

## Basic Search Engine Optimisation

### Backlinks – the right and wrong way to do them

If a website links back to your website, that's what is known as a 'backlink' - obvious really. The number of backlinks is probably less important than the quality of these links. In early SEO, you could get great success by creating thousands of automated backlinks from spamming blog sites and link exchange systems. Now such practices are frowned upon and backlink spamming is more likely to get your site penalised than help it.

There are a number of factors that determine how good a backlink is. Some of these are:

1. Popularity – a page that has lots of backlinks to it, gives higher quality backlinks itself.
2. Topic relevant – if a page is themed on a similar topic or keyword cluster to yours, then it will have higher quality. Backlinks from irrelevant pages are generally considered worthless
3. Anchor text – not as highly valued as it used to be, but the keywords used to link to your page are relevant. The best backlinks have similar link text to the title tag of your page
4. Trust Rank – this is a score used by search engines to measure how much they trust the website that the link is on. Certain TLDs like .gov and .ac are more highly trusted than regular .coms.
5. Age – fresh links tend to have higher quality than older ones. However, on the flip side, old domain names generally have higher trust rankings. If you can keep links fresh, then your backlinks are more useful.
6. Link neighbourhoods – spammy sites tend to link back to other spammy sites. If you are caught up in this kind of 'link neighbourhood' then you will need to take action to get the link removed, or disavow the link in Google Webmaster Tools.

Getting good quality backlinks is all about identifying where your links should be and then getting them there. Social sharing is a good way to make your page known, and some of those people who see your page in social media might add backlinks to them on their own blogs and websites, so having social media sharing buttons is vital.

Another source of backlinks is to write reviews. If you have a product or service that you can submit reviews on other websites, or you can give away trials and free samples to bloggers and YouTube vloggers to get more back traffic. YouTube will not necessarily give you backlinks, but the whole aim of SEO is to get traffic, not just get your page to the top of a list of pages, so this tactic cuts out the Google middleman.

If you have tried any products, you can write testimonials for people. For the sake of 10 minutes work, you can get your backlink on some high quality sites, and you might even get your picture on there too if you're lucky!

There are many other tactics that you can employ to get backlinks, some are sneaky (like finding relevant domains that have recently expired, getting a list of all sites that link to that domain and ask those sites to link to your page instead). Some are legitimate like targeting .edu sites with

links/resources pages. And some are just hard work, like writing content for other sites and journalists.

The best way to get good backlinks is to make sure your page is worth linking to. Have unique, good quality, interesting, funny or provocative content that will make people want to bookmark and share. That's the number one way to get great backlinks.