

Little Blue link building BOOK



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We Want Your Feedback!

This is just the 1.0 version of "*Little Blue Link Building Book*" and we'd like to update it in future.

That's why your feedback is very important to us. Or maybe you're willing to contribute? :)

Feel free to send your thoughts to Tim Soulo at timsoulo@ahrefs.com

Introduction

Here at *Ahrefs* we believe that link building is, and will continue to be, one of the key elements of modern SEO.

We also believe however, that as Google's ability to detect manipulative link building improves, it is vital that your efforts are focused on methods of attracting links that will ensure your site is safe from penalties – both algorithmic and manual.

More importantly, focusing on these same methods will allow you to build the kind of powerful, editorial links, that Google loves to see. The kind that will quickly see your site shoot up the rankings, and your traffic and sales grow on a monthly basis.

We're sure that these are the type of links you want to be building, but...

...we also know that link building can be a bit of an informational minefield.

To help you navigate safely through it, we created this detailed guide to modern, white hat link building. A guide we like to call our '***little blue link building book***'.

There are currently 12 parts to the book (although we expect it to grow), and in each section we detail specific white hat link building methods (with examples), while also providing links to further reading/tools that will assist you when implementing the strategies on your own site(s).

But before we dive into the methods, let's start by defining exactly what it is that makes a link white hat.

What makes a link white hat?

First, an important point...

Google is not against all link building and not all link building is 'bad'. We can quote Matt Cutts directly on that from [this 2013 interview](#) with Eric Enge of Stone Temple Consulting.

“No, not all link building is bad. The philosophy that we’ve always had is if you make something that’s compelling then it would be much easier to get people to write about it and to link to it. And so a lot of people approach it from a direction that’s backwards.”

Indeed, Matt has pretty much defined for us the ethos of white hat link building – that links should be earned - not bought, or automatically created through manipulating loopholes.

With every method included in this guide (save perhaps some social sharing), the editorial control remains with the linking website (either to approve the link, or to add it) and it is this editorial control that makes a link 'white hat'.

But that's not to say we can't be clever too...

Ok, let's get started.

Part 1: Creating Custom Visuals

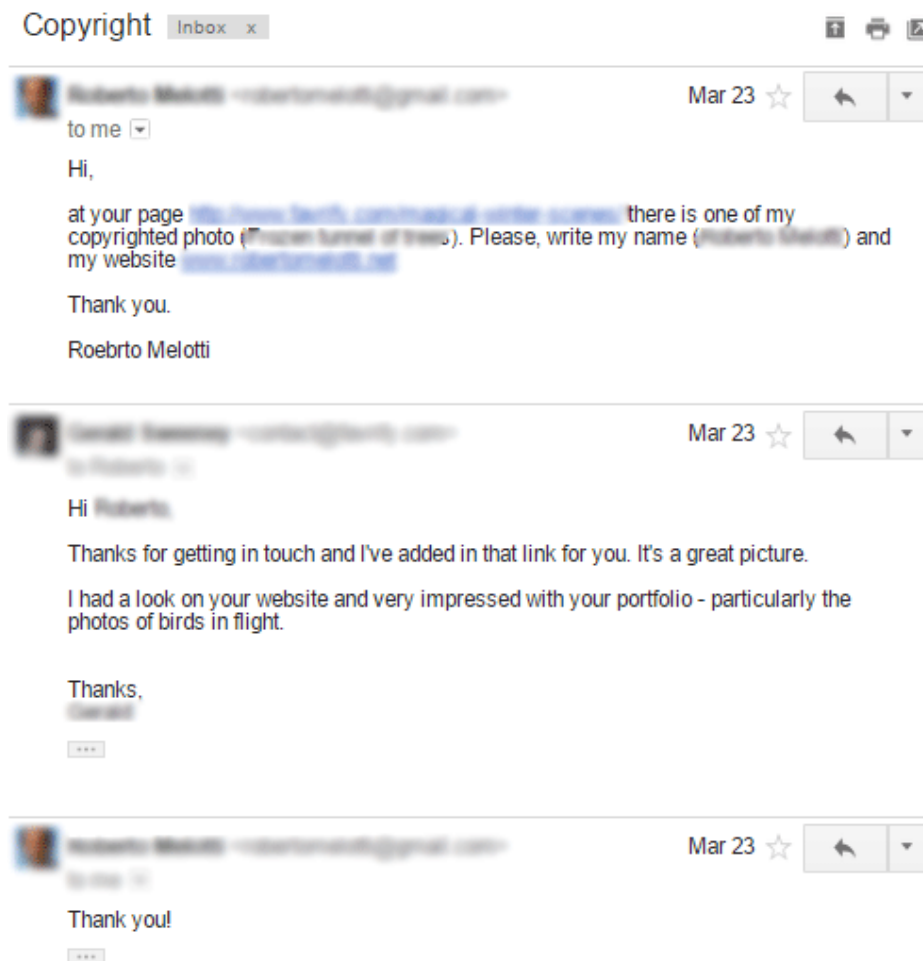
With the huge growth of viral media sites such as buzzfeed, and content sharing communities (like reddit), the line between fair use and copyright has become a little blurred to say the least.

If you create and publish a high quality image - be that a photo, or a custom visual – there is a fair chance that it will be 'borrowed' at some point by another website; generally with loose attribution, or often with no credit at all.

Fortunately, as a smart marketer, this is something you can leverage to your advantage.

Each unattributed use of your original work is a link opportunity, and one in which you are in the rare position of holding the upper hand. Reach out to those who have swiped your images, thank them for using them, and ask for a link.

Here is a real world example of someone doing just that (a site I am involved with had inadvertently used an image without attribution).



Pretty painless right?

The above example was a photograph, but it could just as easily been a chart, or other custom visual.

What to do

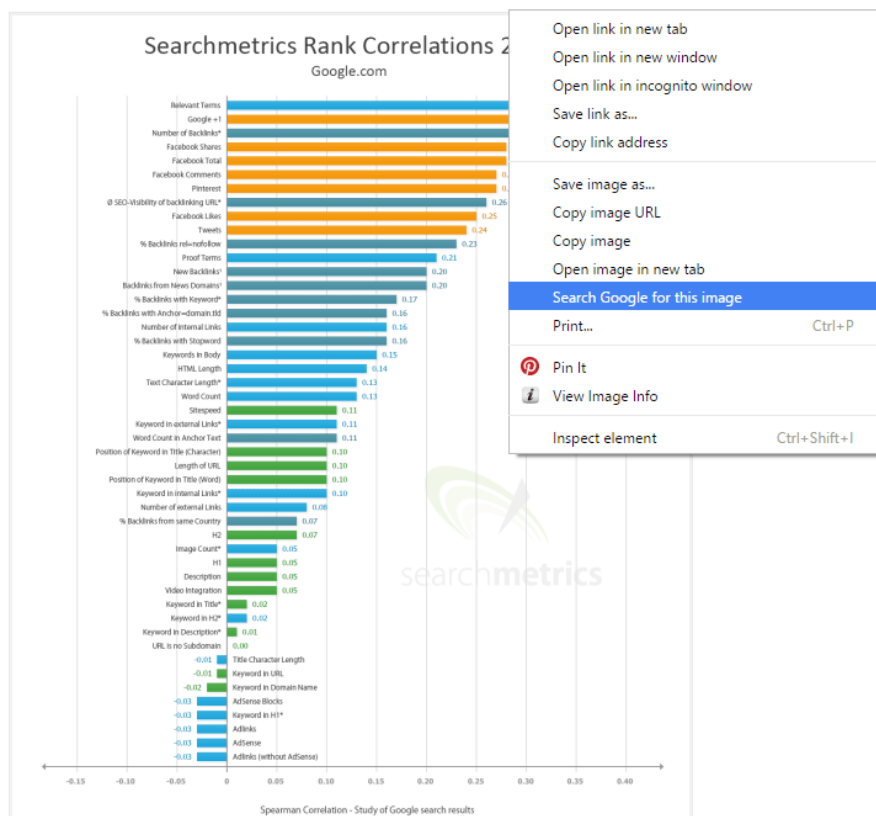
Take the time to create high quality, custom visuals for your content, then actively encourage other webmasters to share them (with attribution). If you find another site has re-posted your visual without credit, send a short, friendly, email similar to the above.

How to find other sites using your images

Example: if you are using chrome, Google makes this pretty easy.

Searchmetrics [Rank Correlations 2014 post](#) features a very useful chart that has been shared a number of times across the web.

If we right click on the image in chrome, we have an option to 'Search Google for this image'.



Clicking on that will bring us to a Google image search page, which lists other URLs using the image.

Pages that include matching images

SearchMetrics Released SEO Ranking Factors For 2014 ...



searchengineland.com/searchmetrics-released-seo-ranking-fac... ▼
985 × 1093 - 8 Sep 2014 - **SearchMetrics** announced their **2014 SEO ranking factors** study is now ready for download. Every year, **SearchMetrics** releases the study but ...

2014 Rank Correlation Analysis and SEO Ranking Factors



blog.searchmetrics.com/.../the-2014-rank-correlation-analysis... ▼
1221 × 1565 - 7 Sep 2014 - Rank Correlations And SEO Ranking Factors Google U.S. 2014. We have greatly ... **Searchmetrics Ranking Factors** - SERP 1to3 We have ...

Searchmetrics Ranking Factors 2014 and How it Relates to ...



dwellinbound.com/.../searchmetrics-ranking-factors-2014-an... ▼
985 × 1093 - 26 Feb 2015 - Rank factors are defined by many data points. Find what **Searchmetrics** learned this year and how it relates to SEO for Real Estate.

Searchmetrics' Ranking Factor Study 2014 - XEN Systems



xen.com.au/look-searchmetrics-ranking-factor-study-2014/ ▼
550 × 704 - 23 Sep 2014 - It's that time of the year again when **Searchmetrics** releases its annual ranking factors study. Once again, content quality is a key factor.

SEO Ranking Factors 2014 Study Released By SearchMetrics



www.dynamicsdigital.co.uk/.../seo-ranking-factors-2014-stud... ▼
985 × 1093 - 9 Sep 2014 - **SearchMetrics** have released their in depth study of the ranking factors that lead to strong SEO performance in 2014's Search Engine Results ...



If you find a site using one of your images without attribution, go ahead and reach out and pick up that link!

Further Reading

- [Easy Link Building With Images](#) (*Matthew Barby*)
- [10 Ways To Use Images For Link Building](#) (*Kaiser The Sage*)
- [A Visual Asset is Worth 1000 Words](#) (*Gregory Ciotti*)
- [Why Visual Assets > Infographics](#) (*Moz*)

Recommended Tools

- [Piktochart](#) (create infographics, charts & presentations)
- [Statistia](#) (statistics portal)

Part 2: Spying On Your Competitors

It goes without saying (although I realise I have just said it) that with most link building campaigns, the primary objective will be to improve your site's organic search rankings.

By extension this of course means that you are aiming to gain ground on (and ultimately overtake) the rankings of your competitors. After all, if you are aiming to claim the number 1 position for a certain key phrase, it follows that the incumbent site is going to have to lose that same position.

With this in mind, the backlink profiles of your competitors are a great place to start looking for link opportunities.

What to look for

Over time you will develop a sixth sense for picking out the golden nuggets in a competitor's link profile, but when starting out you can use indicators such as: -

- Domain Rating (Ahrefs)
- Domain Authority (Moz)
- Trust Flow & Citation Flow (Majestic)
- Pagerank (although this hasn't been updated for a long time, so take it with a heavy dose of salt)

When you find a high quality link, you'll want to reverse engineer the strategy that was used to acquire that particular placement (this ties in with several other tactics in this guide).

For example, the link might be a guest post, or perhaps on a links/resources page. These should be relatively easy to replicate.

Pick off the low hanging fruit!

Pro tip: Look for hubs, i.e. sites that are linking to 2/3 of your competitors. These should be fertile ground for link building.

Using Ahrefs to export competitor links

Log in to your *Ahrefs* account and type the URL of the domain you wish to explore into Site Explorer. Click on 'SEARCH LINKS'.

Click on the 'Links' button under 'Inbound Links' on the left menu and then choose 'Export'.

	DR	UR	Int Ext	Link URL Link Anchor	First Seen Last Check
8+ 86 897 4.7K 3.6K	62	80	331 8	ahrefs.com/	25 Oct '13 4 d
8+ 55	60	53	6	ahrefs.com/robot/	8 Aug '13

This will produce a CSV file containing all the information you need to mine your competitor's links. To make it easier to find the strong links, I would recommend sorting the spreadsheet first by Domain Rating, then referring page URL.

	A	B	C	
1	#	URL Rating (desc)	Domain Rating	Referring Page URL
2	865	18	95	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjAZrBnLo20
3	511	21	94	https://plus.google.com/+AhrefsCom
4	512	21	94	https://plus.google.com/+AhrefsCom
5	513	21	94	https://plus.google.com/+AhrefsCom
6	514	21	94	https://plus.google.com/+AhrefsCom
7	515	21	94	https://plus.google.com/+AhrefsCom
8	516	21	94	https://plus.google.com/+AhrefsCom
9	517	21	94	https://plus.google.com/+AhrefsCom
10	518	21	94	https://plus.google.com/+AhrefsCom
11	519	21	94	https://plus.google.com/+AhrefsCom
12	520	21	94	https://plus.google.com/+AhrefsCom
13	304	22	94	https://plus.google.com/+BrianZippin
14	994	18	94	https://plus.google.com/+HalfdanTimm
15	676	19	94	https://plus.google.com/+JosephGojoCruz
16	289	22	94	https://plus.google.com/+KristiHines
17	613	20	94	https://plus.google.com/+KristiHines/about


Alternative method

If your competitor doesn't have a huge link profile, you might want to work directly in *Ahrefs* to find opportunities. I would recommend browsing by 'Referring Domains' and sorting the data by DR.

Top Content

Top Referring Content

Near-Duplicates BETA



INBOUND LINKS

Links

New / Lost


Broken Backlinks

Anchors

Referring Domains

New / Lost

Referring IPs




OUTGOING LINKS

Linked Domains

Anchors

Broken Links



EXPORT

CSV

PDF

	Referring Domain	DR	Ahrefs Rank	DR
1.	youtube.com	95	3	0 /
2.	wordpress.org	94	4	0 /
3.	plus.google.com	94	5	12
4.	pinterest.com	91	10	0 /
5.	en.wikipedia.org	89	14	0 /
6.	w3.org	88	17	0 /
7.	goo.gl	87	24	0 /
8.	bit.ly	85	37	0 /
9.	joomla.org	84	52	7 /
10.	sina.com.cn	84	54	1 /
11.	ameblo.jp	84	55	4 /

When you spot a promising domain, you can click on 'Backlinks' to get the actual linking URLs.

Ahrefs.com

13.	sites.google.com	83	62	0 / 6	25 Mar '15	BACKLINKS ▾
14.	feedburner.com	83	68	0 / 2	24 Mar '15	BACKLINKS ▾
15.	reddit.com	83	72	34 / 44	22 Mar '15	BACKLINKS ▴

Referring Page URL	UR	Int/Ext	Size	Link Anchor	Type	Last Ch
www.reddit.com/user/RIST_NULL/	18	201/29	19 kB	ahrefs.com/ Ahrefs Site Explorer & Backlink Checker		7 d
www.reddit.com/r/mediachimps/	18	116/36	12 kB	ahrefs.com/ ahrefs		97 d
www.reddit.com/r/SEO/comments/2luo4q/real_list_of_top_15_seo_tools/	16	241/23	26 kB	ahrefs.com/ https://ahrefs.com/		103 d
www.reddit.com/r/SEO/comments/25ejw/how_is_a_google_doc_rankin...	16	155/14	22 kB	ahrefs.com/site-explorer/backlink... I mean here's the backlink profile: Ahrefs and a quick look at a page from one of those links	⊘	94 d
www.reddit.com/r/SEO/comments/25ejw/how_is_a_google_doc_rankin...	16	155/14	22 kB	ahrefs.com/site-explorer/overvie... won't. It's SEO like it's 2010. You end up with shit like this .	⊘	94 d
www.reddit.com/r/SEO/comments/25ejw/how_is_a_google_doc_rankin...	16	155/14	22 kB	ahrefs.com/site-explorer/referrin...		94 d

So go ahead and get those links!

Further Reading

- [Filling the Gaps in Your Link Profile with Ahrefs Competitor Backlink Analysis](#) (Ahrefs)
- [How to steal your competitor's backlinks, rankings & traffic](#) (Robbie Richards)
- [The Ultimate Guide to Reverse Engineering Your Competitor's Backlinks](#) (Brian Dean/Ahrefs)

Recommended Tools

- [Ahrefs](#) (analyse & export competitor backlinks)
- [Open Office](#) (for analysis/sorting of exported links)
- [Moz](#) (analyse competitor backlinks)
- [Majestic](#) (analyse competitor backlinks, find hubs)

Part 3: Putting yourself out there

While there may be plenty of products (particularly on the Warrior Forum) that promise you can sit back in your room, put up some spun content, automate some link building and watch the visitors (and cash) roll in, to truly succeed with marketing any business online you have to get involved.

You have to make connections and, as the title of this section says, you have to put yourself out there!

You want your name, and your website, to be synonymous with the niche you are in; anywhere people are talking about your industry, you want to be there - in fact, you've got to be there.

You'll be building your brand, building trust (which will aid conversions), and even better... picking up some nice links along the way. What's not to like?

So what sort of places do you want to look out for?

Top blogs in the industry

This one is a no-brainer.

You'll probably already know who the influencers are in your niche, and the quickest way to get yourself on their radar is to simply become an active commenter on their blog.

You will generally get to leave a link back to your own site, and if you take the time to leave insightful comments, or questions, then you will find that other visitors (often including the site owner) will click through to find out more about you.

While the links will generally be nofollow, they are great to have as part of your overall link profile.

As a regular commenter you are also starting to build a relationship with the influencer, which will help with any future outreach.

Industry forums

Most industries will have at least one active forum (if yours doesn't then create one yourself!), and that's definitely somewhere you want to be hanging out.

Remember though, this is all about building your reputation and networking, not easy link dropping.

Answer questions, get involved in threads and be an active member of the community. Only include a link to your content, where it genuinely adds value to a conversation.

If the forum allows you to add a link in your signature, then you'll want to do that, but don't be pushy or overly promotional.

One caveat to the above...


Sometimes you might have created some content that crosses into another niche outside of your regular industry. Forums can be a good place to promote this content, but if you are doing so, then be completely transparent.

Here is an example of a thread I started in a history forum, promoting a piece of content on my own site. I was completely honest - I was the creator of the content, and I thought that it would be of interest to the members.

The link was well received and brought some nice referral traffic.

January 31st, 2015, 11:46 AM

#1



surround3

Citizen

Joined: Jan 2015

From: Glasgow

Posts: 4


Timeline of the new york skyline over 100 years

Thought you guys might like this. I put it together last week (took quite a while) and tried to [include](#) all the major additions to the skyline over the last 100 years. There's over 150 [photos](#) with some really interesting old shots.

100 Years Of New York Skyline (1915 - 2015)

January 31st, 2015, 02:35 PM

#2



Fire_Raven

Historian

Joined: Jul 2010

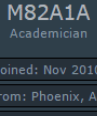
From: Oregon

Posts: 2,395

Very nice work. I love looking at old photographs.

January 31st, 2015, 10:52 PM

#4



M82A1A

Academician

Joined: Nov 2010


From: Phoenix, AZ

Posts: 78

Thanks for sharing this! Every time I see pictures of skyscraper construction in the 20s and 30s, I am amazed at the seemingly calm appearance of construction workers high atop the steel frames.

February 1st, 2015, 07:31 AM

#5



surround3

Citizen

Joined: Jan 2015

From: Glasgow

Posts: 4

Yeah, the bravery of the construction workers is quite incredible. As someone who suffers from vertigo badly it staggers me that they can just sit there.

Sorry about the chinesewomendate... google [this](#) can be a odd at time!

Notice that I didn't just link drop and go. I checked back and got involved in the thread I had started.

Reddit

Ok, I'll say it: Reddit is a tricky one.

It's a smart, fickle, tech savvy community, and they can sniff out those who are just there to drop links very easily.

But get it right and you can get some serious traffic. Traffic which can lead to some great links (notwithstanding the link you get from reddit itself).

Generally, just like forums (actually reddit is a kind of forum of sorts), transparency is the key and growing your reputation before you start sharing your own content is a must.

Find a subreddit that is closely related to your niche and get involved. Build your 'karma' by sharing content from other sites, and commenting on links other redditors have shared in the sub.

When it comes to sharing your own content, you might want to seriously consider adding [OC] (which means original content) to your title. This tells the other redditors in the sub that you are the creator of the content you are sharing, i.e. you are self promoting, but you are not trying to be sneaky about it.

It's not essential, but generally if you have a good rep in the sub, other redditors will appreciate your transparency and are less likely to downvote your submission.

I have had good success using the method above, and while I haven't been lucky enough to have any content hit the front page (yet), I have had many posts right at the top of the subs homepage, which drives great traffic.

In a nutshell... don't spam and don't be annoying (that applies to a lot of this section).

Default Subs

Aside from niche specific subreddits, here are some tips for a couple of the default subs in which I've had some good success: -

<http://www.reddit.com/r/interestingasfuck/> (pardon the french) – data driven posts work pretty well here, infographics, and well, anything that's interesting. Really good sub and drives great traffic.

<http://www.reddit.com/r/todayilearned> – this is a hugely popular sub. If you have a post that contains a really interesting fact (it can't be brand new), then it can work well here. You have to include the fact in the title with TIL before it, i.e. 'TIL that (really interesting fact)'. You'll get good click-through.

<http://www.reddit.com/r/dataisbeautiful/> - data visualisations (but not infographics). This sub often hits the front page.

Honourable mentions to...

Quora – this is a great place to make a name for yourself as an expert, by answering questions specific to your industry. You can drop your links in, but again, only where relevant to the conversation and to add value.

Yahoo answers – not quite as good as Quora these days, but still worth checking in on occasionally to see if there are any questions you can help out with.

Further Reading

- [Forum Participation Rubric for Ecommerce Link Building](#) (*downtown ecommerce*)
- [How to Use Forum Link Building to Build Authority for Your Site](#) (*Vertical Measures*)
- [The Easiest Guide to Making Reddit Your #1 Traffic Source](#) (*Blogging Spell*)

Recommended Tools

- [Citation Labs Link Prospector](#) (find forums & blogs specific to your niche)

Part 4: PR

The lines between modern SEO and traditional PR are becoming increasingly blurred. Indeed some of the best link builders these days have backgrounds in PR.

Traditional PR is defined as...

“the practice of managing the spread of information between an individual or an organization (such as a business, government agency, or a nonprofit organization) and the public.”

...which is in many ways the goal of white hat link building/content marketing – to manage a company/website's online reputation (and pick up some juicy links along the way).

Here are some white hat link building tactics you can utilise, which would fit under the umbrella of PR.

Getting Quoted

Whether you are a one man band link building for your personal site, or are representing a multi-national company, getting quoted is one of the best ways to both:-

- a) establish your expertise in an industry
- b) manage your website's online reputation.

Of course, wherever your name is mentioned, you'll generally get a link (if not see 'Link Reclamation), and these are the kind of high quality editorial links that Google simply loves.

So how do you go about getting your words of wisdom featured on other sites?

Full Interviews

Lots of websites publish full interviews with experts in their industry. Look for opportunities, and reach out to the websites asking them if they would like to interview you.

If you are new, it will be harder to secure opportunities, but as the ball starts rolling you will find it becomes easier, and eventually you will find other sites approach you directly.

As Rand Fishkin of Moz says: -

'Interviews also, perhaps oddly, beget more interviews, especially if the answers you provide are robust, useful, interesting, and shareable.'

The takeaway from Rand's advice is to make sure your answers are both interesting, and will resonate with the website's audience.

Expert Round-ups

If sites in your niche publish expert round-up posts (these are particularly popular in marketing), then you want to try and make sure that your name is included regularly as one of those experts.

Again, getting the ball rolling is the hardest part, so if you find a newly published expert round-up you might want to simply reach out and ask if you can add a tip/quote (I would recommend including the quote in the outreach email).

Additionally, Ann Smarty has a great service called MyBlogU (link in tools), which allows you to browse opportunities for quotes (i.e. sites publishing expert round ups) and submit your tip directly.

HARO

HARO (Help A Reporter Out) is a free service, which will send you a daily list of websites and publications looking for quotes from experts.

The site covers a wide range of topics, and you will generally find good opportunities for most niches.

Note: The first two tactics (full interviews and round-ups) can be flipped round and hosted on your own site – see 'Part 12: Link Bait'.

Press Releases

When used correctly, press releases are still a great way to secure valuable coverage for your business.

I caveat the above with 'correctly' as, the tactic of simply submitting a low quality press release to dozens of free press release to pick up cheap backlinks, is one that you should avoid. Indeed it is very likely to get your site penalised.

While higher quality press release services such as PrWeb are still useful to an extent (for example getting your release into Google news), to get the most out of your releases, you should take the time to build a prospect list of journalists and bloggers who have a history of covering your topic.

Most newspapers have readily available contact emails for their journalists/editorial teams, and when not available you can often reverse engineer them by looking at email addresses that are published.

For example, if you find other email addresses at the publication are in the format *firstname.lastname@thenewspaper.com*, then normally you can just follow the same format with the name of the journalist you wish to contact.

If all else fails, when targeting newspapers, you can always pick up the phone and ask for contact details for a particular journalist.

Once you have your prospect list in place, you should send a personalised introductory email to each contact, along with your press release.

Keep your prospect list in a spreadsheet, for later use.

Further Reading

- [Use press releases in your SEO](#) (*Branded 3*)
- [How Press Requests Can Be A Link Building Goldmine](#) (*Search Engine Land*)

Recommended Tools

- [HARO](#) (Help A Reported Out)
- [Gorkana](#) (advance notification of editorial calendars for major publications)
- [MyBlogU](#) (get featured in expert round-ups)

Part 5: Guest Blogging

Don't believe the headlines.

Guest blogging is far from dead and is still a powerful way to drive engaged referral traffic, build awareness for your brand, and improve search rankings.

While Google may have waged a very public war on guest blogging in the Spring and Summer of 2014, the target was those who had been using guest blogging as a scalable, low quality way of acquiring links.

Here's how to do it right and ensure you stay on the good side of Google.

1. Go for quality not quantity

Aim to publish one or two guest posts a month on authority sites in your niche.

You will get much more (both in traffic and SEO benefit) out of one post on an authority site, than you will from dozens of posts on low quality sites.

The quality aspect applies to your own writing, as well as the host site.

Guest posts should be on a par quality wise with what you would publish on your own site. Indeed, there is an argument that you should actually save your very best work for guest posts as they represent an opportunity to showcase your talent in front of a new audience.

Ask yourself: -

- *Would I be happy to publish this post on my own site?*
- *Am I proud of this work and happy to put my name to it?*

2. Use branded anchor links in your bio box

Guest posts are not the place to be dropping in keyword rich anchor text - these links are all about boosting your domain authority.

Place one link back to your site in your author bio box with either the name of your brand, or a naked url. For example: -

John Doe is head of marketing at YourBrandName...

John Doe is head of marketing at <http://www.yourwebsite.com>

Only link back to your site from within the body of the post if the link genuinely adds value, and if you do feel that it should be there, be upfront and link naturally. For example: -

'I wrote up a post on this over on my own blog last week, [which goes into a little more detail.](#)'

3. Assist with promotion

When a guest post goes live, do what you can to help promote it:-

- Share it through your own social media channels
- Consider sharing it with your email list
- You might even want to conduct some outreach (the more authority the guest post has, the more value will be passed to your site)

The better the post does, the more you will get out of it, and the more likely you are to be asked back!

4. Stick around

After launch be sure you are on hand to help answer any questions that may arise in the comments.

Further Reading

- [How To Succeed With Guest Blogging In 2014](#) (*Top 5 SEO*)
- [The Real Truth About Google and Guest Blogging](#) (*Kiss Metrics*)
- [The Definitive Guide to Guest Blogging](#) (*Backlinko*)

Part 6: Syndication

Syndicating your content to other sites and blogs in your industry can be a good way to build up traffic to your site, and pick up some backlinks.

I would recommend being selective with this though, as although Google will normally recognise your site as the original source, there may be times when due to the authority of the site hosting your content they may actually outrank you.

Aside from seeking other sites to repost your content (either manually, or through an RSS feed), you might want to think about actively encouraging visitors to republish your posts (with attribution, i.e. a link). If you go down this route, you can throw up a creative commons license for your content, instructing those who wish to republish exactly how you wish to be credited.

The viral sites do this all the time

IFLscience (I'm sure you know what the IFL stands for!) is a high traffic site that often republishes articles from elsewhere on the web.

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This article was originally published on [The Conversation](#). Read the [original article](#).

In fact, the viral sites (buzzfeed, distractify etc) are full of content that is just re-purposed from elsewhere with a 'via' or 'h/t' (hat tip) link at the bottom.

If buzzfeed take one of your articles and republish it, then believe me the traffic you get will more than make up for the plagiarism!

Of course, if you find someone using your content without attribution, then reach out and ask for a link. If they don't acquiesce to your request, then you'll probably want to consider filing a DMCA takedown.

Automatically add a link to copied text

If you are using wordpress, there are a number of plugins available (such as this one <https://wordpress.org/plugins/add-link-to-copied-text/>) that will automatically add an attribution link to copied text.

This can be an easy way to pick up some extra links, with no additional overhead required on your part (other than 2 minutes to install the plugin).

Further Reading

- [The 101 on Content Syndication: Who, What, Where, When and Why](#) (SEJ)
- [Content Syndication: How to Get Started](#) (Search Engine Watch)
- [Syndicating Content - Whiteboard Friday](#) (Moz)

Recommended Tools

- [Add link to copied text](#) (wordpress plugin)

Part 7: Content Re-purposing

As someone who appreciates the value of high quality content, you will spend a lot of time, money, or both, on content creation. With this in mind you should make sure that you squeeze every last bit of value out of everything you produce.

Your visitors and potential customers will have different preferences on how they consume content – some may enjoy reading text based tutorials, whereas others may prefer a visual format (e.g. infographic), a video, or perhaps an audio version.

Re-purposing your content is a great way to reach new audiences and pick up some nice links along the way!

For example, one text based blog post could potentially be re-purposed into: -

- A video (which can be posted to youtube, vimeo and other video sharing sites)
- A slideshow (which can be posted to slideshare etc)
- A podcast (iTunes, Stitcher, Soundcloud)
- An infographic (there are lots of places to share these)

All of these should give you an opportunity to drop in a link back to the original content piece hosted on your site - driving traffic and boosting authority.

Further Reading

- [11 Genius Ways to Repurpose Content](#) (*Wordstream*)
- [50+ Places To Repurpose Your Content](#) (*Coschedule*)
- [The Ultimate Guide To Repurposing Content](#) (*Buffer*)

Part 8: Social Sharing

The debate about whether or not Google uses social signals in their rankings continues to rage.

They have said directly that they don't, and the argument is compelling.

After all, if they included facebook links, or twitter links when calculating rankings, and facebook or twitter were to block the Google crawler at some point down the line, it could seriously mess things up.

With that being said, there are many (including me) that maintain there is an element of social signal involved in the algorithm, and I have seen lots of evidence on my own sites to suggest this is the case.

Another consideration is that lots of sites have, for example, twitter and facebook widgets in their sidebars, and often in a way that makes the links crawlable (although granted, depending on how frequently they update, they might not stay around for long).

Notwithstanding the above, social sharing is a big part of white hat link building, as those social shares, regardless of their own direct equity, will lead to links further down the line.

Remember, eyeballs on your content = potential for links.

Also, if there is a traffic/popularity element to the algorithm (which I believe there is), then the traffic generated from social will also potentially help your site to rank.

Pro tip: Tweetable quotes are a great way to boost twitter shares for your content, either with pre-built quotes/tweets (using a plugin such as TweetDis) or 'on the fly' quotes which can be automatically generated from selected text (SumoMe).

Getting the most out of your time

While I believe it is important to have some sort of presence for your business on all of the major social networks, in most industries there is one in particular that will work well.

For example, I have found that twitter is great in the Internet Marketing niche, but not so great for entertainment (where facebook is much better). For food sites, pinterest is the king. Instagram is great for fashion. LinkedIn is good for career sites, and Google+ is great for... erm...

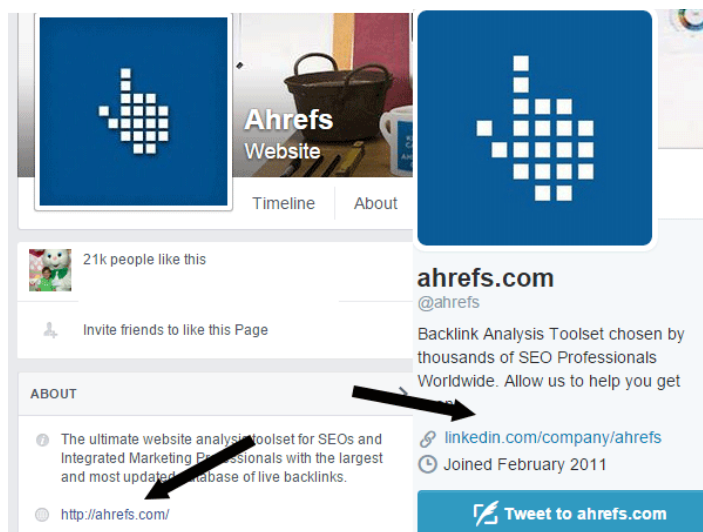
If this is the case for your industry, and depending on your resources, I would generally recommend focusing most of your efforts on the network where you get the best results.

That's not to say that you shouldn't update all your profiles and share your content on each, but if you're not careful then social networks can chew up a lot of your time, so generally, it's a good idea to pick one to hang out on.

Grabbing some easy links

One place you should definitely be dropping your links is in your profiles as these will definitely be indexed.

You might even cross-link between your different social presences, as *Ahrefs* do with their twitter account (link to linkedin profile).



Further Reading

- [5 Things You Need to Know About Social Media & SEO](#) (*Kissmetrics*)
- [Has Google Turned up Social Signals as a Ranking Factor?](#) (*Search Engine Watch*)

Recommended Tools

- [Buffer](#) (manage social media)
- [Hootsuite](#) (manage social media)
- [SumoMe](#) (selectable quotes/tweets)
- [TweetDis](#) (pre-built in-line quotes/tweets)

Part 9: Broken Link Building

The web is an ever changing place, with websites popping up, then disappearing all the time. You may well have started projects yourself then abandoned them after a couple of years; leaving them to fester and forgetting about them until the domain name eventually expires – I know I have.

This is good news for the link builder.

Because it means that the web is full of broken links.

Broken links that you can fix.

Broken link building is without doubt one of the most powerful weapons in the link builders arsenal, and in terms of outreach, one of the highest converting.

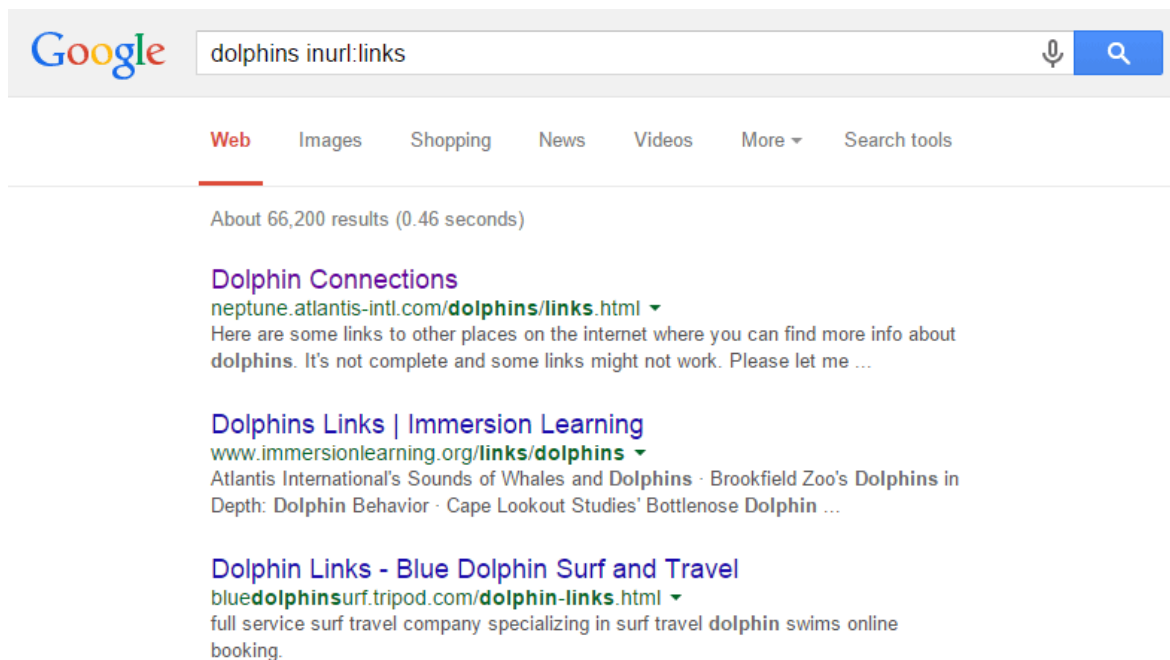
There are a number of ways to go about finding broken link opportunities (see links below), but let's quickly walk through a very basic example.

For the purposes of this exercise we'll assume you have a website about dolphins (everyone loves dolphins right?!).

To find opportunities you'll want to use Google search queries to your advantage. Let's start with a simple one: -

dolphins inurl:links

This searches for the keyword 'dolphins' and pages which have the word 'links' in the url.



Let's go to that first result and use the free chrome extension 'check my links' (link in tools below) to scan the page for broken links.

The screenshot shows a webpage titled "Links to other dolphin or whales related pages". At the top, there are three links: [\[Home\]](#), [\[Photos\]](#), and [\[Report\]](#). Below these, the text reads: "Here are some links to other places on the internet where you can find information about dolphins and whales. Some links are complete and some links might not work." followed by "Please let me know if your page is whale/dolphin related and you want me to add it here in the list of links."

The Ahrefs Link Results extension is open, showing the following data:

Link Results	
Links: 48	Queue: 5
Caching: FALSE	Method: HEAD
✓ 33	✗ 10

The webpage lists several links, some of which are highlighted in red to indicate they are broken:

- [The Electroic Zoo.](#)
You just have to add this to your bookmarks. It's a collection of links to all kind of info on the net about animals. Databases, sounds, images. A great idea!
- [Jaap's page about marine mammals.](#) All species listed with some info about them. And more.
- [The WWW Virtual Library](#)
The VL is the oldest catalog of the web, started by Tim Berners-Lee, the creator of the web itself. Unlike commercial catalogs, it is run by a loose confederation of volunteers, who compile pages of key links for particular areas in which they are expert; even though it isn't the biggest index of the web, the VL pages are widely recognised as being amongst the highest-quality guides to particular sections of the web.
- [Dolphins Plus Home Page.](#) 404
A place where you can learn more about dolphins.
- [The Marine Mammal Page.](#) 404
Mark is an ex dolphin trainer.

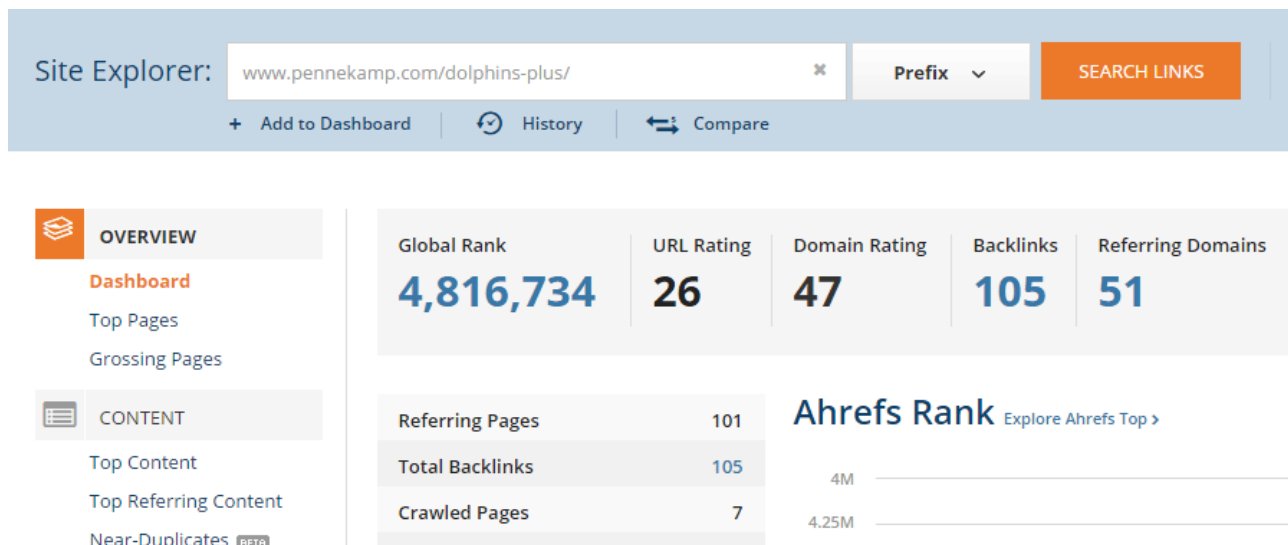
The extension will highlight broken links – there are 10.

So we can now do two things:-

Firstly we can reach out to this site, advise of the broken links and recommend our website as a replacement.

More importantly though, we can take each of the broken links and plug it into *Ahrefs*.

That first broken link has 51 referring domains – so from just one broken link, we have discovered 51 potential link opportunities.



Rinse and repeat and you will uncover hundreds of opportunities, with a great 'in' for outreach and a high conversion rate.

The above example is pretty basic, but gives an indication of how powerful the tactic of broken link building is.

Going advanced, you can use tools such as archive.org to find expired content, bring it up to date and offer your new content as an alternative to the broken link.

Further Reading

- [The Broken Link Building Bible](#) (Moz)
- [Broken Link Building: The Ninja Guide](#) (Top 5 SEO)
- [How to Get High Quality Backlinks](#) (Backlinko)

Recommended Tools

- [Check My Links](#) (chrome extension)
- [Archive.org](http://archive.org) (browse archived/historic content)
- [Screaming Frog SEO Spider](#) (crawl a website as Google sees it)
- [Xenu Link Sleuth](#) (simple tool for finding broken links on websites)
- [Ahrefs](#) (find sites linking to broken urls)

Part 10: Link Reclamation

In its simplest form, link reclamation is the practice of picking up links from unlinked brand mentions and citations on other sites.

You can find these in a number of ways:-

Firstly, you can do a simple Google search for your brand name, or website name (always good to do periodically), and go through the results looking for opportunities.

For ongoing opportunities you should set up a series of Google alerts for your brand name and any other ways in which your website might be mentioned (for example, the names of members of your team). Again, notwithstanding the opportunity to pick up links, this is good practice as you certainly want to know what people are saying about you and your brand around the web.

When you find an unlinked mention, simply reach out, thank the webmaster for the mention, and ask if they could include a link for any of their visitors who wish to find out more. You'll get a very high conversion rate on this.

Aside from link reclamation on external sites, you can often reclaim links on your own website!

When you move things around, which happens from time to time, URLs change and links get broken. You can use *Ahrefs* to find broken links to your site.

Type in your domain in site explorer and then click on 'Broken Backlinks' under 'Inbound Links'.

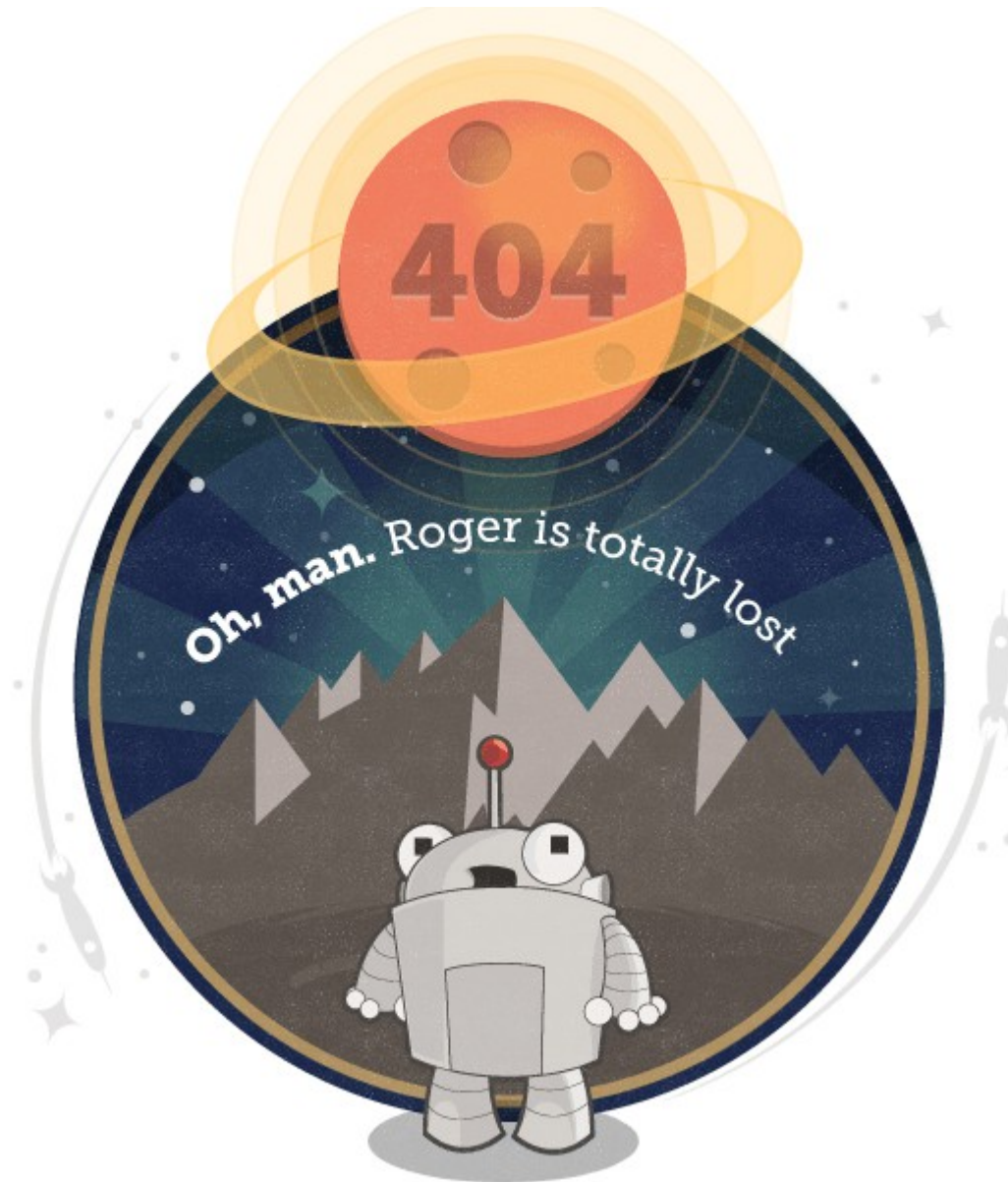
Our friends at Moz currently have 3,483 broken links pointing at their site (going to pages returning a 404 error). If they fixed these and added 301 redirects for the old URLs to the new ones, they would perhaps get a nice little rankings boost. But hey, that's up to them! ;-)

The screenshot shows the Ahrefs Site Explorer interface for the domain seomoz.org. The left sidebar has a menu with 'INBOUND LINKS' expanded, showing 'Broken Backlinks' as the selected option. The main content area displays a table of broken backlinks. The top navigation bar shows a total of 3,483 broken backlinks, with a red arrow pointing to this tab.

ALL	DOFOLLOW	REDIRECT	GOVERNMENTAL	EDUCATIONAL
3,483	361	2,727	0	0

#	Referring Page Title	Referring Page URL	DR	UF
1.		www.seomoz.org/web2.0/short	8+ 0 17 0 7	71
2.		guides.seomoz.org/chapter-4-basics-of-search-engine-friendly-design-and-development	8+ 0 44 0 0	71
3.		www.seomoz.org/seo-expert-quiz/take	8+ 0 0 0 0	71

Nice 404 page mind you...



Further Reading

- [Link Reclamation - Whiteboard Friday \(Moz\)](#)
- [Link Reclamation – How to Get the Links You Deserve \(Cognitive SEO\)](#)
- [Plugging the link leaks \(White.net\)](#)
- [Link Reclamation: The Guru Guide \(Top 5 SEO\)](#)

Part 11: Ego Baiting

Ego baiting sounds a little grubby, but when used correctly, it is a highly effective way of catching the attention of influencers in your niche.

No matter how high profile you are, it's always a boost to be asked for your opinion as an expert, or to be featured within a list of influencers.

Interviews

Right at the top of the list for ego-baiting is securing a list with an influencer in your niche.

It's a great way to both tap into their audience, and ensure they are on board for, at minimum a share, and in some cases a link.

And on that note, don't get too hung up on whether the influencer themselves links to you (and certainly don't push for it) - the key is the sharing as more eyeballs on your content = more potential link opportunities.

An influencers slip stream is full of potential linkees, and as a bonus, by having that influencer featured on your site you will be leveraging some of their credibility.

So how do you go about securing an interview with an influencer?

When you're lower down the food chain, it can sometimes seem that A list bloggers are completely inaccessible, perhaps residing on some distant planet, but you'll find that actually, most of them are just human beings. Human beings with email addresses. Email addresses that you can, believe it or not, send emails to.

You won't get a reply from everyone, but if you target the top 10 influencers in your niche, then there is a good chance that you'll be able to secure an interview with at least one of them.

To increase your hit rate, try not to be boring. Spend some time creating questions that they won't have been asked a hundred times before - it will be much more interesting for both the influencer and those who read the interview (read, more potential links).

Quotes From Influencers

Round-up posts are hot at the moment, and for good reason.

You'll have seen lots of them around, particularly in the IM niche - 'X experts give their opinion on this', 'Y gurus share their favourite tool for doing that'.

It's also much easier to get several big names on board for a round-up post than for separate interviews, as there is much less overhead involved in answering one question than answering 10 (or more).

With regards to the ego-baiting part of this, once you have a couple of high profile bloggers on board you might want to name drop them in your outreach (i.e. I already have x and y on board, and would love to get your insights too).

Again, when you have high profile members of your niche featured on your site, it's both a great link asset and a big boost for your credibility.

Top 10 Lists

Top 10 lists can be very effective as ego-bait, and also make for great linkable assets.

For example, in the fashion niche, you might create a list of the 'Top Ten Fashion Bloggers To Watch In 2015'.

Again, you'll likely get at minimum a share from each of the bloggers on the list, and more than likely pick up a few links as bloggers love to be featured on lists such as this.

Pro tip: To really get some bang for your link building buck, you could create an award badge for the featured bloggers to use on their sidebar (which of course links back to your site).

Further Reading

- [How To Create An Expert Roundup Blog Post](#) (*Brian Dean/Quicksprout*)
- [How to Create Expert Roundups That Generate Huge Traffic](#) (*Matthew Woodward*)

Recommended Tools

- [Buzzsumo](#) (find previously popular round-ups and experts that were involved)
- [MyBlogU](#) (create expert round-up requests)

Part 12: Link Baiting

At the very heart of white hat link building, and indeed what separates it from other 'greyer' forms of acquiring links, is the premise that links should be 'earned', that is they should be editorially given.

Quite simply, great link building, starts with great content, and the stronger your 'bait', the easier your link building and outreach efforts will become.

So what makes for great link bait? Well, here are some ideas.

Taking something awesome and making it even better

Brian Dean has this tactic nailed with his 'skyscraper technique', which in a nutshell is finding previously popular and proven content, and making it better.

The great thing about this method is that you are taking the guesswork out of your link building and content marketing efforts as you: -

- a) know the content will be popular (if you can get eyes on it)
- b) you can run through the link profile of the old content to find hot link prospects

Make It More Visually Appealing

Take a boring list post and turn it into something visually awesome. This could simply mean creating some custom graphics, or perhaps including an infographic (great for outreach).

Of course, if those images are swipeable, even better!

Make It Longer

Sometimes all that's needed is to build on what's already there.

For example, if you find a list of 20 free tools to do x, you might turn it into a list of 40 free tools to do x... or better still 100 free tools to do x.

Make It More Comprehensive

Again, using the example of a list style post (20 ways to do x) that simply lists out methods, you could write up a mini tutorial on each method, instantly making the post more valuable.

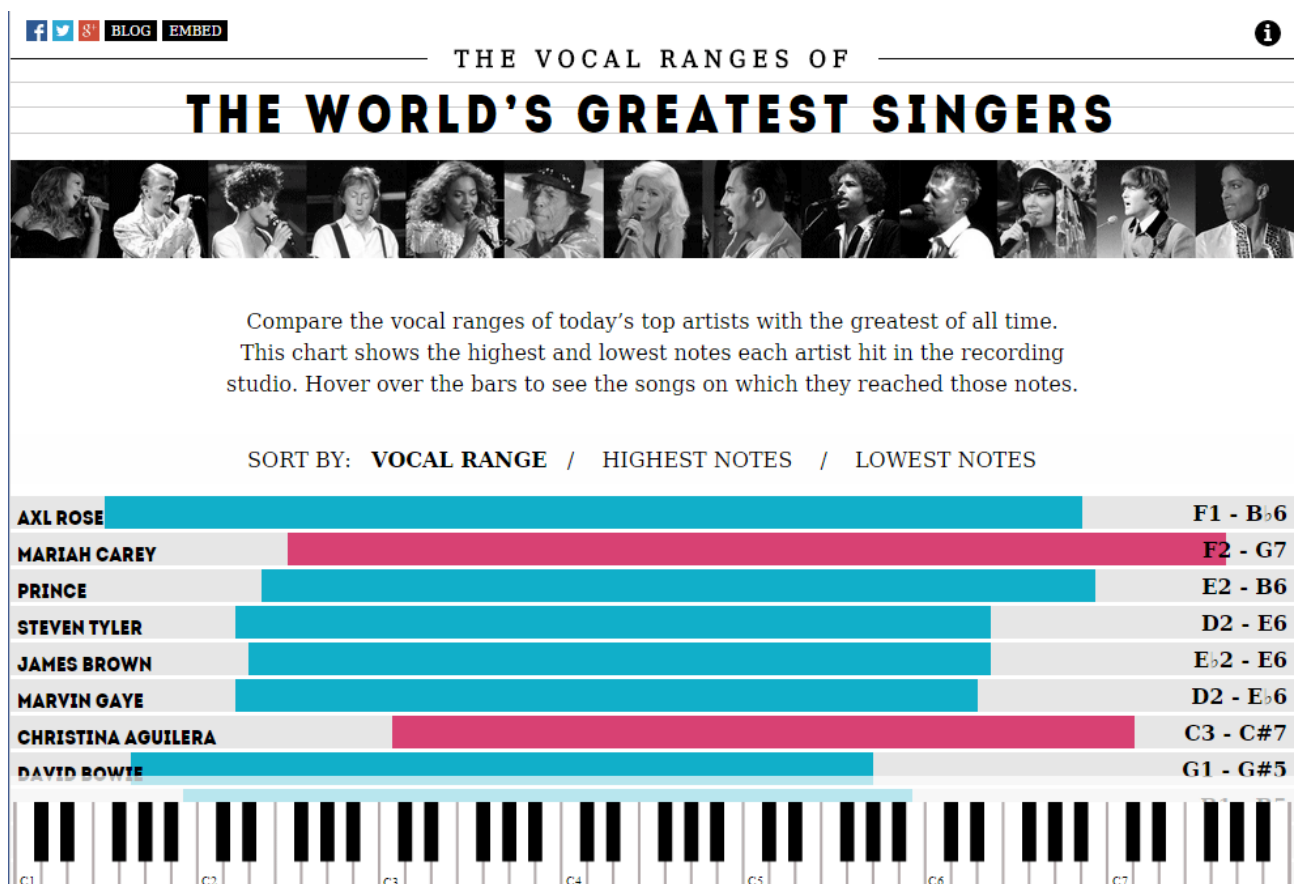
Bring It Up To Date

Things change. Take advantage of this and find old, popular content that may be a little old hat and bring it up to date.

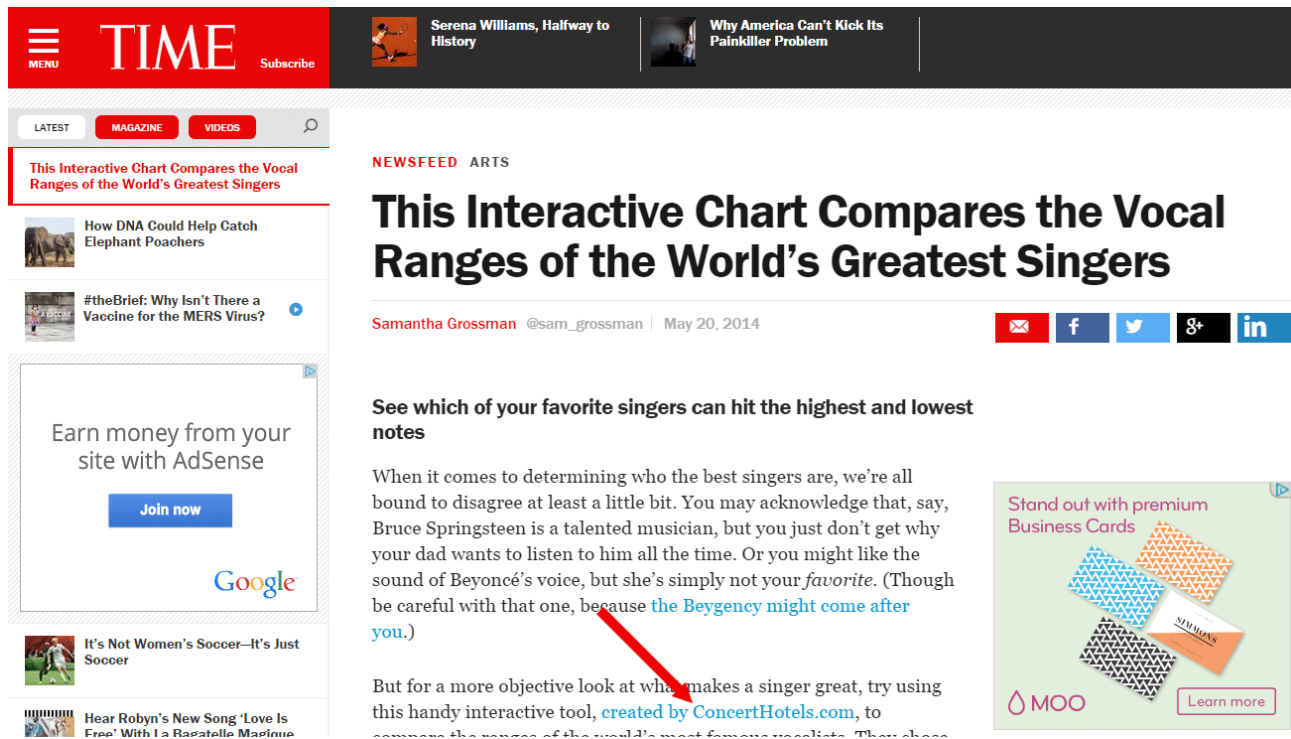
Widget/Tool

Creating an awesome tool, or widget is a great way to pick up high quality links.

One of my favourite examples is this interactive widget from ConcertHotels, which showcases the vocal ranges of the world's greatest singers in a beautiful visual format.



It picked up a lot of great links (over 500 referring domains), including this one from Time Magazine. That's the kind of link that can make a difference!



Of course, *Ahrefs* itself is an awesome tool that's often referenced in SEO tutorials and guides, resulting in a pretty impressive backlink profile (if we do say so ourselves!).

Global Rank	URL Rating	Domain Rating	Backlinks	Referring Domains
9,517	80	66	4.4M	10K

Videos

Videos are great link bait, and if you can stumble upon the magic formula of creating a video that goes viral (yes, sometimes it does seem like it takes a little magic), then your link profile will get a serious boost.

Notwithstanding the viral magic, you can of course share your video on numerous free channels – just make sure you include a link in the description.

News Round-ups

If you can become a go-to source for news in your industry, then you will pick up regular links from other sites, which will cite you as a source.

This could be as simple as a weekly round-up, or, depending on your industry, more regular news updates.

You could also consider submitting your site for inclusion in Google news, which can be a nice source of additional traffic (and link yielding eyeballs) if accepted.

Further Reading

- [Skyscraper Technique](#) (*backlinko*)
- [Content Promotion Killers](#) (*backlinko / video*)
- [10 Extraordinary Examples Of Effective Link Bait](#) (*Moz*)

Recommended Tools

- [Buzzsumo](#) (find previously popular round-ups and experts that were involved)
- [Ahrefs](#) (explore backlink profile of previously popular content)
- [moz](#) (show top pages from websites)

Over to you!

Ready to skyrocket your SEO, and build solid rankings that will stand the test of time (and any future animal themed updates from Google)?

This guide wasn't meant to be a quick fix, but by using a combination of the methods included, you'll soon be on your way to success with your link building and internet marketing ventures.

Of course, even if we do say so ourselves, *Ahrefs* is a handy tool to have at your disposal when it comes to link building.

You're already on our email list (wise move, thanks for that!) and we'll soon be sending you more free tips on growing your online business.

If you don't have an account yet, [you can sign up here](#) to start using our service to uncover more link building opportunities than you can shake a stick at*.

We'll leave you with some links to some more white hat link building resources that you might want to bookmark.

- [White Hat SEO Case Study: 348% More Organic Traffic in 7 Days](#) (*backlinko*)
- [32 White Hat Ways To Build Inbound Links](#) (*hubspot*)
- [3 White Hat Link Building Techniques That Go Far Beyond Links](#) (*Ahrefs*)
- [Link Building Tips For 2015](#) (*hobo internet marketing*)
- [White Hat Link Building : The Zen Masters' Guide](#) (*top5seo*)

Thanks again for signing up, and any questions just give us a shout.

Happy link building,
The Ahrefs Team

<https://Ahrefs.com/>
support@Ahrefs.com
t: 1-347-352-0138

** that is of course assuming you are the type of person that goes around shaking sticks at link opportunities, which in our opinion doesn't generally help and is not an actual link building tactic that Ahrefs endorse or recommend. But if you do decide to do it, then shake the stick naturally, at a sensible velocity (so as not to appear spammy), and let us know how you get on. Who knows, maybe we'll include it in Little Blue Link Building Book 2.0.*