



Discover the Power  
of **BACK LINKS**

## Discover the Power of Backlinks

In all the current excitement over social networking, creating a buzz and using new platforms, the strategy of creating strong backlinks is sometimes taken for granted, overlooked... or, worse, seen as quaintly old-fashioned and irrelevant.

While it's true that backlink strategy is quite different than it used to be earlier this decade, make no mistake: It's still one of the most crucial ways to **strengthen, improve** and **maintain** your all-important **Google page rank**.

Having a strong Google page rank – and by “strong”, I mean showing up on the very first page in Google search results for your primary keywords or topic – can mean the difference between being recognized as an authority site... or never being found at all.

### Why So Many Marketers Overlook the Power of Backlinks

There are 2 types of people not making the most of backlinks, nowadays...

1. Those who are stuck back in the days when simply submitting sites to directories was considered cutting-edge SEO (search engine optimization)

2. Those who take backlinks for granted, or mistakenly think they don't matter at all

It's not just a question of "not making the most" of backlinks, however: It's also all about realizing exactly how powerful a strong backlink strategy can be. So what is a `strong backlink`?

Think of it this way... Suppose you applied for a job. You arrive on your intended employer's doorstep with a wonderful résumé... but no one who can vouch for your experience.

However, if your prospective employer asks for references, and you are proudly able to hand him a file full of letters from top professionals in your field – ones he knows well, and respects – all full of glowing recommendations... well, he's going to bump you to the top of his list!

In your eyes, the top professionals he's known and hung out with for the last 10-20 years have validated you thoroughly, and he now trusts your credentials – even though you may be new!

In our analogy translated to the wonderful world of the internet, it goes like this...

You	<b>equals</b>	Your Website, minisite or blog
The "top industry professionals" who wrote letters of reference	=	"authority" sites with good page rank and established history

The prospective employer	=	Google
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Once you've grasped that concept, you should instantly realize 2 things...

1. Backlinks are still **vitaly important**
2. Not just any old backlink will do! You need **relevant** ones that add to your own **credibility!**

### Why Is It So Important to Please Google?

Google is still the number one search engine used by most people (when they do still actually use a search engine to find you, that is)...

Google acts as a gatekeeper, jealously guarding its search engine – and users – from spam. Just like you, Google wants to be top dog in its industry, so it cares about accuracy and quality. And even though only an impersonal search bot initially crawls and indexes your site, Google does employ real human editors to eventually follow them, checking out elements on your site or blog such as:

- The **relevancy** of your inbound links
- Whether or not you seem to have used questionable tactics or attracted **natural, organic links**
- What **value** your inbound links bring to your website's overall content.

And in the wonderful and whacky world of internet marketing, if “content” is king, then “Google page rank” is definitely the queen!

How can Google tell if you’ve used “questionable tactics”?

Back to our job interview analogy...

Suppose, instead of those glowing letters from industry top professionals – the well-known ones with sterling reputations – you offer your prospective employer a bunch of letters that are poorly written, with obvious spelling mistakes.

They all look suspiciously similar: For example, there are the same spelling mistakes in each one, as if you’d written them yourself. And instead of coming from industry professionals in your field, your “Medical Transcriptionist position” job application has letters of ‘reference’ from:

- A candy store, who says they used you to transpose medical records for customers
- An individual calling himself “Medical Man” and offering to sell the reader a kidney in his P.S.
- A “hospital” that didn’t quite ring true or use the right terminology, so when the employer checks it out, he discovers its address actually belongs to a fast food restaurant instead of the hospital it claimed to be

You’re wrinkling up your nose already, aren’t you? If you were the employer, you’d toss those obviously phoney recommendations in the

garbage the instant your applicant was out the door (maybe before, if you're extra-crabby).

In other words, that particular batch of written references wasn't worth the paper they were written on.

In fact, they did you irreparable harm! Mr. Prospective Employer would now no more consider you than he would consider a 6-year-old as a possible serious job applicant. (What a shame! Your seriously wonderful interview went to waste!)

*Yet thousands of otherwise competent internet marketers commit virtual suicide in this way with poor backlinks every day!*

## **What Backlinks Can Do for You**

You ask in alarm: "Does that mean my inbound link from GoldenMeanieCasino is harmful?"

Back to that all-important **relevancy** thangg... if you are running a blog on *Playing Perfect Poker*, probably not.

But if you're running a blog dealing with *The Best Siamese Cat Breeders*, yes. That backlink – no matter how thoughtful and honest the comment – isn't going to do you much good, and might even hamper your Google page rank.

So, since you didn't take any precautions to deal with poor quality linkers, you now have three choices:

- 1.** Offend your commenter, if the comment really was thoughtful and relevant, by deleting it or not allowing it
- 2.** Remove the hyperlink, and hope he will just think your blog did it
- 3.** Comfort yourself by saying that you trust the commenter, and nobly leave the comment in, hoping that the Google editor might one day read it and realize your site deserves a better rank

(Since we are talking about the relevance of the linking site here – not the relevance of the actual, individual comment – that latter is a wistful hope, at best.)

The harsh reality of marketing on the internet and backlinks? It's kind of like attending a Hollywood premiere...

If you're an up-and-coming starlet, you want to be seen partnering up with Brad Pitt or Angelina Jolie (depending on your gender).

You don't want to be seen with a drugged-out ex-bit part player, who hasn't been in a movie for forty years. Especially if there are disreputable stories circulating about his unprofessionalism, trouble-causing capacity and seedy personal life.

So now that we've got the issue of backlink relevancy and quality dealt with, is "credibility" the only benefit of using well-optimized backlinks?

Absolutely not!

It's a major issue, of course, but there are other benefits you may not yet have thought about...

- 1. Credibility** – how trustworthy you are
- 2. Authority** – how expert you are in your website's subject
- 3. Popularity** – Let's not kid ourselves: Popularity counts with Google, as well as in Hollywood!
- 4. Page Rank** – Great backlinks mean you vault to the top of the "list" – Google's front page. And that's where people will find you!
- 5. Keyword power** – Not only do you vault to Google's front page, you do it for the keywords that will bring you the right targeted traffic.. potential customers for your products
- 6. Traffic** – Authority sites are quoted. They pull in noticeable and significant traffic.

So it's all about:

- Being yourself... but dressing for success

- Being seen with the “right” people – ones who can boost your career
- Not being seen with “wrong” people who can scuttle your reputation or weaken your authority
- Bringing value and relevancy to your content, your website – and most of all, your readers

Fortunately, there are ways to boost your backlink power, and it all boils down to attracting not just the right potential customer or client... but also the right reader and comment-maker.

You need to be aware of **anchor text**, and how you use it. (For example, turning the words “click here” into a link, while perfectly harmless, isn’t going to advance your page rank one iota – you seriously can do better than that by using one of your best long-tailed keywords – one that would seem totally natural.)

You also need to set up your blog so that you encourage commenters to link with text that works to your best advantage (as well as considering how to best filter them).

And you need to know how Google works with static sites – and the sort of backlinks you should (and should not) include.

Take the time to do a modicum of research. Get rid of or replace your weak backlinks with more powerful keywords and phrases. Encourage great comments by providing great original content. And avoid anything manipulative or artificial.. but do take advantage of common sense and shrewd, honest backlinking tactics.

Your positive results may surprise you!