

# Build Traffic and Value Through Reciprocal Links

By Angela Wu

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Reciprocal linking is catching on in popularity. It's a way for website owners to share each other's traffic, a simple "let's trade links" deal that can help to widen your web audience.

Swapping links can also help you with your search engine traffic. Some search engines calculate the number of links to your site from other sites and use it to determine your ranking. As you know, a better position equals more targeted traffic!

Another way reciprocal links can benefit you is by drawing repeat traffic back to your website. If you offer a high-quality list of relevant links, visitors will return often because they know that they can quickly find what they're looking for.

## PROACTIVE LINKING METHODS

One way to approach reciprocal linking is be proactive. You actively search out websites that would complement your own, and send a note to the owner asking to swap links.

This is actually a very time-consuming task. It isn't as easy as purchasing a list of "targeted" and "willing" email recipients (also known as SPAM!) and then blasting out a link swap request.

It requires research, pure and simple. To find possible link partners, visit any of the major search engines such as Google <http://www.google.com/> to find websites that can offer valuable content to your visitors.

Then visit each website individually. Take a few minutes

to look around and see what type of information it offers, and whether or not it can add value to your own site. Don't worry that linking to other sites may make your own seem "incomplete" - it doesn't. No one website can cover everything, and a high-quality links directory benefits your visitors by saving them from searching the web.

Keep in mind that website owners may get several link requests every day. To make yours stand out - and to convince him that you're not spamming - be sure to personalize your link request.

Include the site owner's name. Comment on something you've seen on her website. This shows that you have actually visited the site and taken the time and effort to look around. Personalized requests are far more likely to get a positive response.

## PASSIVE LINKING METHODS

You can also take a passive approach to reciprocal linking. That is, you basically sit back and wait for others to approach or link to you. This passive approach gives you an obvious time advantage. Some ways to encourage passive links include:

- = Put a link on your site that says, "How to Link to Us". Provide the text, banners, buttons, and HTML to make it as easy as possible for someone to think to you.
- = Offer a content-rich site. You'll be pleasantly surprised at how many websites link to you just because they like what you have to offer.

Personally, I prefer the passive approach, as I'm sure most of you do. I only actively request links when I happen across an excellent site that I know my audience would appreciate.

But like with all things online, there isn't one "right" way to do things. Success depends on doing a combination of things well. Reciprocal links are one way to steadily build targeted traffic and add value to your site.

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Angela is the editor of Online Business Basics, an exclusive newsletter for eBusiness beginners. OBB features ongoing tutorials on how to build a profitable Internet

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