

Link Exchanges Bring Qualified Traffic

By Sage Lewis

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Next to search engines, link exchanges are the best way to entice new, pre-qualified traffic to a web site. Below are seven tips for planning a solid link-exchange strategy.

1. Plan for the long term. Link exchanges will give you great results if you continually work at them. There is NO proven quick fix for getting quality links to your site. While there are programs that can help you with the process, nothing beats going to a site, looking it over, and then writing a personal email asking to exchange links. Recommend where you would like to be placed on a site. They might not put you there, but at least this will let them know that you were at their site.
2. Track your exchanges in a spreadsheet or database. Develop a system of keeping track of where you have requested a link and when and if it was placed. Keeping track of link exchanges can get confusing after a while. Having a tracking system in place will help.
3. Use Yahoo, LookSmart, and Google to start looking for places to exchange links. Begin by doing searches on your own site's prime key phrases. Find sites that are related to your industry yet are non-competing. A shoelace site would be a good exchange with a shoe distributor, for example. If a site is ranking well for your key phrases on these major engines, having a link here is going to increase the value of your site in the eyes of all the other engines. This will also lead to a nice amount of traffic.
4. Consider programs to help you with the process. Two programs that can save you some time are Zeus at <http://www.cyber-robotics.com> and 2bpop at <http://www.2bpop.com>. These programs help you search for and organize related sites and then enable you to contact them for link exchanges. These tools can be big time savers. But don't fall into the trap of creating hundreds of boilerplate emails that say nothing of interest to the prospective site owner. Always create individualized emails.
5. If you want to really increase your chances of a link exchange, call the person in charge of the site. Emails can be a bit superfluous especially from a stranger. But a phone call can often give your request a bit more weight.
6. Make your links page easy to access from the rest of your site. If your links page is hard to find or not linked from the rest of your site, it will decrease your chances of persuading someone to want to exchange links. Make your links page attractive, organized and a valuable resource for your visitors. There is concern about providing links to other sites because this encourages people to leave your site. The value you will receive from exchanged traffic and becoming a centralized resource for your industry far outweighs the loss of visitors. If your site is setup correctly, the visitor will have

accomplished your most wanted response before they ever go to your links page.

7. The big secret to link exchanging... join an affiliate program and pay people to send you traffic. You can set up a program that will give a site owner a certain amount of money (usually between \$.05-\$.10 per click) for every visitor they send your way. Using a program like this in conjunction with the above steps is going to really help your exposure. There are many companies that offer these services. Some are managed by you and some are managed by the company. Choosing the right service depends on many variables. Some such services are:

clicXchange: <http://clickxchange.com/>

AssocTRAC: <http://www.marketingtips.com/assoctrac.html>

Commission Junction: <http://www.cj.com/>

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