

How to Improve Your Search Engine Ranking with Reciprocal Links!

By Tony LLoyd

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Not too long ago the search engines depended heavily on meta tags and keyword density to determine the positions or rankings of web sites. Google is the first search engine to shift its primary focus to link popularity when ranking web sites. Some other major search engines are doing the same. It is therefore very important to focus on link popularity if you want to get a better placement on the search engines and drive more traffic to your site.

The search engines regard a web site as very valuable if there are several links pointing to it. The rationale is that an informative and useful site will attract the interests of several web site owners. These owners will link to this site as a benefit to their viewers and to increase the "content" value of their sites.

To increase your link popularity you should get involved in a link exchange program. This is often referred to as reciprocal linking. To be very effective, link exchange or reciprocal linking should be done with web sites that have similar theme or subject matter.

Before ranking your site, Google and some other search engines will look at the popularity of the sites you are exchanging links with and how they relate to the theme of your site. You can exchange links with just about any site but the search engines prefer the link to be formed with sites in your field.

Basically, search for web sites with similar or complimentary theme to exchange links with. For example, if your site sells floral arrangements exchange links with a wedding planning site. Visitors to that site will be interested in what you offer and some of your visitors will find value in the wedding planning site.

Some web site owners may not exchange links with you. If your site only attracts 5,000 visitors per month and the site you want to link with pulls 50,000 visitors per month, one site will benefit much more than the other. Take this into consideration before you request a reciprocal link. Reciprocal linking should be mutually beneficial to those involved.

Search for complimentary sites at your favorite search engines. It is recommended that you create a link on your site pointing to the site you want to exchange links with. Prepare a simple letter addressed to the owner of the site, requesting a reciprocal link. The letter should look something like this:

Dear _____ (Use a real name; never use Dear Webmaster or Webmistress),

I found your site while doing a search on home business (or whatever search term you used.) You deserve a lot of credit for putting together a very informative and appealing web site. The visitors to my site would benefit from the content of your site, so I have added a link that you can view at www.mysite.com/resources.html . This link will send more visitors to your site.

Please take a brief moment to review my site. Since our sites are not in direct competition with each other, would you please consider a reciprocal link to my site? I truly believe we will benefit from the increased traffic that a reciprocal link will bring. Please inform me of your decision. I can be reached at me@mysite.com.

Best Regards,
Tony Lloyd

I recommend that you allow 5-7 days for a response. After that time send a tactful reminder and wait another 5-7 days. If no response after 2 weeks, it is safe to assume that the owner of the other site is not interested in linking with you. The rule here is patience. Never assume you should get a reply within 48 hours and never send annoying letters reminding the owner that you are waiting for him or her to link to your site. (Some people actually do that.)

The process of searching for sites to link to, placing links on your site and contacting the owner of those sites takes time. This is actually an ongoing process. You should request a few reciprocal links each week, document the date of each request and the date on which you will do a follow-up.

HERE IS A SECRET! Go to Google and enter a search term related to your business. Let's say your business is copywriting. Do a search for copywriting or copywriter. Make a note of the sites that are listed in positions number 1, 2 and 3. Next, go to this link popularity site - <http://www.marketleap.com/publinkpop> - and enter each URL. Click on Generate Report to see how many sites link to that site.

Notice that there are close to 1,400 sites that have links to www.copywriting.net . Click on a number under one of the featured search engines and browse some of the sites listed. While browsing these sites you will soon get ideas as to where you can request links to your site. This is a "fantastic" tool you can use to generate a list of sites to contact for reciprocal linking.

It is possible to get a top search engine ranking in your field. A lot of hard work is involved but it is worth it. Stick with your link exchange program. Keep requesting reciprocal links and watch your ranking improve steadily.

Written by Tony LLoyd

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