

## Three Paths to Better Link Building

Information drives the World Wide Web: websites, articles, directories, databases, blogs, vlogs. Where there's a desire for information, there is someone on the web who either has it or is willing to provide it. Sites host everything from personal interests to highly rated, peer-reviewed academic articles intended for circulation among the intellectual elite. The web is the single greatest achievement in the field of human interaction and information sharing, putting a great part of the entire sum of human knowledge at the fingertips of anyone with a computer and a telecom connection, and it is ridiculously easy to get lost in the utter volume of the sites presented.

There are many tools out there for getting your content noticed. Social media networks, article directories, linking hubs, and user forums all present opportunities to advertise and build up interest in a site's content. Perhaps the most common tool in this arsenal of promotion is the discipline of link building. Link building is the promotion of your site to other sites that will then provide a link back to it. The theory basically asserts that when site A links to site B, a portion of site A's traffic will then look toward site B, hopefully leading to continued visits, promotion, and possibly even revenue.

Link building is not simply about volume, however. In fact, it is much more a matter of quality and discernment than it is quantity of links. There are a number of mistakes to avoid, and a number of techniques that will help you get the most out of a proper link building campaign.

### Choose Relevant Links

Ideally, link building is more than collecting as many links as possible from any indiscriminate source. People go to websites for very specific reasons; they go to Google to search, to YouTube for videos, to Half for great shopping bargains. They do not go to YouTube for complex technical articles or to Half for custom furniture commissions. If in our example site A focuses on fiction writing as a general craft, and site B does as well, this is a relevant link. People from site A will be interested in site B on at least some level, because they provide related content. However, if site B is a site pertaining to the art and craft of personal finance, site A's membership isn't as likely to be interested. In fact, improperly chosen links can have a detrimental effect on a site's traffic. Savvy users dismiss a site that chooses irrelevant links.

This isn't to say that every link has to be an exact match, content for content. Continuing the previous example, the fiction-writing site may link to a fiction-publishing site that offers agents interested in looking for new material. These are not identical services, but are definitely related, and the links are chosen for that reason.

### Be Reciprocal

In the most basic sense, the idea of reciprocity is to return the favor by linking to sites that have linked to yours. This encourages cooperation, allows both sites to benefit from wider audiences, and is basically an example of common courtesy. However as mentioned before, not every link is relevant and people have vastly different reasons for linking to various sites. A blogger may link to a particular author or article they find outstanding. The author in question may be grateful, but their readership might not be interested in this other person's blog, for whatever reason. In this case, they are not (and indeed never are) obligated to return the favor. However, failing to return the link could be construed as impolite at least, and possibly lead to one of those 'internet reputations' that cause headaches.

In such cases, there are ways to be reciprocal without returning a link. Suppose someone has taken the time to link you, as in the case above, but your site audience just isn't targeted to the site in question. Send a brief email to the site owner, thanking them for the link. This acknowledges the service they've provided, leading to possible future communication. If you know another site that is relevant to your benefactor, consider offering to put them in touch, further cementing the opportunity to establish a relationship with someone who has provided you a service. The key is to be inventive, rather than to reflexively link and possibly end up off message.

### Provide High Quality Content

This has been stressed many times, but it remains a vital truth. People are more likely to link to a site providing content that offers quality for every click, be it in terms of content or services. A well-designed forum with a number of insightful posts, diverse discussion topics, and active moderation is more likely to attract visitors and links than a site using a basic, shoddy interface in which a number of spam bots make irrelevant sales pitches in poorly-constructed English. Give your site a chance to get noticed and get promoted. Make it the very best site you can, promoting materials that people will want to link to when given the chance.

## About the Author

Enzo F. Cesario is a digital brand engagement specialist and co-founder of [Brandsplat](#) which employs [Brandcasting](#), informative content and

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