

Link Building for SEO...

When it comes to Search Engine Optimization (SEO), there is an abundance of information available. For the SEO novice, there is everything from free on-line tutorials to endless articles chalked full of SEO tips and advice. But, when you go to research link building the information seems scattered, contradictory and sometimes even useless. When reading up on link building, make sure your advice is coming from a trusted source that is well known in the SEO community!

Here are 7 things our expert link building team wants you to know about links for SEO:

- ✓ **Type.** A healthy backlink portfolio is diverse and consists of multiple link types. Google designed it's algorithm around links as it's the most natural way to allow the web to essentially "vote" for each other. Since each link counts as a vote, it's important to ensure your votes look as natural and organic as possible. If your site was recognizably becoming an authority in your space, naturally all kinds of different people and different sites would talk about and link back to you. This is why diversity is so key. If 100% of the sites linking to you were all higher PR, 100% relevant sites, it would actually look unnatural to the engines and potentially create a "red flag". In order to avoid looking "paid for", we use a mix of link types to ensure your campaign appears as natural as possible. Link reports may include: Articles, Press Releases, Directories, Social Bookmarks, blogs, etc. Some links may be a higher quality than others, but ultimately it's the mix of link types together that ensure your campaign is effective.
- ✓ **Anchor Text.** Staying in line with diversity for an organic campaign within link types, the same can be said for the anchor text used to create the links. If various people/sites were to naturally link to you, why would they all use the same anchor text? Instead, by using multiple keywords within the link building efforts, we are ensuring your links appear as natural as possible. From time to time you may notice a slight variation of a keyword phrase, a direct URL link or even something like "click here" in place of your target keyword phrases. The links help the entire campaign appear more natural while still passing "link juice" to your site.
- ✓ **Relevancy.** Over the years relevancy has been a huge topic of conversation within the SEO community. How important is it to have "relevant" links? In our experience relevancy is all about the site audience and NOT the site topic(s). What's important is that the links appear relevant to the users of the site and therefore the search engine can see the purpose of the link. In fact, blogs, directories new sites and social media can virtually talk about anything and everything. Having a mix of links from strong, relevant sites and general family friendly sites is, again, the most natural and therefore effective approach.
- ✓ **Page Rank (PR).** Google uses a scale from 0-10 to display their importance of the website/page you are viewing on the Google toolbar. Many people confuse toolbar PR with actual PR. In link building it's been said that the higher the PR, the more valuable the link. However, many are simply looking at Google toolbar PR and assuming that is the value of the site, which is simply not the case. Actual PR is made up of several criteria including, but not limited to: the age of the domain, the number of outbound links on that page, daily hits and time on site, number of indexed pages, number of incoming indexed links, etc. By ensuring we are building links on pages that we know cache, index and remain "SEO friendly" we are giving you a much more effective and powerful link building campaign. If we simply relied on toolbar PR, we would be missing out on opportunities to get you powerful links on pages that actually pass link juice – even if the toolbar doesn't give the site a "high" ranking.
- ✓ **Deep Linking.** When focusing on specific keywords within link building, we link to the best corresponding page within the site. This may be the homepage or a subpage within your site that has been optimized for that particular term. We do this because we want to ensure that the best converting page is what ranks the highest in the search engine result pages. However, as important as link are, content is still king! If you have pages within your site that Google hasn't indexed, you aren't getting credit for the content on those pages! If you want to really be seen as an authority on the subject you are trying to rank for, you need to have content to support your efforts! To ensure all content is getting indexed by the engines, you need to "deep link" into each page within your site.
- ✓ **Age.** In order to combat manipulation of the search engines by link "spammers", in recent years Google placed more weight on the age of a link. Link age is key when evaluating the effectiveness of a particular link campaign. Because Google needs to crawl a link multiple times before giving it credibility, as a general rule, we like to give new links at least 3-6 months to fully index – some new links can take as long as a year to show "true results". As new links continue to age with time, they actually grow in authority and pass more value to your site. The value that age provides cannot be "faked", so it's important to start now and then be patient while you give your new links the appropriate amount of time to achieve full indexing and give your site that boost your looking for.
- ✓ **Inconsistencies.** Google is all about trust, and trust comes with consistency and time. Any new link building campaign will alert Google – this is what we want to happen. However, if the new link building efforts do not continue over a period of time and create a trend, Google may throw up a red flag and actually place a hold on your new links. It looks suspicious to Google when they suddenly see a spike in incoming links followed by a decrease or even nothing at all. Just as link age plays a role, it's also important to continue a new campaign for several months in order for Google to "trust" the links are natural and organic and therefore give your site full credibility. Inconsistencies can actually harm your rankings and even make it harder for you to rank again in the future. If you are struggling with budget concerns and feel as though you can't continue, it's best to, at very least, continue with some sort of smaller on-going "maintenance plan", this way you will maintain visibility and link trend trust and when you are ready to ramp things up again, you won't have to deal with "mistrust" issues.