

33 SEO experts share their most effective Link Building strategies

wordtracker.com/blog/link-building/33-seo-experts-share-their-most-effective-link-building-strategies

Have you ever wanted to know which 3 link building strategies are most effective?

If you've turned your back on link building - whether out of fear, confusion or sheer frustration - you may have been a bit hasty.

The rapid proliferation of content marketing techniques has meant link building strategies have evolved.

Yet the net result is the same as it ever was: link building still works. It's just the way we get those links that's changed.



So to find out exactly what's working right now, I asked some of the best SEO's in the world a simple question:

“Which 3 Link Building Strategies Are Most Effective?”

I got thirty-three expert responses and their answers are fascinating.

And the key takeaways?

Well let's just say if you aren't using 'intelligent' content led link building strategies to promote your online business, you're definitely leaving money on the table.

With that said, let's dive in to those answers and find out what our crack team of SEO's recommend when it comes to proven link building techniques in 2014...

Brian Massey

[Conversion Sciences](#)

I don't know the best way to get backlinks, other than writing awesome, kick-ass content and sharing it on social media like crazy.

However, I do know how you should capitalize on your backlinks.

1. Create backlinks to pages that ask the visitor to do something. Treat highly-linked pages as landing pages.

2. Embed offers IN THE CONTENT. Blog posts should have offers in the text. Infographics should include an offer at the end (or middle).

3. When you invite someone to link to your story, give them a trackable link. This can be as easy as using a URL shortener like Bitly or Captix. You can also tag your URLs for tracking in Google Analytics.

Bonus:

When someone asks you to contribute, give them a (trackable) link!

Brian Dean

Backlinko

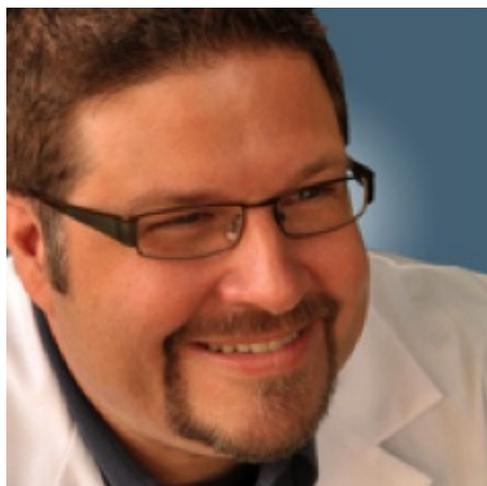
1. Resource page link building: Where else can you find pages online that exist JUST to link out to excellent resources.

2. Infographics: Not the beast they once were, but when done right, they work like a charm.

3. (Smart) guest posting: Don't give up on this strategy just yet. When done right, you can still get fantastic, niche-relevant links from guest posting.

Lisa Parmley

Business Bolts



Link building is really about building awareness. Here are my top 3 strategies for building links along with awareness for a web site:

1. It makes sense in almost any topic to create a useful piece of content that pulls resources together. Alternately, you can even ask for quotes from experts in the field.

It's really a win-win situation because the visitors to your site will get useful content and the experts or companies you're featuring will gain exposure.

Once you have your content ready to go just tell everyone who's featured in it. Send them a link and even ask them to share it. Many will end up linking to it.

Even if they don't it really helps build awareness and that awareness is to all the right people who already have influence in yours or a related market.

2. This strategy works great for link building. It helps build awareness to a smaller extent. For this strategy your site should be a good resource.

Either you can create a useful piece of content or web application on your site or just offer up your entire site as useful (if it actually is).

Then you need to create a list of libraries that are linking out to resources. Many do this. They might have a 'resources' link somewhere on the site that just links out to sites on a variety of topics. They do this as a service for their visitors.

The nice thing with libraries is they have staff that responds to the emails. So you don't need to worry about whether you know the person you're emailing or really spend a whole lot of time building a relationship with them first.

You can just send out a short email to the best contact email address you can find for that particular library. Point out the page on their site where they list out resources like yours. Include a link to your resource.

Tell them you believe their visitors would find value in your resource and ask for the link if they agree.

You can also do the same thing with schools if your market fits. Many schools have resource pages also. I've gotten dozens of links from universities this way.

3. This next strategy works great if you have a product or service to offer. Think about the type of website that already has an audience who may be interested in what you offer.



Contact owners of sites like these and briefly tell them about your offer, link to it, and explain how it relates to their visitors. Let them know if they believe your offer is a good fit that you're happy to create a special coupon code just for their visitors to receive a discount on your product or service.

This really helps build awareness about your site and your offers because you're letting people with the right audience know about it. These people already have a following and with an email like this you're not being pushy. Many will respond to it. You may get more than links with this tactic, which is even better for you.

Rand Fishkin

Moz

My top 3 link building strategies are as follows:

1. Content creation + social amplification - consistently producing useful, interesting stuff that has a clear audience on social media who'd help amplify it (because it serves them in some way), is a great strategy that yields on-going returns month after month. It's a flywheel in that it's hard to turn those first few times, but gets easier and easier with time.

2. Thought leadership + bios & interviews - thought leaders in any field earn links simply through their day to day activities, e.g. speaking at events, being asked to contribute to interviews, going on podcasts, doing online hangouts, etc.

Establishing that thought leadership isn't easy, but nothing that's truly strategic in link building is. Don't underestimate the ambient power of thought leadership for links, though - it makes the process much easier.

3. Online tools, calculators, and interactive data - these types of resources earn links and citations like no other, and sometimes, all it takes is a single resource (think Statcounter's Global Stats, Zillow's price estimates, Walkscore's Walkscore, etc) to kickstart massive, on-going links.



James Parsons

JamesParsons.com

Here's what I think are the three most effective forms of link building are:

1. Guest blogging.
2. Link bait/content creation (infographics, great resources, etc. every new piece is another hook in the sea).
3. Email (a very powerful tool for a link builders arsenal)

Miguel Salcido

Organic Media Group

1. Competitive analysis to find niche resource links. Finding those golden nuggets of topical resource-rich relevant link opportunities (that's a mouthful) is tough. The easiest way to find them is to mine the top ranking sites.

I ALWAYS find nice niche relevant link opportunities this way. This is very low hanging fruit that is also very powerful, especially for newer sites with smaller back link profiles.

2. Editorial (in-content) links from relevant sites. This usually comes from guest blogging on niche relevant sites. The higher the PR and DA (domain authority), the better. If you do this properly, and only write for relevant sites and don't overdo it, then it is still extremely effective.

3. Anchor text variation. This means having a high number of branded anchor text links, which is usually achieved via niche resources (see #1 above), relevant directories, press releases (yes, nofollow links are a must have!), etc.

But you will also need keyword-focused links. Be sure to try and make it so that you never use the same keyword-rich term more than once. Find variations and synonyms and use those.

Chris Antoni

The Traffic Blogger



1. Don't just participate, participate frequently.

Run your own link exposure programs on a regular basis (this is exactly what the author is doing) as well as join in on others (hi that's what I'm doing).

When I ran a gaming blog I would have a monthly blogging carnival where readers would be treated to 30+ blog links to other writers I respected. The fact that it was consistent in both timing and quality made it incredibly popular.



2. Relationships are king.

Frequently reach out to content curators in your niche in order to build relationships. Having something to offer like a guest post or insight into your niche is the best way to approach this. We're busy people and we don't want to talk about the weather.

Once you have a relationship, it's easy to build trust and get lots of links.

3. Your readers can build links for you.

Social media is key for this. Don't just regurgitate your links on twitter or Facebook though. Try to spark a discussion at the same time.

Example: I did the ice bucket challenge today, do you think that's dumb? Read my article at (link).

That way people can talk about it without first going to your site, which in turns created more exposure. Simply sending a message with the link and title in it and nothing else is really not going to work!

Bob Jones

Visible Online Marketing

1. The good old-fashioned outreach works for a lot of niches where there's either a community involved or the market is of a lesser commercial grade.

Fan sites for example are great places to find congregations of website owners about particular topics and striking up conversation with them can land you some great link opportunities.

2. If you have the fortune of working with a big brand on their link building campaign, a lot of doors open to conversations with small players in the same field who are happy to link out to the brand authority sites. Remember that link building is not just about incoming links but Google also looks in turn who your website is linking out to.

3. If you don't have any linkable assets you would be wise to invest in great content. Once published make sure you amplify reach through social channels with paid campaigns, ping the people who you believe would be willing to link back and if you add a bit of ego-bait to the content, you'll increase your chances of getting linked back to by the people you highlight.



Richard Marriott

[Clambr](#)

1. Infographic Link Building in Adjacent Markets -
If you're in a highly competitive niche and are struggling to get anyone within your niche to link to you, then infographic link building in adjacent markets might be your ticket to "Link Town".

Let's say you're in the "Shred Your Belly Fat FAST" niche. If you're competing with a bunch of other weight loss sites, then reaching out to these guys with an infographic that promotes your competing site and competing diet plan might not go down too well...



In fact, a lot of people will probably tell you to "frack off".

So what do you do?

You promote your infographic to adjacent markets!

When you do this you'll instantly get a much better reception (because you're not a competitor) and if your infographic fits in well with their audience they'll likely jump at the chance to feature you.

If I was genuinely promoting a "Shred Your Belly Fat FAST" infographic, for example, I'd either give it a "Lad's Mag" theme (using beer related facts and gags) and pitch it to lad's mags...

Or you could go totally NUTS and pitch it to a load of fish themed sites - i.e. link up with fishermen's beer bellies and compare different belly types to certain types of fish - puffer fish and Grouper fish might be interesting :-)



Yes, this is a Grouper fish ([Image credit](#))

2. Broken link building - I own an authority site in one of the notorious “BIG 3” industries (Dating / Health / Making Money). Let’s just say it’s in the online dating niche :-)

After launching the site in December 2013, I quickly realised getting fresh links was going to be a struggle (since competition is too damn high!!!)

Seriously...no matter how many hundreds of emails I send after a new post goes live (in that niche), pretty much NO-ONE ever links to me.

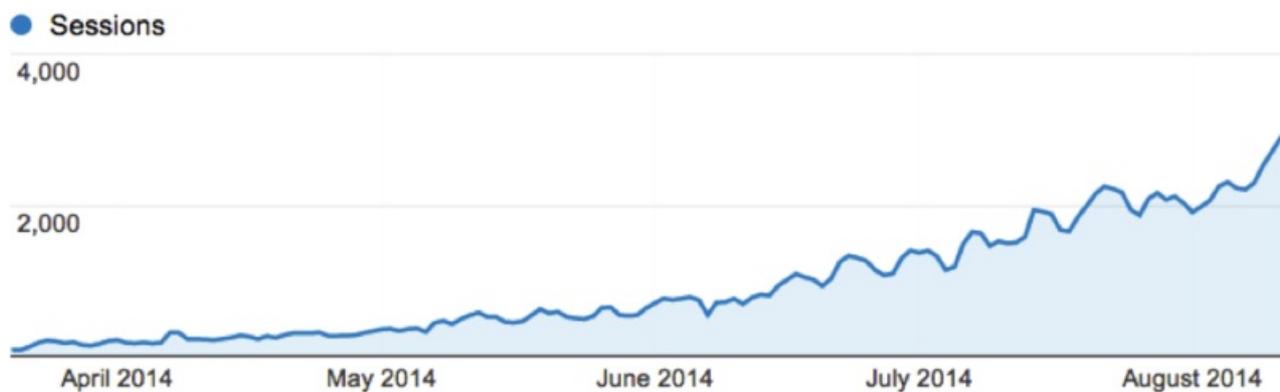
So...broken link building is my way around that.

With broken link building you simply find a broken link on someone’s page - reach out to the webmaster - tell them about the broken link and then recommend your link as a replacement.

It works SO well in competitive niches because plenty of sites don’t survive the long haul, which can provide you with a constant drip feed of opportunities.

And broken link building can be VERY rewarding for consistently growing your traffic over time.

The screenshot below is of consistent traffic growth to one of my authority sites. Over 50% of the links built to this site are from broken link building and around 40% are from link building with infographics in adjacent markets (mentioned above):



3. Expert roundup link building - This is a little cheeky but it works a dream...

First, get invited to take part in an expert roundup - the way to get invited to a roundup is to establish yourself as an expert in your niche. You can prove your expertise by publishing an eBook; taking screenshots of income reports; traffic reports, etc. (Basically anything that proves you know your stuff).

Then, when you take part in a roundup, drop a link to the post you're currently promoting. (You'll notice I dropped a link to my deep broken link building tutorial above).

As long as it helps answer the question of the roundup then you should be able to get away with it :-)

Zac Johnson

ZacJohnson.com

When it comes to best link building practices, you will get different answers depending on who you ask. My three recommendations are all "link building" based, but aren't your ordinary methods. Instead, these methods are more focused on engagement and response.

1. Word of mouth - a real and personal recommendation is the best you can get!

2. Guest blogging - when done correctly you can get your name and brand in front of an established audience and the cost is time, not money.

3. Viral social traffic -with over a billion users on Facebook, it's an amazing opportunity for sites to create viral content that can potentially send a ton of traffic for free.



Matthew Woodward

MatthewWoodward.co.uk

There are a handful of link building strategies that I fall back on and have stood the test of time.

1. Competitor Backlinks - the first one is simply downloading all the backlinks of your current top 10 competitors, then replicating them to your own site.

Just go through them one at a time, and workout how you can get the same backlink for your site.

It takes a bit of time but you can speed up the process with this [tutorial](#).



2. Wikipedia Backlinks - getting a backlink from Wikipedia is one of the best links you can get.

It is coming from one of the most authoritative sites on the planet and will also drive targeted traffic to your site. On top of that it will help you earn even more backlinks as people use Wikipedia as a point of reference.

It used to be quite time consuming to find opportunities to get backlinks from Wikipedia but this [tutorial](#) makes it quick & easy.

3. Private Blog Networks - building your own private blog network is a great way to rank your site.

By definition a link from a private blog network is the best type of link you can get. It is coming from an authoritative domain surrounded by relevant content in-context.

While it does take time and money to build up a blog network, once you have it - you can use it to rank multiple sites with ease.

You are also in full control of the links so if you ever do get penalised, it's easy to remove the links!

Adam Connell

[Blogging Wizard](#)

1. Contribute to large publications

The web is all about trust and people are hard wired to trust authority figures, whether it's a doctor, police officer or an industry expert.

When you are cited or interviewed in large publications this adds to your credibility in your industry.

This is easier to do than most people think.

Services like [HelpAReporterOut.com](https://www.helpareporterout.com) (HARO) and [MuckRack.com](https://www.muckrack.com) enable you to get notifications when reporters need expert sources for articles and books.

There's also the occasional TV appearance too.

But, it's important to remember that you shouldn't abuse these services, if you cannot add value to an opportunity, don't respond.

2. Create epic content and ask people to link to it

Great content that is promoted well has the potential to earn links but it needs a push.

I'm not talking about just emailing and saying "hey, look at this: I published an awesome piece of content and you should link to it".

You need to be smarter.

First of all, create your piece of content, find resource posts and related posts where a link to your content would add value (if it's not relevant, you're wasting your time).

Craft your email link this:

Personalization - include a name at a bare minimum.

Do something for them and tell them what it is - e.g. share their post to all of your followers.

The call to action and a compelling reason - what you want them to do and why they should do it.

What you'll do for them if they help you out - make it relevant and be creative.

Sign off - let them know you're a real person.

When you make your outreach emails all about the person you're contacting, they'll be more likely to help you out.

It's also worth considering that this email should be the first step in building a mutually beneficial relationship with the person you're contacting.



Don't just use them for a link and burn them – you are wasting opportunities that way.

3. Guest posting but not in the way you are thinking

Low quality guest posting is dead and quality guidelines are tightening for a lot of bloggers. This is how it should be.

Your guest posting strategy should go beyond trying to get as many links as possible. Focus on contributing to higher quality sites and writing better content.

This isn't just for the link though, it's for branding and visibility – that's important.

Instead of a direct link to a blog post or your home page, get a link to a personalized landing page that offers visitors something for free in exchange for an email address.

The truth is that relying on Google to send you traffic is a mistake and social media isn't as effective as it once was (e.g. Facebook's organic reach dropping).

I'm not saying to drop SEO and social because they should be part of your marketing plan, but, a higher focus on building an email list is essential.

Traffic from guest posts will typically be more engaged than any other source, they've already read your content, they know a bit about you and they want more from you.

Afterwards you will have more people to market your products/services to.

Nick LeRoy

NickLeRoy.com

These are the three techniques I find the most effective:

1. Private blog networks. Anytime you can "own" your links you're in a really good position. I'm not a fan of buying links on others PBNs though. Building a PBN is not cheap and not easy so this isn't a solution for everyone.

2. 404 link reclamation. Go to GWT and download any pages you have that are currently showing 404. I like to run the full list through Scrapebox to check page authority and amount of backlinks pointing to each of these individual URLs.

Ideally you'll redirect all 404 pages but if you have a group of URLs with valuable inbound links you might be more selective as to where you redirect these specific URLs.



3. Outreach. Definitely not the easiest and takes the most time. If you create a relevant piece of content you can follow up by reaching out to niche bloggers and sites linking out to similar resources.

It's definitely not scalable but sometimes you only need a handful of these types of links to really move the needle in the SERPs.

Peter Attia

Pingboard

As always, the “most effective” methods vary depending on your industry and goals. While I’m not willing to reveal my trump card, I will say these 3 tactics are the ones I enjoy working with the most.

1. Reverse Guest Posting - Finding bloggers in your industry with big followings and paying them to write on your blog consistently.

This is one of the fastest ways I’ve found to build up your blog’s audience, because every time they write an article on your site, they’ll share it with their current following. This is much more efficient than building an audience from scratch, and of course, it builds nice natural links.

2. Visualizing data no one else has - I think [OK Cupid Blog](#) do this the best. They were able to take unique data points they had and visualize them in interesting ways.

For example, they found that most people who like the taste of beer are also more likely to sleep with someone on the first date. The data is comical and interesting to read.

3. Asking - One of the most underutilized linking tactics, is just asking your biggest fans if they’ll link to you, mention you, tweet you, etc. If you have their email address, you can figure out if they have a blog.

Tell them you’ll give them something for a review, mention, etc. It’s pretty straightforward and easy, but you do have to figure out who your biggest fans are first.

Chris Ainsworth

High Position



The definition of “most effective” would ultimately depend on your own objectives. The role of link acquisition can potentially serve multiple purposes therefore your adopted link building strategy will depend on your goals as a business.

Do you want to increase organic search rankings be it local, nationwide or global? Do you want to drive customers directly to your website? Are you looking for increased brand exposure?

Traditional forms of link acquisition such as directories, article syndication etc were widely used to influence search engine rankings for glory keywords. This is where many business often feel their link building strategy efforts would be “most effective” – improved search engine rankings for glory keywords.

However, targeted link acquisition through local citation supported by the maintenance of NAP consistency can improve location based marketing efforts. This will arguably form the “most effective” link building strategy for small/medium sized businesses seeking to increase their local presence online.

Also, although often (somewhat unfairly) overlooked in the SEO industry, link acquisition can (and should!) be used as an effective method of increasing referral traffic and lead generation. Often businesses will lean towards link building as a method of gaming rankings rather than method of customer acquisition.

Personally (and I think many would agree) the days of mass link building are dead and buried, so if you’re considering engaging in any mass link building activity such as directory submissions, article syndication, guest posting, forum or blog commenting then think again!

So what are the “most effective” techniques? A combination of the above but with greater focus on brand awareness rather than link building.

1. Interactive Content Marketing

Content marketing is one of the most significant forms of link building, however link acquisition is only one of the multiple benefits.

By content marketing I am not referring to old school techniques article syndication, blogging, PR releases or any such tactics; I’m referring to today’s interactive content marketing techniques such as those offered by [Ice Viral](#).

In today’s digital market you should be looking to adopt techniques outside of the traditional, narrow-minded, one-dimensional view of link building.



Instead you should be leaning toward techniques such as the creation and marketing of interactive content which offers the ability to amplify brand awareness and spark engagement, through which factors such as link acquisition come second to the sheer reach of the content and the maximised brand reach.

Interactive content has been around for a while now but is still in its infancy and not well known to most businesses; therefore many people will still question its place as a marketing initiative. But trust me when I say this is digital marketing at its most powerful.

Interactive content can be an incredibly cost-effective method of content marketing if done correctly, plus it's not a process that can be gamed like those mass link building techniques therefore not susceptible to spam so potentially future-proof.

If you're serious about digital marketing then this is one area which you should research.

2. Written Content Marketing

Written content marketing is still an incredibly effective way to gain links. By "written" I'm referring primarily to the creation of content for use on your own website and potentially for external websites.

If you can create an informative, compelling piece of written content and market it successfully it will be worth its weight in gold, will increase brand exposure and is likely to naturally acquire links (bonus!).

If you're the type of business that can release something new such as industry research or offer a new slant on a subject then go for it full steam ahead!

Alternatively, research ways in which you can create content which is worthy of the reader and research methods of content marketing (LinkedIn advertising, Facebook advertising and promoted tweets to name but a few possible options!).

With this in mind, guest posting on well renowned websites can still be an effective method of link acquisition but I would advise strong consideration of your target audience before you proceed. Identify a topic that will be beneficial to the reader and tailor your content to those seeking your information.

Don't write a guest post just for link benefit, use it as an opportunity to showcase your in-depth knowledge of the chosen subject. A credible article written by a credible author is far more likely to have a positive impact on the audience and more likely to gain exposure.

3. Local Citation

Promoting local business citation and ensuring you maintain NAP consistency is still considered to be one of the most influential factors for local search rankings. Citations

can also aid in driving referral traffic and lead generation.

So identify and claim existing citations, maintain NAP consistency of those identified, and look to develop further local citations where possible.

But remember, there are a lot of low-quality local directories and such like out there, so keep it credible and remember quality over quantity.

Harris Schachter

Optimize Prime

1. Broken link building. This is a given because no one wants to have errors on their site and pointing these out to webmasters is basically doing them a favour. In addition this works very well because they can be found easily.

2. Plain old outreach. Putting in the time and effort up front to contact and establish relationships with people who run sites in your niche is priceless.

People who curate content have to go out and find the content first, so contacting them first just makes this easier. Furthermore, these relationships can come in handy down the road.

3. Dare I say guest blogging? It works well for placing links on sites that are relevant to you, but at the same time it also exposes your content to a pre-established audience who might not have heard of you otherwise.

If you make a good impression with solid points and good content, the traffic coming through the link can be more valuable than the SEO value it brings.

Chris Dyson

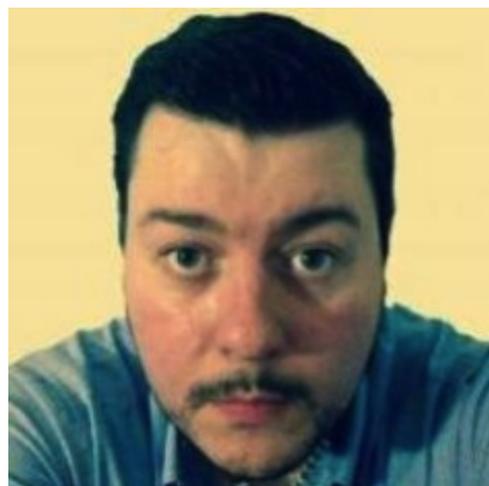
Triple SEO



A lot of link building techniques are "effective" but it depends upon what you mean by effective. For this answer I'll assume we are talking about links that will move the needle and at the same time be at lower risk of causing Google penalties.

1. Enhancing Other People's Content - I use this quite often to get links for my clients in content that is performing well on social media or gaining links.

Whatever your skill-set there is always a way to make a piece of content better whether it's an illustration, additional data or a handy tool. You can read more on this [technique here](#).



2. Broken Link Building - if you want to get links from pages that are well linked to and have been indexed for some time taking advantage of the link rot on the web is a great place to start.

I will often begin by looking at Org and Edu domains as many libraries have curated links around various topics. If you or your client have an in-depth resource that fits then it's worth looking for broken links on these sites and offering your resource as an alternative.

3. The Information Gap - this is not really a link building strategy but more of an outreach tactic I like to use if I have to email someone I don't have a relationship with already. The term information Gap comes from George Lowenstein's paper on Information Gap Theory in 1994:

When we come across something new that is not explained by our previous knowledge or experiences, an information gap is formed, and we have a desire to find the answer.

It's the same reason everyone clicks on those UpWorthy style headlines.

So when you are emailing a prospect, offer them part of the information up-front and then ask permission to send them the link to the article or data source. If you want to learn more about these techniques you can check that out here or on Gregory Ciotti's blog.

Chris Gilchrist

[Hit Reach](#)

1. Content Link Bait - Creating content that's educational, funny, entertaining and link worthy is hard but also very rewarding.

Quizzes and other interactive content pieces do very well socially and can earn you a lot of links if you manage to execute them successfully. This evolution of the headphones interactive piece for example got picked up on Huffington Post, The Verge, Engadget and many more causing a swell of links, traffic and social shares.



2. NewsJacking - By jumping on popular news stories that you can link to your brand or business to is a great way of getting links with little investment.

Of course you have to be very sensitive as you don't want to be linked to a tragedy or negative story however a great example was when Lyndon Antcliff teamed up with a music shop in Dundee to send a UKIP MEP some Bongo's after a fairly racist remark last year which secured a lot of UK media attention and links!

3. Improve your own Website - Do something a little different with your site. Be original and make your boring pages linkworthy.

Whether you design a funny 404 page, have an interesting robots.txt file or make your about page an interactive game there are lots of ways to earn links by making your site stand out from the crowd, I wrote about lots of ways to do this and many of which we have implemented on our own site.

George Stevens

Nebstone

1. Publish high quality interesting content and promote to the right audience.
2. Guest blogging (high quality relevant articles on high quality relevant websites only).
3. Be Balanced: don't use exact match anchors – I go for brand name while the content around the link gives relevance, don't just go for dofollow links – nofollow links still indicate activity and create a less artificial backlink profile, build links evenly over time.



Lisa Irby

2 Create A Website

I don't have link building strategies because I earn links. This is the process of gaining links by simply being helpful and providing value in as many places as possible.

I do YouTube videos, blog regularly and have a podcast. When you focus on creating free value, you will earn those links and those are much more valuable than links you build manually.

I haven't manually built a backlink in years unless you count commenting on blogs. But I do that out of the desire to comment, not for the purpose of building backlinks.

Marc Heighway

MarcHeighway.com

I work with many clients to position them as experts in their industry. With so many websites crying out for content, a very simple link-building strategy has been to reach out and arrange written interviews on industry websites who want both current and informed opinion. This always works extremely well.

Another tactic that has worked well has been creating some piece of content that is controversial. My more conservative clients are not too keen on this one, but with some of the edgier brands I've generated great exposure and back-links via a piece of content quite "close to the bone".

Most of all though, relationship building is a huge component of link-building. It's all very well creating an awesome piece of content or compelling website, but without relationships to support you disseminating that information, back-links can be hard to attract.

Matt Bullas

Click Consult



When Matt Cutts posted his now famous clamp down on guest posting, SEO had to start thinking differently. We had to look at new ways to develop a link profile and devise a new approach to outreach strategies. We knew the market was going to change, and had to come up with innovative ways to use these new strategies to service client requirements.

So the question then becomes, what link building strategies are in fact most effective? Here are just some of the latest techniques that are working.



1. Social Link Bait

Social Link Bait is a new technique that is showing promise as a growth area as part of an effective link building strategy.

Here, the principal aim of Social Link Bait is to generate a media storm based of a highly captivating marketing idea and from this, social shares and general mentions link to the event and or promotion, with the aim of building a natural linking profile.

What is important to note from this type of link building strategy is that there is no specific keyword criteria or requirement for certain pages being linked to.

A good example most recently of this kind of activity would be the Coca Cola happiness machine where the Coca Cola branded dispensing machine is used to “dispense doses of happiness”.

This takes event style marketing to a whole new level, where the experience is shared between the user and the brand the benefits to both are equally distributed. Fresh, engaging, and fun, this practice is helping to drive engagement to the brand and potentially reposition it on the web to a new customer base.

2. Digital PR

Most will have heard about Digital PR, but be looking at the execution in a myriad of ways.

Here, the most important element is to remember that this is still a traditional method of PR but utilised through digital means, what changes is the scope of visibility and the development of brand awareness through these channels.

Not only would a Digital PR method be targeted at journalists but bloggers would also be considered, especially for generating links and social shares.

We've discussed that one of the fundamental differences from traditional PR is that there is a movement away from print media to digital, however, what is rarely

considered is the scope that this gives in executing a strong Digital PR campaign.

For example, a press release is not engaging enough to bloggers but, an on page asset which can be linked to has far wider potential SEO benefits as the blogger will be more than likely to link back to the customer's site.

A good example of this kind of link building can be found with The AA. [The site's newsroom](#) is updated monthly with average fuel prices, not only does this get picked up by the traditional media as a press release, but bloggers have a tangible asset in which to link to.

3. Campaigns

Based on good marketing principles, snappy ideas and a penchant for thinking differently, general campaigns are being utilised across the SEO realm as a great way of building links to a customer's site.

Following a format of traditional marketing campaigns with idea generation at the heart of the activity, these are brand building exercises used to generate a buzz and engagement with social influencers to then generate mentions, and importantly, link to the customer's site from a blog post, or even several posts done over a spread period of time.

One of the best examples of this kind of link building strategy comes from Ford. In 2013 they launched the new Ford Fiesta and gave 100 brand new Ford Fiesta's to prominent bloggers and social influencers to provide unbiased reviews and their experience of using/having a new Ford Fiesta.

Similarly this has now developed in 2014 to Fiestamovement where a microsite has been built and all participants are encouraged to document their own personal journey through their site as well as their own social channels and blogs.

Then there is another great responsive campaign example, which has just recently happened in the world of Formula One. The Mercedes GP team launched a survey for their twitter followers after the two drivers entered into an on piste battle and team orders were considered to control the situation.

The question asked was "should team orders be used over the remainder of the 2014 season?" which led to onsite engagement and social engagement with influencers to help further the Mercedes brand.

Darren Shaw

Whitespark

We've found the following three strategies to be the most effective for our LocalSpark clients:

1. Sponsorships. Small businesses in most industries don't need a ton of links to rank well. Often, a handful of high quality links can be enough. Sponsorships are the quickest and most effective way to get those links.

Every city has events, charities, and organizations that are looking for sponsors, and most of them will give you a link from their website.

For a great example of a local business that is ranking No 1 for all their key terms with sponsorship links, run this [URL](#) through your favourite link tool.

2. Scholarships. Another great way to build some high authority links is by creating a scholarship for your industry and getting listed on colleges around the country.

In this great example, Open Site Explorer reports 896 linking root domains to their scholarship page while they only have 15 linking root domains to their homepage:

3. Testimonials. Every business uses the services of some other business. IT services, plumbing services, printing services, catering, etc. Every time you hire a business for something it's a link opportunity.

Send them a testimonial for them to post on their website. It's a win-win that often results in a great backlink from another local business in the same city.

Derek Edmond

Ko Marketing

Three Tactical Ideas:

1. Guest Post/Content Contributions - I'm not talking about writing for the sake of an SEO link alone. I'm talking about creating content that has real value for a publishers' audience and marketing objectives, while providing good exposure and brand recognition for your organization/marketing strategy as well.



2. Interviews & Collaborative Content Development - We create a lot of content that involves multiple contributors, interviews and feedback from experienced professionals in any given field. This helps add more value to content developed and the hope is that the additional collaborative exposure will drive social shares, referral traffic, and ultimately third party references.

3. Brand Monitoring - Using tools like Google Alerts and Talkwalker amongst others, paying attention to brand mentions (and keywords, competitors, etc) provides not only an opportunity to reach out to publishers who reference your site but don't necessarily create a link in that reference, but also help you understand your client's business strategy and how others see them as well.

Generally speaking, I tend to think of link building as more about relationship building. By getting to know the people behind the publications, blogs, and social profiles, you can much more easily create opportunities for gaining link references and content development ideas.

Joe Williams

Tribe SEO

1. Overseas Competitor Backlink Research: using *I Search From* you can easily see which websites rank for your targeted keywords in other countries. Then you can review their backlinks using a tool like Majestic SEO or Open Site Explorer and this opens up a much broader net for research and ideas.

For example, in the UK, if you Google 'iPhone screen repair', there aren't many established repair websites. While this may offer a great business opportunity, it doesn't give much in the way of research.

But using *I Search From* I can see iCracked.com does very well for 'iPhone screen repair' in the US and it's an established smartphone repair site with a killer backlink profile that's worthy of researching for both link building ideas and market research. You'll be surprised at how effective overseas backlink research can be.

2. Guest Posting: this technique has taken a lot of flak but when done right – in audience building – it's a great way of attracting relevant followers to your brand (and blog), leading to more eyeballs and over time more people sharing your content and this will eventually lead to more backlinks as well.



3. The Skyscraper Technique: developed by Brian Dean from Backlinko, he describes it as “content marketing for link builders” – where you find link-worthy content, make it even better (on your own site) and then promote it to the right people. I’ve used the Skyscraper technique and had it used on me.

Phil Rozek

Local Visibility System

As you may know, I specialize in local SEO. So I’m going to focus on my top-3 “local” link-earning strategies.

Local Link Strategy 1. Create a scholarship. First create a page where you describe the terms of the scholarship, eligibility, the application deadline, etc. Then find the “Scholarships” or “Financial Aid” pages of local (or even non-local) colleges, find the gatekeeper, and tell him/her about your program. [Here’s a perfect example.](#)



[This is a great post](#) that can help you unearth the kind of sites you’ll want to contact.

Local Link Strategy 2. Offer a senior or military/veterans’ discount. Same idea as with the scholarship: first create a page, and then spread the word.

Here are two nice examples: [senior discount page](#) and [military/veterans’ discount page.](#)

How to publicize? Well, there are discount-finder sites out there, and ones just for seniors, or for military personnel/families, or for whatever group of people the discount is geared toward.

Be sure to feature the discount visibly on your site. The visibility it gets there may be enough to get people finding your offer (and eventually linking to it, we hope).

Local Link Strategy 3. Get accredited by the Better Business Bureau. Is the BBB kind of a shakedown? Yeah. But if you get accredited you do get a nice link.

Sean Si

SEO Hacker

By the word 'Effective' I'm assuming that you mean both link equity and the traffic/exposure that a specific strategy brings with it. So I'll rank my answers in such a way that the strategies listed are ranked for both categories.

1. Guest Posting

If you ask me, getting the exposure on guest posting is already reward enough. Getting that link juice is just icing on the cake. (I'm hearing link builders cringe at that answer!)

Let me explain:

I know that the link juice you can get at a well placed, well landed guest post is a huge win - but theoretically, if the content of that guest post sucks, even if it's posted in TechCrunch or Moz, you've damaged your branding, wasted traffic opportunity, and the links you've posted in the article probably has a low click-through rate.

That means wasted signups, wasted conversions, wasted opportunities and live links that give off minimal link equity.

Yes you got the link, but you lost the purpose.

Again, that's theoretically speaking. A sucky content will never make the Moz blog or TechCrunch. That being said, guest posts hit both sides of the coin - link equity and traffic opportunity.

2. Broken Linkbuilding

Who in his right mind would let a broken link sit idly by his website? We don't like to see 404 pages when we expect to see the information we were supposed to find. Broken linkbuilding is a strategy that has a huge benefit to the link host. They get to fix their resources.

It's also relatively easier than guest posting whereas you don't have to invest a lot of time building that relationship. All it takes is a Google search, Screaming Frog's SEO spider, your mirrored content and an email.

And you've got yourself a link.

3. Data Driven Linkbaits

People love data. In my latest post about what kinds of entries people prefer to read online, data-driven entries ranked 2nd place. But if we take a look at the link profiles of content that's data driven vs. content that's built as how-to's, data driven entries get at least 100% more links.



I use the tool Qeryz to gather data in the SEO Hacker blog. Then I use Infogr.am to turn it into infographs for my readers. It makes it a lot easier for people to just see the data in a chart than in a sentence. It also makes the content a lot more share-friendly.

Paul May

BuzzStream

I don't know if you can point to any specific strategies and say "these are the most effective."

Context is always the key - the best approach will vary depending on the company, the market landscape, the competitive set, etc.

I don't think there's any way you can get around the hard work of analysing the market opportunity and then using your creativity to come up with strategies and tactics that will work.

I see this as good news though...the fact that it requires hard work, creativity and intelligence means that there's always going to be opportunities to differentiate yourself.

That said - here are some approaches that have worked well for us:

1. Big content pieces combined with outreach

Creating and promoting stand-out content pieces has been the most effective strategy for us.

2. Outreach for reviews and early looks

One thing that has worked great for us at BuzzStream is giving influencers and bloggers an early look at new features. This leads to not only great reviews and great branding, but links as well.

3. Encourage and support digitally active customers

You can use data appending systems like FullContact to understand which of your customers are socially engaged and have blogs - showing some extra love to these digitally active folks can result in great links.

Steve Scott

SteveScottSite.com



Honestly, my favourite link building strategy is no link building strategy.

Over the years, I've learned that search engines (like Google) consistently change their rules and algorithms. In my opinion, it's not a good time investment to keep up with these changes.

Instead, I prefer to focus on creating excellent content through blog posts and Kindle books. Over time, this quality content gets natural backlinks from top authority sites.

Sure, it's a long-term strategy. But I know that my site won't get penalized whenever Google does one of its infamous "dances."

Tadeusz Szewczyk

SEO 2.0

Which 3 link building strategies are most effective? This is a good question. Why? You say "strategies" not "techniques".

Strategy implies long term "strategic" planning and implementation, and to this day most link building "techniques" are quick and dirty.

In order for link building to work by itself (aka earning links), you need strategies that build up momentum over time.

1. Relationship building

By relationship building I don't mean straightforward outreach, but getting to know people in your area, niche and industry long before you need them.

Ideally you don't have a hidden agenda of "one day I will need you that's why I'm being friendly today". Just be positive to everyone you come across and those who care and are helpful will stick after a while. Of course, you need to be helpful in the first place.

Why should other people notice you at all? It's because you are approaching them without wanting anything in return. In my case this has been the most successful link building strategy over the years.

However, I only realized this afterwards. I mostly did it instinctively, just like you make friends in real life. It may take three months or longer before you build up relationships, but once you have enough contacts this may "result" in shares and links forever, so that



the initial investment of time and effort will pay off.

2. Flagship content creation

Flagship content creation refers to resources that stick out beyond the flood of average content we get inundated with everyday.

A group interview, infographic, case study, survey or tutorial are examples of such content. Of course not each group interview etc. is of such high quality that it will stand out. They are just more likely to become a flagship piece of content.

All your online friends won't be of much help if your content is just average or merely "nice". Make sure you are more than "nice" by providing deeper insights, and giving away more trade secrets.

I have written an article called '[Four Types of Flagship Content That Truly Stand Out](#)' that expands on this concept.

3. (Personal) branding

Both personal branding and branding in general has always been beneficial in the long term for link building. However, now that Google clearly prefers brands in search results and most likely it even counts unlinked brand mentions as ranking signals - it's the ultimate way to get links for years.

By branding I don't mean (just) a logo or a neat corporate design, although this of course helps. Branding means what you stand for, what you are about and what people associate you with.

Take a look at some of the early and well-known brands in SEO and what they stand for or how they changed along the years: Moz (moz.com), Aaron Wall (seobook.com), Outspoken Media (outspokenmedia.com).

To this day I link out frequently to them because they stand for something. I don't link out to them because we have a relationship, we don't, they are aware of me at best and that's all. (They don't link to me either).

I don't link out to them solely because they have flagship content, in fact their content I share is often just "nice" - but they have proven authority. So what are their brands about?

Moz's underlying message is "you can excel by being helpful without compromising your integrity".

Aaron Wall proves that "you don't need to kiss Google's ass to make it in SEO".

Last but not least Outspoken Media shows that "you can thrive by fearlessly fighting for your industry no matter who stands in your way".

Jaimyn Chang

Overit

There are all sorts of link building tactics that can help you achieve what you're looking for.

Determining which one to use depends on how much risk you want to take on, how many resources you have, and the desired longevity of the results.

Below are three link building strategies I use for Overit's clients.

1. Build Backlinks to Your Backlinks

A lot of people like to focus on just creating backlinks that point directly to their website. It might be a guest blog post on a relevant industry website, a press release about a new product/service, or a YouTube video that contains a link back to your site in the description. And having a long list of first tier backlinks will no doubt help you out with your SEO efforts.

But as each industry becomes more competitive, you need to boost these backlinks. A lot of people are going to read that sentence and think that I'm talking about blasting your first tier backlinks with SE Nuke or some other automated program. Don't get me wrong, those blackhat tools produce fantastic results if you use them correctly.

But the less risky route could include discussing a guest blog post you published on another site (your first tier backlink) in a blog comment. As long as the comment and guest blog post is relevant to what you're talking about on the second tier backlink, that will help boost your first tier backlink, which passes more link juice up to your website.

And while we're on this topic, it's perfectly fine to build nofollow backlinks. Stop thinking in terms of nofollow/dofollow ratio and start thinking in terms of authority and relevance. If you run a tech blog and you have the chance to get a nofollow backlink on TechCrunch.com or CNET.com, you would be an absolute fool to turn it down simply because it's nofollow.

2. Participate in Relevant Forums (Yes, forums)

One thing that I have seen make a big difference, especially with B2C clients, is maintaining an active presence on industry-related forums. It seems like a lot of people associate the word "forum" with "spam," which I can understand, but if you post meaningful content and interact with your potential clients on forums that they all hang out on, it makes a huge difference.



People like businesses that seem to care about maintaining a presence in the community. There's nothing more annoying than trying to dig through pages and pages of customer support content on a website to find a phone number or email that's buried underneath a bunch of contact forms. A forum gives you the opportunity to get quality links back to your site and also socialize with your customers.

You just need to be sure that the forum you are posting on is moderated properly and doesn't contain spam posts that stay live.

3. Don't Forget About Internal Links

The last thing I want to touch on as far as link building goes, is to never forget about internal linking. Many SEOs assume off-site inbound links are what you need to succeed, but if you're building links to pages of your site that do not link back to other important and relevant pages on your site, you're missing out on additional link juice that could mean the difference between page three and page one.

Neil Patel

Quick Sprout

Here are the three link building strategies I find to be the most effective:

1. Build a good product or service. Sure this may not seem like a tactic, but in the end the websites with the best products tends to win.

2. Infographics are still a great way to generate links. Assuming that the graphics are related to your business and you are avoiding rich anchor text, infographics are a great source of links and branding.

3. Guest posting is my 3rd most favourite way to build links. I wouldn't use this tactic to manipulate search rankings, but if you guest post on relevant sites, you will get referral traffic that is qualified and will convert into paid customers.



Ian Lurie

Portent

1. Fix broken incoming links. This is such an easy win. Find busted incoming links and either contact the sites to get them fixed or 301 redirect them. Or, even better, build a page where the broken link points.

We've seen broken links from major edu's, high authority government sites and major blogs where this simple fix could bring authority it would've taken years to acquire otherwise. Comb through your log files and find those broken links!!!



2. Instead of sending a deluge of cookie-cutter e-mails to random 'influencers,' use targeted social media buys to get your content in front of potential sharers. Then let them spread the word for you. That's got a far higher chance of bringing you links than spamming people.

3. Stop looking for gimmicks. This isn't a tip. But really, I'm tired of seeing folks go chasing link 'tricks' and 'strategies.' (sorry). *Great link building is an outcome, not a strategy.* And no one's 'entitled' to great links.

You work at creating and building value. You do it ceaselessly. You ensure that folks know you're creating value. It's called Marketing. It's never been easy. It's never been fast. But it is very effective.

Wrapping It All Up

There you have it, thirty-three fantastic answers from a great selection of SEO's.

So what are my takeaways from all this?

Well firstly, that Ian Lurie's third point above could have been the conclusion to this post.

And secondly - in a nutshell – that you still need trusted, high authority and sector specific backlinks to promote your content and get better rankings – but now more than ever you have to work hard to earn them.

And it's precisely this content led approach to creating audience engagement and by extension – earning relevant backlinks and improved rankings – that I'll continue using myself in future on Content Champion.

That said, how do you build or earn links? Let us know what's working for you and your clients...