

Basic Link Trading

Trading Links is the simple but effective process of two website owners getting together and linking to one another with the purpose of cross-promotion.

Benefits to Link trading

1. Increasing qualified traffic to your site
 - a. When you trade links with other relevant websites, visitors to those sites may see your link, click on it, and come to your site.
2. Qualified Traffic
 - a. When you trade links with other websites that share your target audience, traffic coming in from those link trades tends to be very qualified, and has a higher probability of converting.
3. No Cost
 - a. Link trading certainly does take time and effort, but it is probably one of the best free promotional techniques available. You simply can't exhaust the supply of potential link trade partners.
4. Improving Link Popularity & Page Rank
 - a. Search engines like Google care how many other websites link to yours. The more sites that link to you, the higher you go in search engine rankings. In point of fact it is virtually IMPOSSIBLE to get effective listings in most relevancy search engines today without effective link building. That is a fact. Link Popularity is a huge factor for Google and other search engines.
5. Speed & Surety of Search Engine Inclusion
 - a. Submitting to major search engines in the traditional way (learn more from the Submitting To Relevancy Search Engines tutorial) is slowly becoming less and less certain as a way to get your website listed. Far and away the most sure and quick way to get listed in major search engines is by trading links, especially with other high Page Rank websites. Google and other search engines will find your website by following links from that site to yours. A traditional submission to a search engine usually requires a wait from 3 weeks to 9 months depending on several variables, and there is no guarantee that your site will even be listed. However, by aggressively trading links, it is technically possible to get listed within days, and the probability that your site will be picked up is much higher than through a regular submission.
6. Improving your site's content
 - a. If you build a directory of links on your website (by trading links) that is a genuinely a great resource for visitors to your website to find related websites, your visitors will tend to return to your site, just because of the great link directory you have.

The key to Link Trading:

The key here is to trade links ONLY with *relevant websites*. A relevant website is a website that shares your target audience. If the website would be of interest to visitors to your site, and vice-versa. Then it is a good prospective link trade partner. Trading links with irrelevant websites is a waste of time, mainly because irrelevant sites that link to you don't share your target audience. As such the chances of getting qualified traffic from them is slim indeed. Your time is much better spent linking with relevant sites.

Strategies to find links:

1. Surf
 - a. This is very straight forward. Go to Yahoo or your favorite directory, and start looking for relevant sites.
2. Competitor Link Pages
 - a. Go to the link pages of your competitors and look at the sites they are trading links with. If they are linking with your competitors, they are probably willing to trade links with you.
3. Do a competitor "link" check on Google
 - a. If you type in "link: yourcompetitor.com" in Google (remember the space between the colon and the url) and do a search, it will give you a list of websites that link with your competitor. If they will trade with a competitor, they are likely to trade with you too.
4. Advertise
 - a. Use some leverage strategies to promote your desire to trade links with other relevant websites. Advertise your link trade request in the free classifieds. Use your permission marketing mailings to mention that you would like to trade links with other relevant websites. Trade newsletter ads with other relevant newsletters and use that space to mention link trading. There are lots of possibilities here.

Example letter to send out requesting to Trade Links:

Subject: Link Trade Request

"Greetings, my name is _____, and I'm the webmaster for (name your web site). I came across your (name their web site) whatever.com while surfing and I think we could both benefit by trading links. I have found that trading links is one of the best sources for increasing qualified traffic to my site.

If you have any interest in exchanging links with me here is my information:

URL: www.mywebsite.com

Title: The Title of Your Website (no more 4-8 words)

Description: The total description of your website. (no more than 25 words)

Just email me back with your info, and let's make it happen. I look forward to hearing from you.

Your name

Webmaster

you@emailaddress.com

- Make sure that you customize each email with at least the address of the site with which you are requesting the trade. Customizing the email will dramatically increase your response rate by communicating to the reader that your email is not a spammy form letter. Also make sure you get to the point quickly. Request letters that are too long won't get read.
- Acceptance of your request will vary depending upon the quality of your search and the content of your e-mail offer. You should expect a 10 to 20% positive response rate. If you want 100 links to your site you might have to send out 500 link trade requests.
- This is a continual ongoing promotion program.
- **NEVER** be content to stop after sending an initial batch of link exchange proposals. The more links you trade the more traffic you get, and the higher your link popularity goes.

Creating an Effective Link Page:

- Use strong advertising copy and create emotion and a desire for other merchants to participate.
- Near the top of your link page, you should invite other relevant websites to trade links with you. You should provide instructions to execute this, including which types of sites are eligible, what your link should look like on their page (URL, Title / Headline, Opening Statement / Description), and a contact email address where you can be reached regarding link trade requests.