

#1 Link building – Role of clients

Links? Why the hell is everyone talking about links all the time?

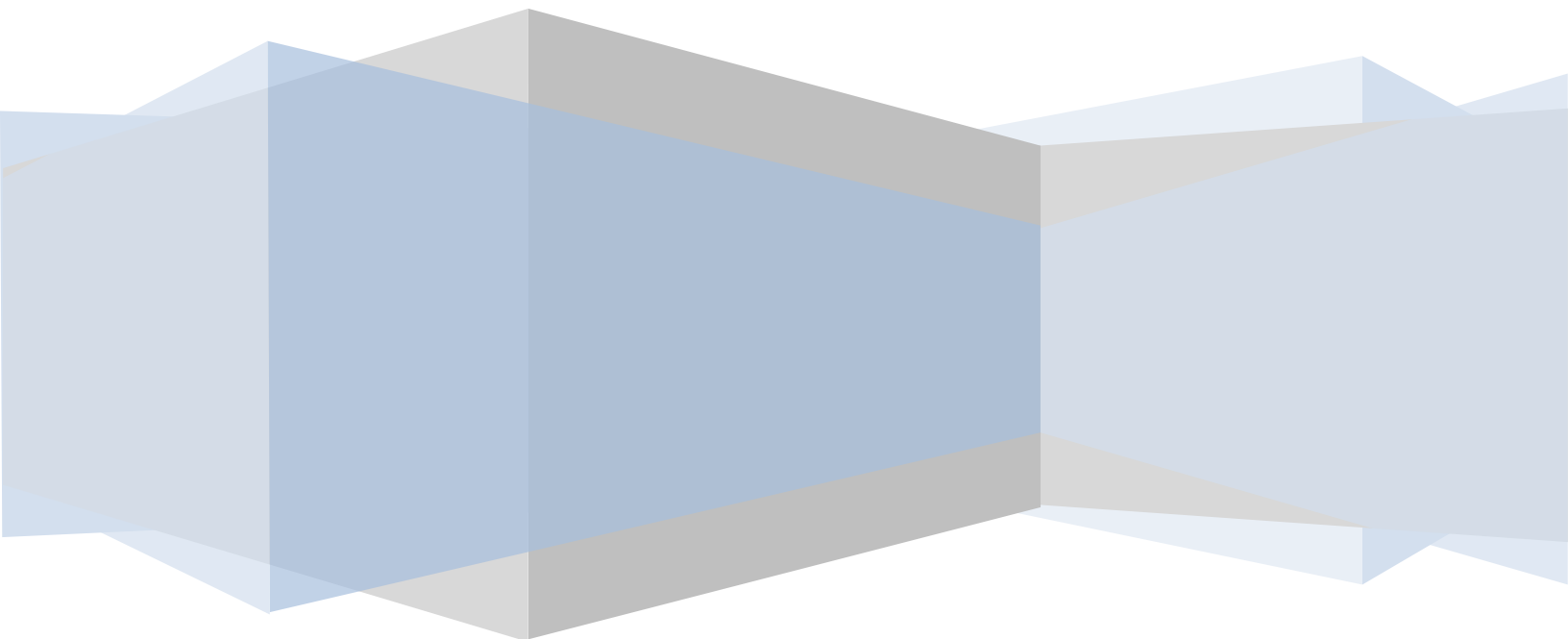
- As we know that most of us start our web quest with a search engine.
- We click the first few sites and do business with them.
- Search Algorithms considers links (incoming or inbound links) as a very major and important factor while ranking the websites.

So in short, to get visitors, a site must rank well in search engine and to rank well in search engine, a site must get good quality links. SO LINKS ARE IMPORTANT.

Be web business educated

[Weekly Educative series – VII]

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[10th Nov 2008]



Why does Search Engine value links?

Search Engines considers various factors like

- Onpage factors (Where all a keyphrase appears on the page including title, text, outgoing links, h1, h2 tags etc),
- User experience (Whether people stick to your website etc) and
- Offpage factors (Who links to you? How they link? When they link? Etc).

In the early days of Search Engines, onpage factors played a major role but soon the SEO crowd started manipulating the text by stuffing the pages with keywords. This got changed when Larry Page (Google founder) worked on a new algorithm to rank websites on the basis of who links to the site (The famous Page Rank Algo). This showed amazing results and was less prone to manipulation (hopefully). Thereafter links played a very important role in Search Engine Algorithms. Each vote is counted a vote. Let's take a small example to make it clearer:

Let's say we have 3 sites: Tomcar.com Dickcar.com and Harrycar.com and now Google needs to rank these three websites. Keep all other factors constant, let's see how links are going to play a role:

- **Tomcar.com** is linked from usatoday.com/cars.html and bluewidgets.com
Link Value = (Valueofsite1xValueofthepage1 + Valueofsite2xValueofthepage2)
- **Dickcar.com** is linked from 100s of websites 1cheapcarsandporn.com, 2cheapcarsandporn.com,...., 100cheapcarsandporn.com
Link Value = (Valueofsite1xValueofthepage1++ Valueofsite100xValueofthepage100)
- **Harrycar.com** is not linked from any external websites.
Link Value = 0;

In this case Tomcar.com will be ranked #1 as Tomcar.com has two links and one is from a very high authoritative website. So Tomcar.com has two great votes. Now whether dickcar.com will rank better or Harrycar.com will depend on the Google's algo. If the links to Dickcar.com is not related or are from bad websites then those may be ignored (or sometimes trigger a filter, negative value, read http://groups.google.com/group/Google_Webmaster_Help-Indexing/browse_thread/thread/59e796b85327a4b2/)



This was just a small example to show:

- That link matters,
- Its not about quantity but quality of links,
- Bad links to your website can hurt you (very controversial but good to avoid getting links from bad sites).

How to Judge the quality of a link?

This is very important for clients as sometimes your web marketing firm can show you 100s of links and charge you accordingly (Generally $\$7*100 = \700 approx) when those links are worth less than a pair of bananas. How should then one judge the quality of links? Here are some points to help you. We will first divide the quality of links into three parts:

1. Site Value
2. Page Value
3. Link position value

Site value

- Is this site valuable for users?
- Is this site related?
- What Google thinks about the site? (See the PR of the site, check the backlinks to the site using Yahoo explore linkdomain:domain.com is yahoo search)
- What is the Top level domain? (Search engines value .edu, .gov sites over other top level domain)
- IP of the domain (Links from same C-Class IP will have less value)
- Type of the site. (Is it directory site, FFA, RSS submission directory? The more difficult to get a link the better should be the value. If the links on the site are not reviewed by humans then it is of less value and should be avoided.)

Page Value

- Is the page relevant? (With the same theme)
- What Google thinks about the page? (See the PR of the page, check the backlinks to the page using Yahoo explore link:PageURL is yahoo search)
- Outgoing links? The most links on the page the lesser can be the value. Also see if the links are relevant or not. If the page has a lot of relevant links (to quality sites) then it is known as hub pages and is better for ranking.
- Is this page valuable for users? I always recommend people to avoid getting links from pages made for link exchanges. That is of no use to normal people and Search Engines will also start avoiding it.

Link position value

- Is the link surrounded by relevant text?
- Is the anchor text relevant?
- Is the link places up in the content?
- What is the link to content ratio?
- Is it a template link?



Some warning while building links

This is important for clients as your web marketing firm can end up screwing your web business for you. **See for following things:**

1. Links from **bad websites** and bad pages. Don't accept these links and ask them to remove it instead.
2. **Too much link exchange**. If you or your web marketing firm builds a lot of links through link exchange avoid it. It can be harmful.
3. Link trend (Signals): Is all your **links coming to one page**? Is your link aggression inconsistent? Leave no trend, use natural look like link building only.
4. **Linking to bad sites**: If your web marketing firms ask you to link to bad sites, don't do that at any cost. Any link going from your site comes under your responsibility.
5. **Add no follow**: If there are links going out from your website, which are added by the users, add a no follow tag to it.

What is client's role in it?

As usual I will keep it in bullets:

1. Checking the link building process and the links obtained by the web marketing firm. Also check the process along with the links.
2. Making sure that good signals are maintained.
3. Come up with ideas on how to generate more natural links. Let people link to your website because of the unique products/services/knowledge offered by you. Make it more talkable. Take interviews; add quality content to develop more links.
4. Paid directory budgets: Give your web marketing firm a paid directory budget so that they can get links from various human reviewed paid directories like business.com, yahoo directory.
5. Whenever you have an option to get a link, get it.
 - a. It can happen by asking your partners to link to you.
 - b. Asking your friends.
 - c. While giving interviews asking the journalists to mention the site link. Give interviews to as many people as possible.
 - d. By paying some money/gift to get natural-looking links.
 - e. Ask bloggers to blog about you.
 - f. Release white papers.
 - g. Sponsor some events for universities to get .edu links.
 - h. Be a panelist to various government events to get .gov links.
 - i. Be open to social media participation.
 - j. Maintain a blog of yours inside the website.
 - k. Other ways: Talk to web marketing firm for various other ways.



Every month question

What did I do this month to generate more natural link? Did I talk to my web marketing firm about generating more natural links? If not then it is a warning sign. Start getting involved in link building with your web marketing firm. This can add an edge to your competitive strength.

