

A Guide to Better Link Popularity

By John Buchanan

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Over the past year or two, one thing has become extremely clear...the need for link popularity. Every major engine weighs the link popularity of sites heavily when ranking sites. At least one major engine even claims they won't index sites that don't have at least one link pointing to them from another site.

Unfortunately, building link popularity can be one of the most challenging aspects of search engine promotion. It's tedious, boring, extremely time consuming, and ABSOLUTELY essential.

That being said, let's go over some things you should and shouldn't do when beginning your link popularity campaign.

We'll start first with the "shouldn't" list so we can get those out of the way and focus on what will actually work.

*Don't bother with FFA pages. They worked at one time but now most engines have learned to filter out FFA pages, and even if they don't your link will most probably rotate off the results page in a matter of minutes, but you can guarantee that your email address will remain in their database for YEARS.

*Don't join link farms. These were a good idea once as well, but have come under heavy fire by the engines over the past year.

*Don't use hidden links with the goal of building your link popularity. I'm of the opinion that one or two throughout a site is no big deal, but don't go overboard with them.

*Don't use free classifieds to get your URL out there. You are just asking to receive mass amounts of junk mail.

Ok...now that we know some of the things NOT to do, let's get down to some things that you can do to build your link popularity.

*The first thing you should do is to get your site listed in the "Big 3" directories. Those are Yahoo, LookSmart, and the ODP. Yes, Yahoo and LookSmart are expensive (even more so since their recent price increases), but one link from each of them can go a long way in boosting your link popularity.

*Next you should concentrate on finding sites that are of a similar nature to yours and approach them about linking to you. Stay away from off-topic sites. Links from sites of the same theme as yours help to reinforce your theme and further help in boosting your search engine rankings. Be creative in your thinking. Attempt to develop a list of all the different types of sites that relate to yours. Once you have this list you can then begin to search for those specific types of sites.

*Create a link page listing all of the sites that you wish to link to you. By linking to the sites you are going to be contacting first, they will be more likely to link back to you when you contact them.

*Search for smaller vertical directories to submit your site to. There are thousands of these directories out there. A good place to start is at:

<http://www.searchengineguide.com/searchengines.html>

*One often overlooked trick is to find similar sites that use guestbooks and forums. If you can find these you will often be able to post a message and include your URL. Be careful with this. Some forums don't allow the posting of URL's so check out their rules of etiquette first.

*Testimonials of products can also be a good way to get your URL out. Consider writing a testimonial of a product you've used. Include your name and URL at the bottom. Email the testimonial to the site owner. Site owner's are ALWAYS looking for testimonials as it increases buyer confidence and most likely they will be happy to post your testimonial.

*Writing articles on your topic can also be a great way to get your URL out. Write an article and include your URL in the bio at the end of the article. Once written submit it to related areas around the web such as E-zines etc. Most of these publications also keep web-based archive of articles

that the search engines will eventually spider.

*One product I have personally used is a program called Zeus. This program can dramatically reduce the time involved in finding sites similar to yours. There is a bit of a learning curve to it, but once you understand it and have it up and running, it is a definite time saver. The program is designed to automate the entire task of finding sites, contacting them, and building a link system for those sites, but many people use it just to help them locate the sites so they can personally contact them. For more information on Zeus, visit the following URL:

<http://www.se-secrets.com/zeus>

*If you don't think you have the time to devote to this consider hiring a professional to do the work for you. I have personally worked with a company called LinkageXpress and had great results. They have different price plans depending on the number of links you want. For more information on them visit the following URL

<http://www.se-secrets.com/linkage>

*Finally, don't forget to link from your site to other related and important sites. This is also taken into account by the engines.

Yes, it can be a bit of a task, but it is an absolute necessity in today's search engine era. Stick to the above guideline and with a little work, effort, and time, you should be sitting pretty.

Good Luck and Happy Linking!

John Buchanan is the author of the book "The Insider's Guide to Dominating The Search Engines", and publisher of "The Search Engine Bulletin", a FREE monthly newsletter. Visit him at <http://www.se-secrets.com> for more information or to sign up for the newsletter.

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