to a trusted domain, the better. The further away a site is, the less the link is worth.
- **Links from on-topic (semantically related) Authority sites are highly valuable.** If your site sells *sewing equipment* then you want links from popular sites whose topics include everything related to sewing – *sewing instruction, sewing patterns, garment material suppliers*, and so forth.
- **Links coming from so-called *restricted top level domains (TLDs)* tend to carry more trust.** These include educational institution (.edu), governmental institution (.gov), and military organization (.mil) domains.
- **Links coming from high PageRank pages will also help your rankings considerably.** Remember, however that PageRank is only one of many indicators of a page's importance, trust, and authority.
- **Unique Domains vs. Total Volume.** Google favors pages with a fair number of links coming from a wide variety of domains over pages that have lots of links but coming from only a few domains. The more domains that link to you, the higher your site's level of trust.

It's worth mentioning that Bing, however, is not nearly as advanced as Google. They tend to favor more links regardless of where they come from. So, one could say that *Google is more quality oriented* while *Bing seems ore quantity oriented*.

Since Google is the 800lb gorilla and Bing is the 90lb weakling, we recommend that you focus on creating a link profile that caters to Google over Bing.

- **Deep Link Ratio.**

As previously indicated, deep links can dramatically improve your site's ability to rank well. It can also help your site get completely indexed. These are links that are NOT to your home page, but rather to the various pages within your site. It's worth noting that highly successful shopping sites are running upwards of 80% deep link ratios. This means that 80% or more of their incoming links are pointed at subpages.

- **Hyperlocal Links.**

IF your business depends on acquiring local customers within a geographic area, it can be highly beneficial to get links from sites that endorse local businesses. These would include sites like *Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau, Local Trade Associations, Local Directories, Schools, Hotels, Restaurants and Community Action Groups*.

The Four Biggest Mistakes to Avoid in Your Link Building Efforts

1. **Run-of-site links** — Having your incoming link on every page of an external site is BAD! In the eyes of Google, it's a sure sign of a paid-for link. Such run-of-site (ROS) links should be carefully avoided.
2. **Link Farms, Reciprocal Link Networks, Web Rings, Paid Link Networks, and Link Wheels** — aka, *Link Schemes* should be avoided like a leaky boat in a swamp full of alligators.
3. **Linking to low quality sites** (aka, *bad*) **sites** — examples would include topical sites such as *gambling, adult, pharmacy, loan, debt consolidation* — any site that *promotes controversial topics or products or which uses dubious SEO strategies*.
4. **Linking to off-topic sites** — is a bad idea since going off-topic is the antithesis of relevancy. If your site is about *sewing*, you should only link out to sites that are related in some way to the endeavor of sewing. Clothing, garments, patterns, crafts, sewing equipment, sewing lessons, sewing tips and so forth.

But linking out to your *webmaster's design company, your local real estate broker, your brother's vacation rental, or a political action site* is a bad idea since all such sites would be considered off-topic in respects to *sewing*.

But, if ever a situation compels you to link to an off-topic site, be sure to *nofollow* the link.

Link Building Summary

Boiled down to its essence, **link building is a popularity contest within a popularity contest.**

Search engines want to rank the most popular sites at the top of the search results. They also reward the sites that are popular with the most popular sites.

Therefore you must do everything in your power to entice people to LOVE your pages because when they do they will:

- link to it from other webpages
- comment about it on blog posts and forums.
- write reviews, rate products and talk about the brand and product names.
- Like it, Tweet about it, and post Instagram and Pinterest photos and videos of your products or services.

...and the engines use all of these signals to determine the importance of your website and your pages. Therefore it is critical that you make it easy for search engines to "see" how popular your website's pages are.

Source: <https://searchenginebook.com/chapter-10>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lisa Chapman is a seasoned entrepreneur and business consultant, advising SMB owners, nonprofits and political digital marketers. She creates value through Strategic and Business Planning, Financial Forecasts for Funding, as well as Content Marketing, SEO and AI. Since 2005, she has written and ranked SEO'd business content, to engage and convert target audiences, for her own entrepreneurial ventures and for consulting clients. In 2010, Lisa started and authored a **Marketing and Social Media blog** that ranked nationally on Google Page One for the main keyword "marketing." It continually attracted over 1 million page views per month. For **Craigslist Founder Craig Newmark**, Lisa created the social media strategy that launched his philanthropy, **craigconnects.org**.

See client comments: [Lisa Chapman's Endorsements](#)

Lisa's professional awards include Nashville's **Executive of the Year** and **Small Business of the Year** Finalists, as well as **"40 Under 40"** by Nashville Business Journal. She was interviewed by **Katie Couric** on **NBC Today**, and a wide variety of television and radio shows. Lisa has been featured and quoted in **Good Housekeeping, Cosmopolitan and Readers Digest**, plus dozens of city magazines and newspapers. She authored **The Web-Powered Entrepreneur** (2010) and four other books.

[Lisa Chapman's Bio](#)