

CLIENT BONUS

How to Use Links to Boost Website Traffic



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MAKE LINKS WORK FOR YOU

HOW TO BOOST WEBSITE TRAFFIC AND SEARCH RANKINGS WITH LINKS

MORE LINKS = MORE CONVERSIONS

MORE LINKS = MORE TRAFFIC
MORE TRAFFIC = MORE CONVERSIONS

Links are critical to the long-term success of a website. There is a direct correlation between the number of high-quality links to, from, and within your website and your search engine page rank.

While search engines update and change their algorithms often, the importance of links has remained constant. That's because links are how search engines and people travel through the internet from page to page and site to site – and the more links that lead them to and through your website the better.

Three Types Of Links

There are three different types of links you need to leverage if you want to improve your search engine rankings and increase website traffic:

- Inbound links
- Outbound links
- Internal links

Inbound Links: Quality Votes for Your Business

Inbound links are links pointing to your website from other places on the internet. Inbound links send people into your website from other websites and they hold high value with search engines.

Quality inbound links — those that come from relevant websites that have earned authority — help improve search engine rankings because they act like a vote of confidence and signal to search engines that they believe the page they are linking to is high quality. With each vote, your site gains authority and the more authority it has the better your rankings will be. This is why so many SEO experts include link building services in their monthly packages.

Outbound Links: Focus on Relevance

Outbound links are links on your website that point to another website. They send visitors away from your website or out of your website to another destination.

- Some marketers advise site owners to minimize or avoid outbound links for this very reason. But the thing is, when use well, outbound links can also help improve your site's authority.
- Some marketers advise that all outbound links should open in a new tab to keep your site active. But this causes a poor user experience and accessibility challenges because then the back button doesn't work.

The success of outbound links boils down to how you use them.

Considering that the main goal of all search engines is to provide searchers the most relevant results for their search query and help them discover quality content, outbound links in moderation are a good thing. They help visitors discover

even more content relevant to what they're interested in and make it easier for new people to travel through the internet.

Let's say you're a professional organizer. Search engines assume visitors go to your website for information on organizing and getting organized, and they expect the content, images, and links on your site to be related to that topic.

Outbound links to relevant pages and sites, such as a store that sells organization supplies, makes search engines happy because you're helping people find more useful and relevant information on a topic they are interested in.

But let's say you joined a link exchange group with ten friends, and you all agreed to link to each other's websites. Included in the group are a dog groomer, a massage therapist, a life coach, a lawyer, a dentist, and a personal trainer. Links to these websites confuse search engines because they are irrelevant to the topic of your website.

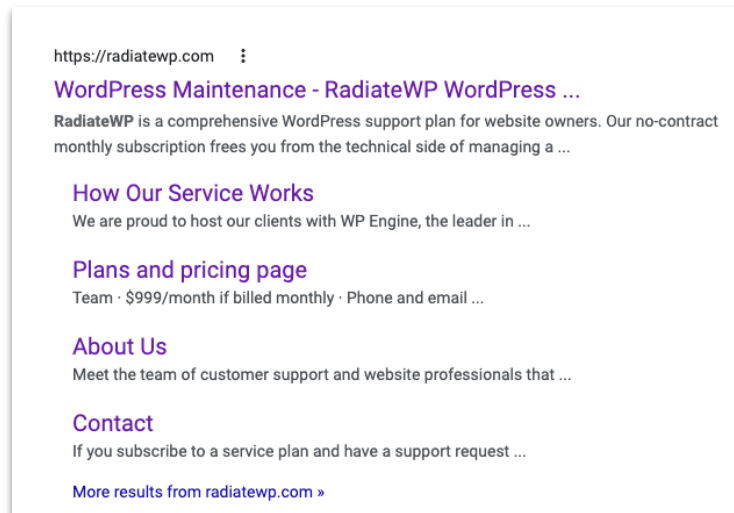
TWO EXTRA QUICK TIPS: When displaying testimonial URLs, consider including the URL but not making it a live link. When using links you don't want search engines to follow or links you don't want to pass "SEO juice" to, set them to "nofollow."

Internal Links: Improve User Experience

Internal links are links from one page on your website to another. Internal links direct users from posts to pages, pages to posts, new posts to old posts, etc. They are important to the success of your website because they give visitors and search engines more ways to travel through your website and discover more of your content.

But the value of internal links goes beyond ease of website navigation. They are also the secret to achieving Google sitelinks – the additional indented sub-links that appear below a main page link in the search engine listings.

Check out this example showing four sitelinks:



Sitelinks are automatically generated so you can work to gain them but nothing is guaranteed. If a sitelink is created that you do not approve of, you can delete it within Google Search Console.

TIPS FOR USING INTERNAL LINKS AND GAINING GOOGLE SITELINKS:

- Add relevant, internal links throughout your website. Every time you add a new page, blog post, or podcast episode to your website, include links in the content to other pages and posts on the same topic.
- Use keywords that match the destination page HTML title or page headline as the text of the link.
- Link to the pages you want to appear as sitelinks in the global footer of your website so they appear on every page and post.

INBOUND LINKS

10 Ways to Build Quality Inbound Links

Links To Your Site Are Votes For Rankings

Search engines look for two criteria when evaluating links and determining the rank for a web page: quality and quantity. That means the relevance of your links and the quality of the pages they link to matter just as much as the number of links to and through your website.

The most valuable and most difficult link to get is an inbound link, especially an inbound link from an authority website in your industry and that uses keyword-rich anchor text (the words of a link).

An inbound link is valuable because it means someone else gave your web page a stamp of approval. It also means someone else is recommending your page to their audience and visitors, which translates to more website traffic.

Here are 10 ways to build inbound links that are easier than you might think:

1. Groom Your Profiles And Pages

Complete all of the informational fields for your social media profiles and pages and take advantage of the features offered, especially the opportunities to link to your website. Do the same for any member profiles on the trade organization websites, and business association websites.

2. Review Industry Books, Products, And Media On Amazon

Amazon offers users a robust way to review books and products, build a reputation as a credible reviewer, and display a profile with a link to your website. You can use your Amazon reviews as satellite blog, a place to offer helpful input for consumers trying to find the right book, DVD, or product. It's also a great way to get invaluable inbound links – and even if the links are set to nofollow, the citation and mention still add value.

3. Publish Articles On Other Websites

Sites like Medium, LinkedIn, Ezinearticles.com, Articlesbase.com, and Self-growth.com offer free memberships and the ability to publish articles on their websites.

While this can expand your brand reach in new audiences, the biggest benefit is the author bio box included with your articles. The author bio box includes your name, bio, and a link to your website, which helps people who like your article discover your website.

4. Comment On Blog Posts And In Public Forums

When you post a comment on someone else's blog post or in a forum thread, you often have the opportunity to include your website address. While most of these links are set to "nofollow," the citation is helpful and the link still gives those who like what you have to say the ability to discover your website.

Engaging with other content creators through commenting can also build your network and earn you fans, which can in turn, lead to more people linking to your website and content.

5. Link Trade With Colleagues

The “10 Friends” link exchange example shared earlier was the perfect example of what not to do. With that said, when done right, a link exchange can be a powerful tool.

The trick is to connect with other experts who serve the same target market you do and offer a complementary service. If their offers and content are relevant to your content and what you do a link exchange may make sense. A perfect example of this would be a link trade between a web designer and a copywriter, an image consultant and a photographer, or a public relations firm and an advertising company.

6. Contribute To Round Up Posts

The round-up-style collaborative blog post leverages insights from several different experts in one post. Each expert is listed by name, usually with their tip, a photo, and a link to their website. The idea is that if each expert shares the published post with their audiences, it could result in an increase in traffic and conversions.

7. Become A Guest Blogger

Guest blogging is a fantastic way to share your expertise, build quality links to your website, and gain access to an audience filled with ideal clients who don't yet know you. The trick is doing your homework and choosing the right websites to pitch your guest post to.

Here's how it works:

1. Identify websites that have the same target market you do.

2. Reach out and pitch your idea for a guest post, focusing on your understanding of their audience, the help you can offer that audience, and why this partnership is a win-win.
3. Create high-value content that addresses a challenge, need, or desire they have.
4. Impress readers enough to earn a click back to your website.

8. Get Listed In Relevant, Quality Directories

Identify free and paid directories in your industry or niche that are high-quality, trusted, authority directories and get listed. These may be portfolio sites, yellow pages-style sites, consumer resource lists, or even recommended vendor/experts lists from trusted centers of influence.

9. Produce Valuable Content On A Regular Basis

Publishing valuable, useful, relevant content on a regular basis is the easiest tactic there is to earn links to your website. It doesn't have a huge learning curve, and there is relatively no barrier to entry. By consistently creating new, fresh content for your website, you will gain loyal readers and followers who appreciate your work and share your posts with their social networks.

10. Share Your Content On Social Media

Set up automatic syndication for your blog on each of the social networking platforms you are active on. That way each time you publish new content, your posts are automatically shared with your social networks. If you use social bookmarking websites, be sure to bookmark your content there too!

INTERNAL LINKS

6 WAYS TO ADD INTERNAL LINKS TO YOUR WEBSITE

Make More Of Your Content Discoverable

Internal links are links from one page on your website to another. They give visitors and search engines more ways to travel through your website and access content. Internal links can also help search engines attribute specific keywords with specific pages, which increases the chances of it being ranked well in search engine results page (SERP) listings.

HERE ARE 6 SIMPLE TACTICS TO ADD INTERNAL LINKS TO YOUR WEBSITE:

1. Duplicate Your Navigation Menu On Your Home Page

Give search engines and people more than one way to reach your most important pages. Don't rely only on the links in your navigation menu. Instead, include a keyword-rich text link to each top-level page of your website's navigation menu somewhere else on your homepage too.

My favorite approach to building an effective website homepage is to create a "teaser row" for each item listed in the main website navigation menu. This way, as visitors scroll down the homepage, they learn more about what they'll find on each of those pages.

Depending on the amount of content on your homepage, you may also sprinkle in a few extra links to useful pages within your site that don't necessarily appear in the primary navigation.

2. Put Your Footer To Work

The website footer is a useful piece of website real estate that can have a big impact on organic search engine rankings. Because it is a global element that appears on nearly every page of your website it can also be used to highlight links to important pages and provide keyword signals for the destination pages.

Let's say you have 50 pages and 150 blog posts on your website. You then add a keyword optimized footer link to a new sales page to the footer, which results in 200 links pointing to that new page. This can help that page get indexed faster by search engines.

3. Put Your Sidebar To Work

If your website has a sidebar, you must be disciplined about what is placed in that sidebar to avoid creating too many distractions that pull visitors away from your content. With that said, the sidebar is a great place to include links to important content archives, landing pages, and sales pages.

Remember to think about your sidebar not as an afterthought to fill with widgets and social media filler, but as an important conversion tool to guide visitors through your website to the information that they need and that you want them to find.

4. Leverage New Posts To Boost Old Posts

If you publish new content regularly, you'll eventually run into a problem: old content gets buried in the archives even though it's still relevant and useful. This phenomenon leaves many bloggers wondering how to keep old but still valuable ever-green content alive.

Luckily, there are two ways to breathe new life into old posts with links:

Keep sharing your old posts across your social media accounts. Set up a regular rotation and keep investing in visibility for your content.

Link to old relevant posts in the new posts you publish. This builds your internal link structure, helps people discover more of your content, and keeps people on your site longer. For the best results, make sure the link is optimized to match up with the HTML title and keywords you set for the original blog post.

5. Use An Author Bio Box

If you're the spokesperson or expert for your brand, people who know your name will search for you by name. Add an author bio box to the end of your articles and posts to not only give some SEO "Juice" to your name but to also take advantage of the opportunity to add a short, descriptive bio with a keyword-rich, optimized, anchor text link to your about page or any other page that needs its status elevated with the search engines.

6. Give Readers More Of What They Like

If a visitor clicked a link to check out one of your blog posts — from Facebook, Twitter, a search engine results page, LinkedIn, Instagram, or another referring site —

your headline grabbed their attention. That shows they are interested in the topic of your content.

Your job at this point is to give them more of what they like.

At the end of each post, provide links to related content and related posts to help them find more content on that same topic and encourage them to stay on your site longer. The longer they stay, the more likely it is that they will sign up, click, contact, register, subscribe, or buy.

One Little Warning

There is no guarantee that adding optimized internal links will get your web page ranked on page one or in one of the top three spots of a search engine results page. To achieve that, you may also need to implement other organic search engine optimization strategies like link building on an ongoing, consistent basis.

TOUGH LINK LESSONS

Good Vs. Bad: Not All Links Are Created Equal

Link Strategy Matters

While inbound links, outbound links, and internal links can all be used to improve your website usability and organic search engine ranking, it is important to know that some links are better and more valuable than others — and that some links are even bad.

Here are 3 reasons some links are better than others:

- **Not all links are good links.**

A website with misleading, irrelevant, broken, or factory-farmed links will just make you look bad to the search bots and to your prospects and customers.

- **Links from high-ranking websites are better than links from low-ranking websites.**

A link from an authority site like www.nbc.com will hold more weight than a link from www.ObscureCatBlog.com.

- **In-industry links are more effective than random links from friends.**

If you're in the cupcake industry, links from cupcake, frosting, baking, and cake decorating websites hold more value than links from your accountant, esthetician, or golf buddy.

Still not quite sure what I mean? Let's look at this like high school...

- **Each link to your website is like a vote for your popularity.** The more votes you get, the more popular you are, and the more popular you are, the more you'll be in the spotlight, seen by everyone and attracting a lot of attention.
- **Search engines work the same way.** The more websites that vote for (link to) your website, the more popular your site will be in the search engine results listings. That means it will get more attention, more clicks, and more traffic.

Before you drop everything and set out to build a ton of inbound links, let's revisit the idea that some links are more valuable than others.

- The star of the football team inviting you to a jock party is a vote for your popularity that will increase your social status quickly. A relatively unknown social outcast inviting you to their party won't raise your social status at all. In fact, it may do the exact opposite.
- Again, search engines work the same way. A link from a popular, high-authority, high-ranking site will have a much bigger impact on your website's search engine status, than a link from some random unknown website.

So how do you know which links are good and which are bad? here are a few examples:

Examples Of High-Value Links

- Links from websites with a Page Rank of at least 2 or higher
- Links from websites with a good Alexa ranking (at least in the 6 figures)

- Links from websites that already rank in the top 10 search results for your targeted keywords and/or key phrases
- Links from other websites in your industry or complimentary industries (web designers linking to copywriters)
- Anchor text links to your website that use the keywords you are targeting

Examples Of Not-So-Valuable Links

- Links to or from link farms and link directories with no useful content.
- Links to or from sites with explicit content or sites associated with spam.
- Links from your website to completely unrelated websites.
- Broken links

Bad Links And Why They May Be Good Links

If you do any amount of research, you will discover an article by an SEO expert or online marketer warning you about bad links. These articles include strong warnings, fearful messages, and threats. And many warn of the potential “Google Slap” that happens if you have too many bad links.

But there are always two sides to every story and this scenario is no different.

Some bad links can sometimes be good links. Using them the right way, for the right reasons can be a smart decision.

DIRECTORY LISTINGS ARE OFTEN TOUTED AND BEING BAD LINKS BUT...

Not all directories are sketchy. Some are considered to hold high-authority. And in some cases, listing your business and website link in a directory can be a smart business decision. For example:

- As a restaurant, you would want to be listed in local directories of eateries and restaurants. But submitting your website to general directories all over the world would be a bad idea.
- A wedding planner would want to be listed in a directory of local bridal vendors, or a directory on a bridal show website.
- If your national or local industry trade organizations have directories that list businesses, freelancers, and consultants, you would want to be included on that list.

TOO MANY LINKS ON A PAGE IS ALSO WIDELY VIEWED AS A BAD THING BUT...

There are no exact guidelines for what “too many links” actually means. Some experts offer up a number or a percentage based on the word count of a page, but really, it is up to you to use your best judgment and few website owners ever come close to having this problem.

- Instead of worrying about including too many links, worry about making sure you’re including the right links – those that are helpful – whenever possible.
- When you’re done formatting your content and adding links, view the page to assess whether the number of links distracts from the readability of the content.

REPETITIVE LINK ANCHOR TEXT IS WIDELY VIEWED AS BAD BUT...

Repetitive link text isn't always negative, especially when that repetition is from a link displayed in a website header, footer, or sidebar. For most website owners, repetitive link text only becomes an issue if the same text is used for several links on the same page — and that's because it starts to sound unnatural and forced, which isn't good for people or search engines.

When building internal website links, don't use the exact same keyword or key phrase for the link text too many times. Instead, use variations of the keyword or keyphrase you're targeting and use it in different ways and in singular and plural forms when appropriate.

RECIPROCAL LINKS ARE OFTEN TOUTED AS A BAD PRACTICE BUT...

Some reciprocal links are great for business! Reciprocal linking happens when two sites link to each other. Often this happens when friends who both have websites link to each other or when business owners in a mastermind group link to each others' websites.

Years ago, this search engine optimization (SEO) strategy was a way sites could quickly build inbound links and raise their search engine page rank. Search engines didn't like this and fear of lost rankings scared site owners away from this tactic.

With that said, there are times when it makes sense for your business to take advantage of reciprocal links. For example, if you have a strategic partner that you work with and you often refer clients back and forth, it makes sense for both of your businesses to link to each other.

The trick is to not trade links with friends but to strategically trade links with relevant sites that serve the same audience. Here are examples of smart reciprocal linking:

- A hairstylist and an esthetician who refer clients back and forth should link to each other.
- A financial planner and a CPA who share clients should link to each other.
- A car wash and a windshield repair company in the same city should link to each other.
- A designer and a copywriter who partner on projects should link to each other.

These links work because they are relevant and natural. They make sense, unlike other links that feel forced or unnatural, such as:

- A energy healer and a professional copywriter linking to each other.
- A restaurant and a professional organizer linking to each other.
- A yoga instructor and a roofing contractor linking to each other.
- A florist and a tire repair shop linking to each other.

LINK OPTIMIZATION

How to Optimize Links for Humans and Search Engines

Links Are More Than URLs

Optimizing your links is a simple search engine optimization (SEO) strategy because there aren't a lot of different options. It's pretty straightforward.

Let's start by looking at two link examples:

Example 1

- Basic HTML for an un-optimized link:
`https://inspiredimperfection.com`
- What people see: <https://inspiredimperfection.com>
- What search engines see: <https://inspiredimperfection.com>

Example 2

- Basic HTML for an optimized link:
`Family Travel And Recipe Blog`
- What people see: [Family Travel And Recipe Blog](https://inspiredimperfection.com)

- What search engines see: [Family Travel And Recipe Blog](#) + <https://inspiredimperfection.com>

When it comes to optimizing links on your website, you're doing both search engines and visitors a favor! Creating links that are more descriptive helps everyone understand what they'll find on the destination page if they click a link, or at the very least, what the topic of the page is.

From The Search Engines' Perspective:

- In Example 1, the only thing search engines will read/scan is the website URL. This doesn't tell search engines what the website is about or what keywords the site should be ranked for. All search engines know is that it is a link to another site.
- In Example 2, search engines will not only read/scan the website URL but they will also scan the anchor text (the text "Family Travel And Recipe Blog").

From The Visitors' Perspectives

- In Example 1, the only thing visitors will see is the website URL. This doesn't tell visitors anything about what the website is about. All visitors know is that it is a link to another site.
- In Example 2, visitors will see the anchor text (the text "Family Travel And Recipe Blog"). This link is more descriptive, telling visitors that the link will take them to a blog about family travel that also shares recipes.

The link anchor text (link text) should describe the page you are linking to and include the focus keyword for the page you're linking to.