

Promote Your Website - Part III Link Popularity

By Nowshade Kabir

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What is link popularity?

The quantity of links in different websites pointing to your sites is called link popularity of your website. The more popular is your site the more links you get from other websites and vice versa.

Why is it so important?

Links from high traffic websites furnish you with constant stream of visitors. Other website marketing efforts i.e. email marketing, might give good influx of visitors while the campaign lasts but the quantity diminishes once the campaign is over. Links are a different story! Once a link is installed, it might start bringing a steady flow of visitors all the time, depending on the website where the link was placed.

Link popularity is also crucial to search engine ranking of your website. Search engines, especially Google, claim that link popularity is one of the key factors that they consider in their search algorithm while indexing a website. What would be the rank of a website in a search result depend on its link popularity in a very big way.

So, how can you conduct an effective link popularity development campaign and build traffic for your website?

Content is the king

Prior to start a link popularity campaign, you should seriously question yourself, what would be the reason for the other sites to post a link pointing to your website? Most high traffic sites are quite picky about putting links, and won't do it without any apparent reason.

If your site boasts quality content that the visitors of other sites might find valuable, chances are there that those sites would be interested in posting a link of your site on their relevant web pages. High quality content that gets updated regularly will definitely help you getting more links and subsequently more visitors. If even you are just a web store, you can still add much sought-after content to your site, such as, detail product information, articles related to the specific products,

comparison tables, etc.

If it is really difficult to get relevant content for your website, try getting a valuable tool that might be interesting for visitors and incorporate it to your website. You must have noticed that free search engine submission forms are common on Search Engine Optimization sites. Giveaways like e-books, white papers, articles and other freebies are also good for creating interest to a website.

Submit website to various directories

When your new website is up and running, first thing you should do is to submit your site to many search directories such as, Yahoo!, DMOZ etc. available on the Internet. Not only, this will help you get quality backward links to your site, this is also the fastest method for your site to get crawled by search engines spiders and get indexed by them.

Don't underestimate the value of the many regional and industry specific directories. Try submitting your site as many as possible relevant local directories. Examples of these directories are municipal business directory, local chamber of commerce directory etc.

If you are a seller of, for example, metal related products; get your site enlisted in as many metal industry associated directories as you can manage.

Get reciprocal links

Since backward links are so important, building link popularity by exchanging links with other websites should be a priority in your online marketing effort.

Which are the websites that you should consider to get backward links to your website? Your objective should be – not just having any backward link from any site, the sites that you are getting reciprocal link has to be relevant to the content of your website as well. First of all, if you get a link from a website which has nothing in common with your site, you, most probably, will not receive any traffic from that site. The second and most important issue is – the search engines, while calculating your website's rank in a specific keyword search result, consider, mainly, the backward links which are relevant to your site.

Search engine Google uses a unique Page rank system to determine how relevant your website is. Your site's Page Rank depends on backward links to your site. However, if the page from where your website gets the backward link has more outbound links then incoming ones, the value of this link gets reduced. A link to your site will have the biggest impact on your Page rank:

- If the page itself has a good page rank.
- There are very few outbound links from the page.

To check out your site's Page rank, download the Google Toolbar from <http://toolbar.google.com/> and install. After that, go to your website. On the tool bar, you will see the rank of your index page in a scale of 0 to 10. The rating is considered good if it is five or more.

Make sure, while exchanging links you select the websites that have page rank no less than yours.

How to find the websites that you should swap links with?

The easiest way is to check out the backward links to the website of your most prominent Internet based competitor or industry leader of your field. Other option is to run a search based on the most relevant keywords to your website and check out backward links to the first ten websites.

In the search box of Google, Altavista and AllTheWeb type link: and then the URL of the site to view all the sites that have backward links to this site. Visit these sites to find the best one to exchange links and then contact them with a nice email.

I will also suggest you to check out the number of visitors the site receives before offering a link swap. The tool that will help you figuring out the quantity of traffic a site gets, you can download from <http://download.alexa.com/> by clicking on the button "Free Tool Bar". This is also a very good tool to analyze web traffic. The tool also shows which other similar sites people tend to visit alongside with the site that you are viewing now.

If a site gets significantly less visitors than yours, what is the point of having a link form that site?

While looking for websites to swap links, don't forget about your partners, suppliers and buyers. These sites are capable of bringing major traffic and are indeed relevant to your site's subject matter!

Your link popularity campaign should also include the following methods. However, mind it, these techniques require tedious work from your side.

Issue Press Releases

Press releases are a good way of exposing your website to mass and increase your link popularity. Whenever you are coming up with a new product or service, overhauling your website, adding new elements to your site or conducting a seminar, etc. you should issue a press release. It is also a very cost effective method of getting publicity for your site. To broadcast your press release you can use one of the free media release sites: <http://www.prweb.com>

Write Articles

If you are dedicated to popularize your website, you must have substantial knowledge of the subject related to your website. Why not, write articles on your subjects of expertise and circulate them on the Internet and post on your website? Apart from this will add good content to your website, if other websites and newsletters publish your articles, you will get free publicity and increase your link popularity.

Build an Affiliate Program

If you sell a product or service through your website, you should seriously consider developing an affiliate program for your site. An affiliate program is when a visitor from your affiliate's site comes to your site using the link that you provided to the affiliate and buy something; the affiliate will get a commission from you. The affiliate program can expand your business substantially. Since your affiliates require posting your links on their sites, this increases your link popularity as well.

Participate in Discussion Groups and Forums

This is also a great way of increasing your link popularity. There are literally thousands of discussion groups and forums on every conceivable subject on the Internet. You should actively participate in some of them, those which are most relevant to your area of expertise. The signature along with your website address that you post there while asking a question or answering to a question also boosts your link popularity.

Link Exchange Programs

You can also participate one of the link swap programs available on the Internet. Unfortunately, most of the automated link exchange offers that you receive through them are random and irrelevant to your site. But, however, I would suggest you to give them a try, as chances are there that you still might receive some good offers. You can also actively search for sites to swap links in their directories.

Development of link popularity is an on going process. You have to work on this constantly. But, the outcome that you might achieve from your endeavor also could be significant.

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