

Backlinks: The Ultimate Guide

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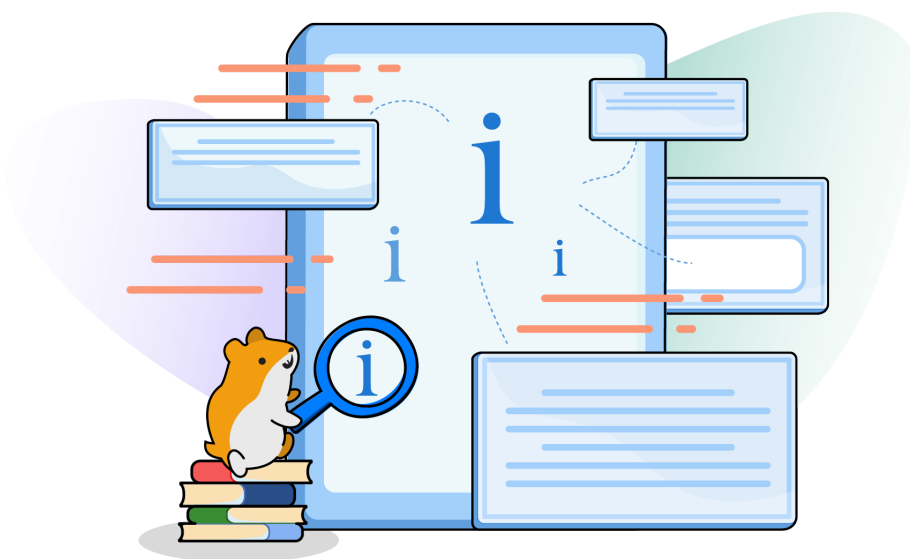
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Backlinks: The Ultimate Guide



Anyone familiar with the history of the development of **modern search engines**, and especially Google, will already know that it is really difficult for us to overstate the importance of backlinks in site rankings. It is one of the three most important factors along with the content on the site and the Rankbrain, BERT and MUM evaluation, if not the most important factor.

So, we wanted to do justice to this vital area of SEO with an ultimate guide that takes you from the history of backlinks, how to build backlinks, to the way Google judges your backlink portfolio, and much more.

We recommend reading the article in its entirety as we've jam-packed it with relevant and useful information, but if you're looking for specific sections, you can use the navigation link below to jump to that section directly. Now, that's out of the way, let's begin!

The History of Backlinks as a Ranking Factor in Search Engines

Backlinks occupy a major place in the development of search engines. Without backlinks as one of the key determinants of ranking, we might not only have not had a vibrant SEO industry today, the Internet might've evolved in a fundamentally different fashion.

This is very clear when you read about the early history of search engines. Much like the dark web today, the Internet was uncharted territory in the beginning of the 90s. Aside from a few established organizations like the governments, mainstream newspapers, and the most famous TV channels, there weren't any established e-commerce, news, listing, social media, etc. and most people mainly either randomly searched up websites or visited the most popular ones that basically got popularized by word of mouth.

During this era, there were a few basic search engines like W3Catalog, Aliweb, and then later on Yahoo and AOL. These search engines didn't pay a lot of credence to the number of backlinks a site had – although their algorithms were wildly divergent and different from each other, they had one thing in common: they had a really hard time filtering out low-quality and spammy websites. Back in those days, you could search the term "The New York Times" and you could be presented with a page full of spam websites with the official NYT website nowhere to be found. This largely made the search engines useless and prevented them from taking off.

Enter Google

Google began in a university dorm with a simple idea: what if we rank Internet sites the same way we quantify the impact of research papers? For not familiar with the scientific method and institutions, this is worth some explanation:

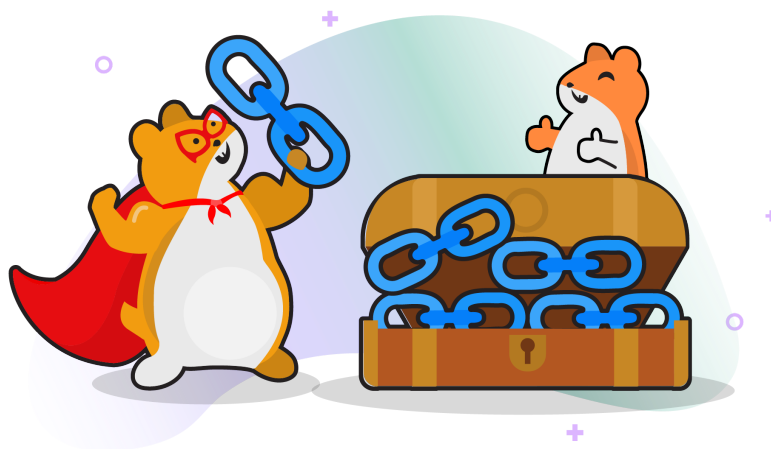
When scientists try to quantify the impact of a research paper and see how influential it is, then you need to make sure you're looking at the number of citations: how many papers have cited this research paper. Next, you look at the quality of those citations, where are those research papers citing this paper are published? Are they trustworthy? You might be able to start seeing the analogy now.

That's exactly where the Google search engine founders took their influence. Their whole search engine algorithm used citations i.e. backlinks as the backbone when deciding how to rank pages. They created crawlers that scoured the net for backlinks to each website and each page and then recursively determine the authority of each linking page, and this is how they primarily ranked sites in their search engine ranking pages (SERPs).

Nowadays, the scene is very different. Other search engines have basically lost all of their market share with Google being the preeminent and dominant search engine for the foreseeable future. Google, itself, has greatly evolved too. Nowadays, its algorithm takes much much more into account than just backlinks from the quality of the content, the technical competence of the site, etc. One thing remains unchanged, however: backlinks still present a significant factor in SERP rankings.

Backlinks Still Present a Significant Factor in SERP Rankings

What are Backlinks? The Basics



If you've spent any significant amount of time learning about search engine optimization and the internal workings of search engines, you've probably heard about backlinks — they are a core part of any SEO strategy. In this section, we'll go over what a backlink is, what are the benefits you'll receive from backlinks, and some common misconceptions people have about the topic.

The Definition of a Backlink and Backlink Profile

Backlinks are outside hyperlinks from other websites linking to your website. A backlink consists of an anchor text, a hyperlink pointing to a specific page on your website, and a dofollow or nofollow status. Backlinks have a lot of key benefits, which is why it is a paramount area of focus.

A website's backlink portfolio (or backlink profile), as its name suggests, is the collection of the backlinks pointing to the site, their quality, properties, etc. A website needs a carefully constructed, balanced link profile if it wants to see the full benefits of having backlinks.

The Benefits of Building a Backlink Profile

We've been mentioning how important backlinks are, and now, it is time to explicitly enumerate the benefits of having a balanced, prolific backlink portfolio:

● **Ranking better on search engine results pages**

Ranking on top of SERPs for relevant keywords will increase the organic traffic your site receives by many folds. Many small and medium-sized businesses will be able to substantially increase their revenue by doing better on SERPs.

● **An increase in organic traffic**

By being linked on other websites, there's a chance their visitors will click on the hyperlink and visit your website. This not increases the referral traffic to your website, but it also helps diversify that traffic and prevent you from being overtly and completely reliant on social media and search engines. This is very important for the longevity for your business because a simple algorithm change might substantially change the nature you receive from search engines, but referral traffic from other websites will be much less impacted.

● **An increase in the quality of the traffic**

You don't want to only increase the volume of organic traffic to your website, but you also want the traffic to be from people who are potentially interested in your website. By ensuring your website is linked on relevant sites close to your own sector and industry, you'll get high-quality traffic from people who are already interested in your website. This traffic is much more valuable than traffic from random people stumbling

● Branding and building authority

on your posts on Facebook, for example.

Does your website have a brand? Does it inspire confidence and trust in your website? Do people view it as a source of authority in your sector?

If the answer is no to any of these questions, a way you can ameliorate the situation is by building high-quality links. Imagine if your website was linked by a mainstream newspaper focusing on your sector? This would instantly boost your authority and credibility immensely. This is why many website owners try to get their websites mentioned and linked on the leading platforms in their sector — one of the main ways to build authority and credibility.

Common Terms and Concepts Necessary to Learn About

To fully understand backlinks, link building strategies, and SEO in general, there are some common terms you need to be familiar with. These terms and concepts are not only used in this guide but are found in SEO articles all over the Internet.

Dofollow & Nofollow Explained

Since search engines started so heavily relying on backlinks to rank websites. Some tags were developed to better communicate the intent of the linking website to the search engine crawlers. There are two tags that are added to the HTML hyperlink tag:

Nofollow: with a nofollow tag, you can signal to search engines that you don't want to signal-boost the website you're linking to. This reduces the significance of the backlink, [but they don't completely disappear](#).

Google, which has been at the forefront of this change, hasn't made the details completely public, sadly. But, we're not completely in the dark. [In a post in late 2019 discussing these changes](#), Google made some explicit remarks about how they'll be looking at 'nofollow' links going forward.

Essentially, Google's algorithms will start looking at these links as 'hints' of potentially valuable websites. Even 'nofollow' links contain valuable information that is important for Google to contextualize to provide better search results for its clients.

Dofollow: a dofollow tag is implicitly applied to each link you include in the body of an article, and you can apply it explicitly too by adding a specific tag. It signifies that you want to signalboost the website you're linking to (this is commonly referred to as 'juice passing' in the SEO world). Websites usually add dofollow to pages they think are trustworthy and informative.

Domain Authority

Search engines needed a way to measure the authority and the relevance of a website in a certain sector/industry, and out of this need Domain Authority was born. Although it is different from search engine to the next, but generally, Domain Authority refers to how your site scores in totality in quality, relevance, and authority in certain sectors/niches.

Google determines domain authority largely through an intricate, ML-based set of algorithms. They are highly complex algorithm with a plethora of inputs — its inner workings are a mystery to this day.

Domain authority matters because a domain with a better authority in your industry linking to you is far more valuable to SERP ranking than a random website with no authority in your industry. If you want to craft a working link building strategy, the domain authority of sites you work with is something you should always keep an eye on.

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How Do Sites Get Backlinks?

Now that we've explored what backlinks are and delved in detail into all the benefits you'll get from a backlink portfolio, it is time to carefully analyze the most prominent ways you typically get backlinks to your websites. This is followed by a section where we explore the bad backlinks specifically and what you can do about them. These two are really important to give you a holistic view of what the backlink portfolio of a typical website looks like, and you can build upon this when it comes time to create a link building strategy.

Effortless Backlinks

This is the category that most people think about when people mention backlinks. It is when people stumble on your content, they find it interesting, and then they decide to link to it from their own website. This doesn't require any additional effort from you, which is why most people count it as "effortless" backlinks.

Although it sounds great in practice, it is very unlikely that you'll get a substantial number of these sorts of backlinks as you're starting out. [According to a recent study, more than 90% of web pages don't get any organic traffic](#) at

all, and this reflects the chances of people stumbling on your content and linking to it.

Software-Created Backlinks

Software-created backlinks, as should be evident by its name, are backlinks to your website from automatically generated web pages created by software programs. This could be for indexing reasons, for archiving reasons, or a way to game Google's algorithms. They all fall under this category.

Back before the first iteration of the [Penguin algorithm update](#), Google's search engine algorithm was quite susceptible to being gamed by software-generated backlinks, and this led to an eradication of millions of computer-generated web pages with the singular purpose of gaming the algorithm. But ever since then, Google has cracked down hard on these, and it is very very difficult for such antics to work anymore.

Media

One of the most important ways you can get your name out there and build great backlinks is by getting featured on a media organization. It is not an easy task, but once you have some news piece featuring you, you can expect substantially improved numbers.

But, before you get featured in the media, you probably have to offer something unique that make it more likely for media organizations to get interested enough in your website to talk about it:

Great product/service

Society at large, and media organizations in particular, greatly appreciate entrepreneurship, and if you were to develop a unique product/service, you'll be much more likely to get media attention.

Interesting and original research/surveys/etc

The same holds equally true for original research/surveys/etc. Interesting pieces of data are high-engagement stories for most media organizations, and this is why you'll quickly find your original research shared and published on medium-sized media organizations.

There is a multitude of ways you can increase your chances of being featured on a media organization, and since it is so valuable, you should definitely look into them:

Software like H/A/R/O (by Cision)

there are excellent software programs like [H/A/R/O \(Help a Reporter Out\) by Cision](#) that allows you to get in touch with reporters and naturally tip them off about your product/research/etc. If you don't have a lot of organic traffic coming to your website, this might be one of the only ways you can get the word out.

Hiring PR specialists

The same holds equally true for original research/surveys/etc. Interesting pieces of data are high-engagement stories for most media organizations, and this is why you'll quickly find your original research shared and published on medium-sized media organizations.

Backlinks from Blogs, Forums, and Business Dictionaries

This is definitely the most common form of backlink your website will see, and it is the least impactful. People linking to your website from blogs, forums, and feature you on business dictionaries — these all fall under this category.

These sort of backlinks have their pros and cons, but overall, you want more of them.

Pros

- It helps you diversify your backlink portfolio and helps it look more natural. If your backlink portfolio is exclusively effortless backlinks or media backlinks, Google algorithms will flag your website for being irregular, and this might cause you trouble. So, a healthy mix of these sorts of backlinks is good.
- The referral traffic you get from these links is something to consider even if it's not substantial. It adds up over time to a considerable amount.

■ The small boost in strength it gives your backlink portfolio might not mean much for established businesses, but new websites will benefit quite a bit from it.

Cons

■ If the patterns you're linked by are deemed unnatural or are on really shady websites, they might cause harm to your backlink portfolio. We'll explore this topic further in the next section.

Backlinks from Wikipedia

This is also one of the most valuable types of backlinks you can get — if an editor at Wikipedia decides your site is a good source to link for a specific topic, then you'll get a great backlink. This is one of the main ways many informative websites rise in prominence.

The problem is that it is very difficult to get such a link, and there's almost no way to influence the process. If you somehow decide to edit Wikipedia yourself and add links to your website, your edits will be reversed in a matter of minutes and you'll probably be IP banned from editing Wikipedia.

Summary

It would be great if you could get backlinks from all the sources, but the truth is that it is much more difficult and time-consuming than it might sound, and most business managers will neither have the time nor expertise necessary to ensure they can maximize their website's performance on all fronts.

This is why if you're really serious about link building and want to see substantial benefits from it, you should use an [outreach link building agency like ours](#) with years of proven success in the field.

Tommy at Husky Hamster

What are Bad Backlinks? What are the Most Prominent Types of Bad Backlinks?

There's a common misconception that almost all backlinks to your website are beneficial, but this is not necessarily true. There are types of links that are actually bad and harm your ranking on SERPs, and you need to be on the lookout for them. Below, you'll find some of the most common ones, but it isn't an exhaustive list.

#1

Backlinks from "Link Farms"

Due to how important and influential backlinks are in SEO, and because a lot of business owners don't have a full understanding of what link building entails, there are a lot of opportunists out there who want to make a quick buck off of tricking business owners.

One of the main ways they do that in SEO is by providing backlinks on link farms, which, essentially, are services that farm backlinks to your website from low-quality websites through various shady means. Not only are they as effective as weight-loss supplements, usually, if Google finds out you're doing it, you'll be manually demoted.

And if you get manually demoted due to this, this could almost mean the end to your website. This is why it is generally considered a very high-risk, low-reward solution that you're better off staying far far away from.

#2

Links from Low-Quality Web Dictionaries

Web dictionaries are places where people list their businesses, services, etc. in the hopes of people finding them. They were really prevalent in the 90s when it was much easier to find a business through a dictionary instead of the badly-functioning search engines.

Nowadays, they are almost all dead, and they've been an easy way for businesses to abuse them to increase backlinks to their websites. This is largely why major search engines like Google consider these backlinks as a negative indicator of the quality of the website.

#3

Links from Websites with Explicit or Illegal Content

This should be self-explanatory, but unless your website is targeted explicitly to the +18 crowd, it'll damage your reputation and ranking if you're being linked from a lot of explicit websites. Google generally considers this a negative signal that shows that your website isn't safe for general use. This is why you should either avoid being linked from such websites or disavow them when you do.

Thankfully, Google has made the disavow process relatively straightforward. You merely need to create a list of the backlinks that are low-quality and you want to disavow, and then you need to use the [disavow tool](#) Google provides and enter the list. Of course, you need to have your website registered with Google to be able to do this, and you can learn more about that on [this Google support page](#).

#4

Links Spammed in User-generated Content

User-generated content like comments, reviews, etc. is content that the site's webmaster generally has little control over, and unless it is explicitly moderated, people can post whatever they want there.

This is why in the early days, many people tried to game the algorithm by going on popular websites and spamming links to their website in the comment section. This loophole has long since been fixed, however.

Nowadays, search bots and algorithms actually specifically look at these places to demote websites that still try to game the system using this trick. So, if there are unnatural patterns about how your website is linked from comment sections, Google and other search engines will take this as a negative signal.

The Most Common Misconceptions about Backlinks

This isn't a simple topic, and there are a lot of common misconceptions out there that people who've researched the topic for weeks and months still fall to. This is why we decided to create this section and populate it with the most common misconceptions regarding backlinks and link building out there. This section will help you clear up some questions you might've long had about the topic.

#1

The Quantity of the Backlinks are More Important than the Quality of the Backlinks

Many people who are just starting to read into backlinks and devise a link building strategy go for quantity over quality. They try to get as many links from as many sites as possible. This is a horrible strategy that is not only inefficient but might also raise suspicion and result in Google taking manual action against you.

The undisputed fact in link building is this: the quality of the backlinks is much more important than the quantity of the backlinks. One link from BBC.com is worth 10 backlinks from average websites. If you want to have a functional link building strategy, you need to give adequate focus to quality — don't worry, we'll be exploring a detailed and comprehensive strategy for link building in the next sections of this article.

#2

All Outbound Links on a Page Provide Equal Value

Now that you've learned that the domain authority and the quality of the website matter when they link to your own site, you might now think that as long as you've chosen the right websites, the way they link to you doesn't matter. This is incorrect.

Aside from the dofollow/nofollow distinction we've already touched on, there are many, many other elements that influence the value of a backlink, most of which are enabled by intricate machine learning algorithms Google operates:

- The context of the backlink - what are the sentences preceding and anteceding it? Are they relevant to the context of the link?

- What's the anchor text of the hyperlink? Is it relevant? Is it misleading? Does it conform to the content of the page linked?

- Even the font size and the font colour can be relevant depending on the context.

#3

Backlinks Need to be From Your Niche Exclusively

Although it is quite important that the backlinks should be from websites that are in your niche, it is neither the only criteria nor is it a deal-breaking criterion. When calculating the value of a backlink, there are a lot of variables that determine it, and the backlink not being on a site not in your niche doesn't bring down its value to zero.

In fact, many SEO experts report that backlinks from general, high-authority websites are more important than backlinks from mediocre websites in your niche.

#4

Backlinks With 'Nofollow' are Irrelevant to SERP Ranking

Although we've touched on this before, it is worth explicitly talking about it in a specific subsection due to how prevalent is the belief, which is not all correct.

There are a lot of reasons why Google, Microsoft, and virtually every other search engine uses backlinks as a criterion for ranking, and some of these reasons are independent of and not influenced by the intentions of the owner of the linking website. Being linked in a body of a paragraph is a positive in Google's eyes whether the webmaster adds nofollow or not.

This doesn't mean that a nofollow and a dofollow link provide the same amount of value, they do not. This only means that a nofollow link also has the potential of

providing a substantial amount of value depending on the circumstances.

Especially [since March 2020](#), when Google explicitly said that they're no longer treating a nofollow attribute as a directive. Now it's only a hint and Google's algorithm will decide whether or not class it as nofollow (disregard), dofollow (fully accept) or something in-between.

What is a Link Building?



Now that you have a relatively robust and comprehensive understanding of what backlinks mean and what are their benefits, now is time to learn about the other side of the coin: link building. This is where you leverage all the knowledge you've acquired in the previous sections to make sure your website gets out ahead.

The Definition of Link Building

The process of trying to get backlinks from other websites is called link building. Link building encompasses a wide array of activities from improving content to

contacting webmasters and much more. In the section below, we'll go over some of the most common methods used in most link building strategies.

Tools Used to Aid in Link Building Efforts

It should be quite evident by now that link building is far from a straightforward task. It includes many moving parts, many complex tasks, and a strategy that will be executed over months. In this ordeal, you need specialized tools that will make your life easier and help you on your link building journey.

In this section, we'll go over some of the most popular tools and SEO suites used by link building experts. It isn't an exhaustive list as there are thousands of tools out there, but these are the most prominent ones that you've likely already heard about.

Ahrefs

Ahrefs is perhaps one of the best-known platforms for SEO research in general and backlink prospecting in particular. It is the definitive source you'll need to go to for backlink news, tips, tricks and tools.

Frankly, if we were to mention all the tools Ahrefs offers, we'll have to dedicate a separate article to it. But, as someone who is interested in presumably interested in building a backlink strategy, there are a few things you need to pay particular attention to:

● **Site explorer**

The site explorer is the key tool that you'll spend most of your time on if you decide to use Ahrefs.

It is a tool that gives you a plethora of key information about any site you want on the internet in a matter of minutes. This information comes in handy both to quantify how your own link building strategy is working and to also check the quality of the

● The key metrics UR, DR, and AR

websites you want to get backlinks from. Both of these are crucial to the success of a link building strategy.

There are a few key metrics on the Site explorer that are particularly important and need to be explored further.

● **URL Rating (UR)** - the URL rating is a logarithmic scale from 1 to 100 that is intended to measure a specific web page's backlink portfolio quality. A UR of 1 is a webpage with a horrible backlink portfolio and a UR of 100 being a page with a perfect backlink portfolio. If you're familiar with Google's PageRank, this metric was developed based on that. The UR is imperative to learn how a specific page is doing and is strongly correlated to its position on SERPs.

● **Domain Rating (DR)** - the DR rating is similar to the UR rating in that it is also a logarithmic scale from 1 to 100 intended to assess the strength of backlink profiles. The only key difference is that, as its name suggests, it is for the whole domain instead of being for just a single page. It is a great indicator to get an overview of how the site is doing overall.

● **Ahrefs Rating (AR)** - this metric is quite different from the first two, and it is useful to give you an overall perspective of how a website is performing. It is an ordinal ranking of websites by their overall backlink portfolio strength with Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube occupying the first three ranks.

SEMRush

How do you know a website is influential? Worthy of prospecting backlinks from it? How do you determine its referral traffic potential? These are all really important questions you need to ask yourself and be able to answer during crucial stages of your link building effort.

Sadly, the questions are impossible to answer without a specialized tool like SEMRush. The tools SEMRush provide are really influential and popular in the world of prospecting, and it is the ideal choice for many agencies out there.

Pitchbox

There is a plethora of outreach software, and everyone has their favourite, but Pitchbox comes out on top due to the quality of the software, the flexibility when constructing emails, and much more — You should realize that email outreach software is going to be necessary as you expand your activity, and Pitchbox is going to be one of the best candidates.

Pitching itself can be incredibly difficult. When you're trying to deal with other webmasters and ensure you get backlinks to your website, you'll need to send tens or hundreds of emails each day to prospect backlinks. Without specialized software that helps you send emails quickly, create editable templates, and add a simple personalized touch to each mail, your task will be nigh impossible.

Small SEO Tools

This platform offers the preeminent collection of free SEO tools online, and while they don't reach paid tools in either functionality or quality, they're a necessary tool in the repertoire of anyone who doesn't have a large budget.

It includes basic tools to check the quality of a website's backlink portfolio, it has tools to help you detect plagiarism and prevent it before a piece gets published, and it has tools that help you detect broken backlinks on your website. In other words, it has a collection of really useful and important tools, and you should definitely check them out.

How Does Google Determine the Quality of Your Link Profile?

The process by which Google determines the quality of your backlink portfolio, which subsequently massively influences your ranking on SERPs, is incredibly complicated. Below, we'll dive into the most paramount indicators that we're sure influence how Google determines the quality of a backlink portfolio:

● **A number of backlinks within a certain timeframe**

The leading indicator that determines the quality of your backlink portfolio is the raw number of links that point to your website during a specific timeframe.

Although not all links are created equal, the raw number alone is quite a substantial consideration.

You just have to keep in mind that after a certain period passes, the value of a backlink slowly decreases. So, if you want to keep the value of your backlink portfolio as high as possible, you need a constant stream of backlinks.

● **Authority and relevance of the backlinks**

As we've reiterated, not all backlinks are created equal, and you'll be committing a fatal strategic flaw if you pretend they are during your link building efforts.

The domain authority (best measured by Domain Rating - the aforementioned metric by Ahrefs) of the site linking to your website and the relevance between the page that hosts the link and the page that the link points to are both highly relevant when Google determines the quality of your backlink portfolio.

● The anchor

The anchor text, the anchor link, and the content around the anchor all have a non-zero impact on how much value Google gives to every individual backlink, which acclimates in having quite a substantial effect on your overall backlink profile. You need to have a balance between brand mentions, specific keywords, general keywords in the anchor text so as to not raise Google's suspicion and make your backlink portfolio look unnatural.

● RD/DR ratio

This ratio is important to learn the overall quality of the links pointing to your website. The RD (referring domains) metric is an ordinal of the total backlinks pointing to your website, and we've discussed DR (domain rating) in the previous section. If the RD is very in proportion to the DR, this means that there are a lot of websites pointing to your site, but the links are generally low quality. When measuring this ratio, you have to remember that **DR is a logarithmic measure** while **RD is an ordinal measure**, so it is easy to come away with the wrong perception. For example, if you have 500 referring domains and a DR of only just 23, this means that you need to look into improving the quality of the backlinks. However, if you have 500 referring domains but have a DR of 80, this means you're doing really well even if the RD/DR ratio is lower.

● **RD/ranked organic keywords**

Ranked organic keywords is the number of keywords you organically rank for on the top 100 positions of SERPs.

When the number of ranked organic keywords increases, it is a very good indicator that your link building efforts are working. So, if you have a low RD/ranked organic keywords number, this means that the backlinks have more or less been useless, and it is time to pivot, tweak, and change your strategy so it can be more effective.

● **Organic traffic**

Although this isn't an indicator Google uses to determine the quality of the backlink portfolio, it is an important indicator to use to see how Google perceives your website and its backlink profile.

If your website is receiving almost no organic traffic despite months of link building efforts, you're either doing something seriously wrong in your strategy or you've been blacklisted by Google. Thankfully, both situations are fixable.

The Most Common Methods of Link Building

Over the years, SEO experts have come up with a lot of methods to help them with link building, and it is impossible to give a complete list of all the methods that are being employed, so we've selected some of the most prominent ones below. A good link building strategy will build a comprehensive approach including all the methods below and much more.

#1

Writing Content that is More Likely to be Linked

One of the most straightforward ways of ensuring you get more backlinks is by building something that other people are likely to link to. This is a well researched subject in SEO, and the question of “what type of content gets the most backlinks?” is someone every SEO expert has asked himself.

The answer is complicated as the answer would be highly sector and industry specific. Things that work in the tech sector might not work equally well in the catering sector. This is why it is recommended to do some field research and carefully track the relevant metrics to see what works and what doesn't. Nevertheless, there are a few pointers that generally holds:

- **Include graphics and infographics:** one of the easiest ways of making your content easily digestible and linkable is through including descriptive and attractive images and infographics in the content. Research has clearly shown that this is quite an effective method of increasing the number of backlinks to your pages.

- **Professional website structure:** the website structure and design are two of the key elements that determine what perception individuals have of your website. No matter how informative and original is the content on your website, without a proper, stylish website structure, you'll have a very difficult time acquiring backlinks.

- **Informative content:** by ensuring the content is informative and interesting, you can increase the likelihood of it being linked. This is self-evident and doesn't really need much explanation.

- **Original research:** you can find almost anything on the Internet with relative ease, barring one thing, and that's original research. If you have the resources. both monetarily and temporally, to

conduct original research and publish it, you'll have a leg up on your competitors. Original research is much more likely to be linked to.

#2

Reaching Out and Trying to Get Your Website Noticed

Putting out excellent content is not enough to get noticed – people need to stumble on your website and see the content for any strategy to work. This is why you need to reach out to relevant people and try to get your content noticed.

How and who to reach out to are the two preeminent questions here, and there is a lot of literature written on the subject, but again, there are some outlines that you would probably need to stay in if you want to be successful:

● **Who to reach out to? For most businesses, reaching out to medium-sized blogs and prominent figures in the industry is the best idea. Large blogs or multimillion businesses usually don't respond nor care when you try to contact them, and really small websites with almost no authority aren't worth your time. This is why you need to find a happy medium between the two.**

● How to reach out? Reaching out and persuading people to check out your website and link to it is an art, and it can be really hard to get the tone, the wording, and the message right on your first few tries. You need to create a few templates and test their efficacy to see what maximizes responses and success

#3

Starting a Blog

If you're serious about link building, you almost always need to create a blog for your website — it has some really prominent benefits that you can't seriously afford to do without:

- **Helps create a steady stream of linkable content:** If you've run a website for a considerable amount of time, you understand how difficult it is to naturally add content to the main sections of the website. You have very limited leeway to naturally add content. This all changes when you add a blog to your website. It is a great way to naturally add new content to the website without needing to adhere to the strict standards and subjects that are the focus of your website. You can naturally explore adjacent hot-button topics.

- Relatively isolates link building activities from main business activities: It is really important to separate your main business activities from your link building activities. This is because the content and their purpose quite diverge for these two goals. When you're building content and landing pages for business reasons, you are trying to be direct and straightforward and ensure you convert as many people as possible. Most of the content must be directly related to your services and products. When you're building content for link building reasons, as we've mentioned before, you'll be way less direct, include more information and research, and diverge quite a lot from the main themes of your business if it means you'll get more backlinks. This is why creating a blog for your link building purposes is such a great idea.

#4

Share Your Expertise and Write Guest Posts

You need to offer some incentive to other businesses, websites, and industry leaders to host links to your website, and one of the best incentivizes that gets great response rates is guest posting.

A lot of businesses would love to jump at the chance of hosting informative and interesting content if given the option, and they're happy to include a do-follow backlink to your website as compensation.

If you have a flair for writing and have amassed considerable expertise and knowledge over the years you're confident in sharing, guest posting is one of the best ways to increase your visibility on the Internet and receive a bunch of high-quality backlinks.

Common Misconceptions About Link Building

#1

Getting the Link Building Strategy Right Guarantees Success

Due to some SEO specialists and agencies recklessly overhyping it, there is a substantial subset of SEO hobbyists who think they will be all set and achieve all their goals by focusing solely on link building. This is also wrong.

Search engine optimization is a complex process with a lot

of moving parts, and link building is only a single, if important, piece of the puzzle. In fact, link building will achieve maximum results when it is used in conjunction with other SEO techniques from on-site to external optimizations.

#2

After You Craft a Link Building Strategy, You Don't Need to Tweak and Change It Often

Many businesses imagine that after performing some preliminary research and constructing a link building strategy, their job is largely done and they don't need to revise and change it, and this is wrong.

The SEO world is a fast-changing world where the major search engines update, tweak, and change their ranking algorithms at least once a year. This often also means changes to how search engine algorithms treat backlinks. When that happens, you need to be prepared to make the necessary adjustments to your strategy to maximize the results.

Miscellaneous Link Building/Outreach Methods

Link building and outreaching have been an integral part of search engine optimization since the sector came into existence, and during this considerable period of more than two decades, a lot of link building strategies have been created – some of them more unorthodox than others.

Although we went over some of the most common methods in the link building section, it is worth learning about some of the unorthodox ones and their potential. This helps you be better informed, avoid being hoodwinked by fancy promises about

“fresh new link building methods” that have been around for years, and learn some methods that more niche uses.

#1

Unlinked Brand Mentions

Although this was neither possible computationally nor software-wise just 2 decades ago, nowadays, even if your brand is mentioned unlinked, depending on the website's DR, this could be a considerable boost to your website's standing with Google. In fact, a healthy portfolio will include a decent number of unlinked brand mentions, ideally.

Google decides it is an unlinked brand mention by the content on the page, the context surrounding the brand mention, and through this, they can determine brand mentions with a very reasonable degree of accuracy.

This is why it might be a decent idea to reach out to blogs and websites with high DRs and negotiate an unlinked brand mention in some context-sensitive places. It is usually easier to get compared to a do-follow link to a landing page of your website, so it might be a viable strategy to some people.

#2

Podcasts and Videos

Written content is not the only form of content on the Internet, and it is exceedingly becoming a less important type of content on the Internet. Podcast and video content both have exceedingly good interactions, receive many impressions and are becoming useful in link building strategies, and this is in two ways: and websites with high DRs and negotiate an unlinked brand mention in some context-sensitive places. It is usually easier to get compared to a do-follow link to a landing page of your website, so it might be a viable strategy to some people.

● **Using podcasts and videos for natural link building: numerous studies have shown that podcasts and videos get more clicks, are viewed**

longer, and generate more backlinks than normal, text-only landing pages. This means if you can make it work, you might be able to increase the number of natural backlinks to your website, and this could prove substantial if you can create a schedule for these releases and collaborate with other people.

● Adding links to your own podcasts and videos: but natural backlinks from others isn't the only way you can use podcasts and videos, however. You can also use the releases to add backlinks back to your own website and various landing pages if you're going to release the podcasts and videos on other platforms. This is quite common and quite beneficial as well. Although, you need to be careful not to spam content and your own links, which might make your link portfolio look bad.

These two link building opportunities in tandem often make podcasts and videos quite an attractive choice for many webmasters. The only major downside is that the creation of podcasts and videos are much costlier than traditional landing pages, and you need to make sure you're getting your money's worth before investing in them heavily.

#3

Exclusive Content

If you get exclusive rights to a piece of content be it video, audio, etc., and it was something that was interesting to a lot of people and provided a lot of value, this means that the only way people can get access to the content is by coming to your site, and all blogs, webmasters, etc. will need to link to your website when they reference the piece of content.

If you actually pull this off, it could be a huge boon to your website and increase your organic traffic and backlink portfolio's strength substantially. The problem is that it is

really hard to think of something original and interesting enough to warrant such a reaction, and it is even harder to ensure its exclusivity on the Internet. You need to be really careful with how you approach things if you want to employ this strategy.

#4

The Skyscraper Technique

One of the classic techniques in link building which some argue is already past its expiry date. The skyscraper technique is a way to take out many of the unknown variables of traditional content building and ensuring more consistent results.

The technique includes searching for already popular topics in your website's domain or closely related to it, closely following how other businesses/webmasters have tackled the topic, and then creating similar content and trying to provide additional value by including more data, infographics, etc.

The technique was very successful for a while because it removed many uncertainties around creating new content:

● **You already know there is demand for the content: when you're looking up popular topics specifically, you already know that there's huge readership and demand for the content, this is why it is popular. So, instead of tackling a new topic with unknown demand, you're tackling one with an established/continuous readerbase. The rewards are lower, but risks are lower as well.**

● You already know there's ranking potential: by looking into what's popular on search engines, you already know that there's huge ranking potential for specific keywords with a lot of traffic. So, it becomes purely a game of numbers trying to outrank the other websites on the SERP.

This all sounds good, but due to updates to the Google algorithm, this technique has become less and less effective over time.

#5

Tools

SEO and link building is becoming a multibillion-dollar industry, and there are a plethora of tools and services out there that try to cater to this market. This is really good news for people who are familiar with the industry and know the best tools out there. Sadly, there are a lot of illegitimate tools that are not only useless but might very well harm your standing with Google and other search engines as well.

Although it is impossible to create solid rules to help you learn the quality of the tools out there, there are some helpful guidelines that will help you distinguish legit tools from fake/harmful tools 90% of the time:

- **Beneficial tools: tools that are usually used for link building are ones that aren't directly responsible for the links, but they're complementary tools that make the process easier. We've already mentioned a few from Ahrefs to SEMRush. Another prominent tool that could be the backbone of brand building in your business and help you secure higher quality links would be Brand 24, which is a highly versatile tool that allows you to manage almost everything about your brand.**

- Harmful tools: harmful tools, as we've lightly touched on before, are tools that somehow directly generate backlinks for you in one way or another. These tools promise you easy fixes and quick results that almost never pan out. These tools might've worked in the early 2000s when the search engine algorithms were much less sophisticated, but they're virtually useless nowadays and put you under the scrutiny of Google and might even endanger direct manual penalties against your website.

How Husky Hamster does Outreach Link Building?

Now that you've learned quite a substantial amount about link building, what would make you want to sign up with us instead of trying to create a link building strategy on your own? This is a very valid question, and we believe we have a few compelling answers for you.

#1

Years of Experience

We have a professional team with years of experience working on SEO, and as with most other fields, this experience has given us valuable insight into how link building works in practice and what approaches are the most effective.

We know what to expect from Google, how to handle the algorithm updates, how to ensure a consistently high-quality backlink portfolio, and much more – and we have tens of testimonials to prove it.

#2

Working Relationships with Top Bloggers and Industry Leaders

When trying to get your website out there, increase organic traffic, and create a substantial stream of referral traffic, who you know and can tap for help can make all the difference in the world. Most business owners don't have any content to the top bloggers, influencers, and industry leaders in their field.

This is not true for Husky Hamster though. Over the years, we've built great relationships with a large number of influential bloggers and industry leaders, and you're more than happy to put those connections to use in the service

of our clients.

#3

Access to the best SEO Tools for the Job

We've touched on some of the tools necessary for you to be able to implement a functional link building strategy, and subscriptions to access the full features of these tools aren't cheap. The subscriptions alone might cost you more than 1K each month, this is not to mention how much the link building efforts will cost you.

This is clearly cost-prohibitive, and the much better approach is to hire a professional agency like Husky Hamster that has access to the best tools in the industry. This gives us access to more information, better metrics, and more options which would allow us to build highly effective strategies that are simply not possible without these tools.

#4

High-Quality Content Written by Experienced Writers

The quality of the content on your website and on the blog associated with it not only determine conversion rates and revenues directly, but they are also highly influential when it comes to the number of backlinks you'll get. Succinctly written content structured into readable paragraphs will do wonders for your business.

This is another area where we shine here at Husky Hamster. We have a team of qualified writers with years of experience in the SEO industry capable of producing highly-engaging content in a variety of topics.

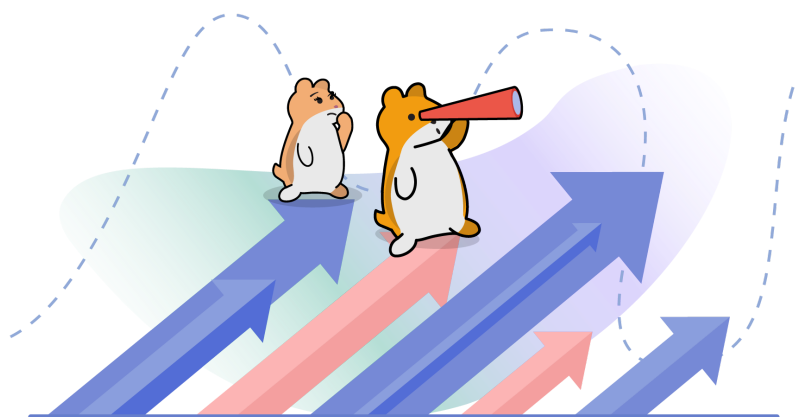
#5

Pros at Pitching and Negotiations

Pitching your content can be incredibly difficult, and negotiating terms isn't any easier either. You need considerable experience before you can craft the perfect pitches that will get decent positive response rates and help you get your content out there and build links.

This is why you need the experience of professionals who've done the process hundreds of times with great success, and they can negotiate great terms for you with leading blogs and industry leaders.

The Future of Link Building



While it is important to keep up to date with current happenings in the SEO world, and especially link building news, you have to always keep something in mind in the SEO industry: you shouldn't miss the forest for the trees. Link building is a long-term project that will consume a considerable amount of time, and you'll probably engage in it for years, which is why it is very important to keep the long trends in link building in mind without sacrificing current success.

This is why we've compiled a list of future trends that we're sure will hold in the medium term. Sadly, the SEO industry is too volatile and new to predict long-term

trends with any reasonable accuracy, and this is a problem for all tech sectors. Thankfully, even with all this uncertainty, the overwhelming advantages of link building makes it worth it:

#1

Link Building will Continue to Matter

This is one of the major things that any SEO expert can state with near absolute certainty. Time and time again, backlinks have proven themselves to be one of the best ways to measure the quality of a website, and every major search engine uses algorithms that have backlinks at their core. Most of the recent changes we've seen to the algorithms have not been about reducing reliance on backlinks, but they have largely been aimed at preventing people gaming the system, abuse, etc.

This is why link building will continue to be one of the most reliable ways you can increase visibility, ensure success on SERPs, and build a brand online. Careful, however, while almost everyone agrees link building will continue to be relevant for a long time to come, even experts and industry insiders often disagree what links will be relevant, how site owners will be able to get them, etc. Sadly, knowing backlinks will be relevant doesn't tell us a lot about which link building approaches we should be taking to future-proof our efforts.

#2

Google will Continue to Improve at Understand Natural Language – This has a Multitude of Implications

The improvements in AI have been absolutely astonishing. In the span of two decades, we went from AI being a curiosity field a few researchers spend time on to a worldwide phenomenon that is rapidly changing our

societies, our business environments, and our sciences: we're today relying on AI for our browsing, our music, our movie recommendations, and eventually, we'll be relying on it for medical diagnoses and transportation.

In this backdrop, there is one specific field of AI that has been seeing even more rapid advances, and it is one that's at the core of everything search engines are interested in — natural language processing. Nowadays, machine translation is everywhere and almost instantaneous, chatbots are being rapidly deployed on websites, and computers are closer than ever to fully understand natural human languages.

If you've been keeping up with SEO, you know that AI has been at the forefront of the changes that the field has seen in recent years. With every algorithm update, every change, and every new feature, we see AI's role in crafting SERPs expand, and this has an impact on a multitude of factors.

#2.1

Sentiment Analysis Will Take a More Prominent Role

Sentiment analysis has been one of the major changes Google has made to their algorithm in recent years. When someone types a query into Google, they do so with a specific intent be it informational, commercial, etc.

To maximize the usefulness of the results, Google has decided to show results that comport with the sentiment of the query.

As AI algorithms get better at understanding human language, they'll be able to detect the sentiment of texts better, which means that companies like Google will be able to more reliably rely on it.

What does this mean for your website when you're targeting a certain keyword/building a landing page/creating a blog post?

It means that you need to be paying extra attention to the

sentiment you display in your articles, and you need to further make sure this sentiment matches with the sentiment of the people who look up the specific keywords you're targeting. This is already one of the most influential aspects of content creation already, and it is only going to be more important going forward.

#2.II

The Quality of the Content Will be More Accurately Assessed and Contextualized

Just ten years ago, you could get an article with barren content, a plethora of grammar mistakes, and plagiarized paragraphs to the top of the Google search results with relative ease. This has changed substantially, however.

Nowadays, you need to ensure your text is not plagiarized or very similar to another text on the web, you need to make sure your text doesn't have glaring grammatical mistakes and doesn't sound unnatural, and you need to make sure you have enough content on the web page to provide value for visitors. Only with the interaction of all these elements will you be able to be reasonably sure your content will rank high for competitive keywords.

This trend is expected to continue for the medium-term with content becoming more relevant, and this is largely thanks to the AI algorithms that is enabling Google to more accurately assess the quality of the content on web pages. If you're going to rely on content to propel your pages to the top of SERPs, you need to pay special attention to the quality of the content.

#2.III

Non-textual Content Will be Better Recognized and More Effective

One of the main impediments in front of the adoption of non-textual elements on websites over the years has been the fact that search engines usually don't recognize them

correctly, hence, you won't see a direct advantage when you include infographics, videos, etc. no matter how hard you worked on them. This is why it is universal advice to include alt-texts with every image you include on your website to help Google recognize the images and make your website more accessible.

Thankfully, this is about to change for the better. Algorithms are making huge strides in recognizing the content and quality of image and video contents. Nowadays, your image might show up on Google images for relevant searches without even adding alt-text or an apt name, and this is thanks to the image recognition algorithms they've adopted over the years.

This means that going forward, it'll make sense to invest more in non-textual elements on the webpage. This could be graphs, infographics, videos, audio, etc., and you can expect these elements to become more prominent as the AI algorithms improve and get better at recognizing these elements.

#2.IV

Voice Searches Will Keep Getting More Influential

Voice recognition was almost non-existent just 10 years ago, and Siri was just a novelty people mostly had fun with when it came out, but things have been rapidly changing in the last five years. With the release of smart speakers like Alexa, a plethora of homes are now suddenly using voice search for a variety of tasks.

The improvements of AI voice recognition are already almost perfect, and they're going to get better in the future. This coupled with the proliferation of smart devices in most homes has laid the groundwork for an exponential increase in traffic from voice searches, and this trend is expected to continue for the medium term.

Thankfully, most companies have not caught on yet and don't fully utilize their platforms to target voice searches, which makes it less competitive and easier to rank for. Sadly, there is always a downside, and the downside here

is that voice searches are kind of unique, and the optimizations you need to make to your website are unique to it as well. This means it requires a considerable time investment. algorithms they've adopted over the years.

This means that going forward, it'll make sense to invest more in non-textual elements on the webpage. This could be graphs, infographics, videos, audio, etc., and you can expect these elements to become more prominent as the AI algorithms improve and get better at recognizing these elements.

#3

Search Engines will Continue to Get Smarter at Recognizing Actors Trying to Game the System

We've already touched on the evolution of tools trying to game search engines briefly — but it is worth reiterating as it is one of the few guaranteed trends in the world of backlink building in the coming years.

Search engines use algorithms that are getting more complex, smarter, and more adaptive to the changing nature of the web — Google's search engine is one of its biggest assets that rakes in billions of dollars each year, and any widespread gaming of its algorithms would cause immeasurable economic damage to the company. Google's survival and growth depends on squashing all the undesirable, disreputable methods people use to try to get their websites to rank higher.

This means that you should expect the crackdowns to continue and be more effective going forward. Especially with the advent of big data, irregular activities can be easily detected, and this is already used in the banking sector to block suspicious transactions. This is going to carry over into the search engines in full force in the next few years, and you can expect this to carry on for the medium term as long as Google's revenue model remains the same.

in recent years. With every algorithm update, every change, and every new feature, we see AI's role in crafting SERPs expand, and this has an impact on a multitude of factors.



Thank you for
downloading & reading
our e-book

If you have any feedback
Please **contact us!**

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