Last month our expert link building team outlined **7 things we want you to know about link building for SEO**. This sparked some questions which we`d like to feature now in a new section called "Link Building FAQ`s". If we haven`t covered a question you`d like answered, please mail it to: aarner@thinkbigsites.com and we will cover it in a future newsletter.

Link Building FAQ's…

Q: What`s the difference between off-page optimization verses on-page SEO?

A: To be clear, SEO can be considered either "on-page SEO" or "off-page SEO".

Here`s a brief outline on the two:

On-page SEO consists of optimizing on-page (within your website) factors that influence the search engine spiders and tell them what your site is all about. Examples of on-page elements that can be optimized for the search engines include:

- ☑ Meta Data (Titles, Tags, Keywords)
- ☑ Internal Linking Structure
- ☑ XML Sitemap
- ☑ URL's
- ☑ Content

Off-page SEO consists of off-page (outside) factors, which also influence the search engine spiders, which ultimately tell the engines what your site is an authority on, what and who your brand influences and how popular your website is.

Examples of off-page SEO can include:

- ☑ Article Marketing
- ☑ Press Releases
- ☑ Traditional and Web 2.0 Link Building: Forums, Directory Links, Social Bookmarks, Blog Links, Banners, etc.
- ☑ Social Media
- ☑ Dedicated Blogging
- ☑ Video Syndication

The major difference is that on-page factors are completely within your control, whereas off-page is out of your control (in terms of a "free" web) and therefore the weight of the on-page factors is somewhat limited in relation to achieving Google PR and higher search engine placement.

Google understands that every business owner/webmaster wants to present their website in a positive way, so if they limited their algorithm to just on-page factors, they`d be serving up only biased results! Instead, they decided to create an algorithm that considers the off-page optimization as well, by giving the public a voice. This means that links to your website from various "outside" sources, hold a heavier weight than the on-page factors that you yourself have full control of. This isn`t to discredit on-page SEO at all, which certainly has its place and is a necessity for any ranking site! But, if you and your competition all housed relevant information, on beautifully optimized sites, how would Google know who to rank first? That`s where the off-page SEO comes in: it`s all about the links! When more people, from a variety of sources, link to you, this is what truly sets you apart from the competition. This is why links via off-page SEO are so important.

Q: Does it matter if my links are not industry specific?

A: What really defines relevancy? We like to think of

relevancy as what the target audience of a specific site would see and find as relevant, useful information. We call this "Target Audience Relevancy". The majority of what you would traditionally see as "relevant sites" would actually be your direct competition. Direct competitors would not link to you naturally, would they? So, who would? Your family member or friend's site? Maybe a random blogger likes the sale you're having and links to it for their users. What about your customer's maybe? Someone may link to you simply because they like your website design, or your pictures. Do any of these links seem less useful to you? Do you think Google should discredit them? Or penalize you for them? Neither do we.

The "perfect link" would consist of high Google PR, a high amount of in-coming links, a low amount of outbound links, high traffic scores, a high amount of indexed pages to the hosting site, old domain age and even niche relevancy. The problem is, these sites don`t want to link to you. And, if they do, it`s going to cost you… a lot! And don`t think Google doesn`t know this. If a site suddenly acquires a large amount of "perfect links" in a short time frame it does become painfully obvious this is simply a paid link campaign and can create what we call a "paid link hold". If Google is suspicious, your links can take longer too fully index which directly affects the amount of time it will take for you to see an increase in your organic placement.

Sure, relevant links are good, but links are good, period. If you take a quick look at any authority site with 100`s or 1000`s of indexed backlinks you`ll see the same thing: a scattering of incoming link types from any and every kind of resource imaginable. How can Google or any other search engine penalize or not give value to a link from a viable site? Who determines relevancy anyways? Take a look at the common blog, clearly multiple topics of relevancy are represented here, and most are so dynamic, they change daily. The same goes for news sites.

Ultimately it`s the diversity within the topics of the sites linking back to you that causes a natural looking trend and therefore creates an effective linking campaign.

Q. Can you explain the difference in the various link types you offer?

A: Of course! Here is a list, in alphabetical order, of some of the various link types you may receive in your monthly link reports:

- ☑ **Article Links** – The client can provide an article or we write an article on the subject of 3 of your key phrases. The article is optimized using title attributes, keyword density and a copyright footer. 3 keyword links are included in the piece. The article is then syndicated with a minimum amount of guaranteed locations. Articles can continue to syndicate for months or years to come.
- ☑ **Blog Review Links** – Your websites is reviewed by a blogger and the review is posted as a blog. From the blog post there are 3 keyword links back to your site. The review goes live on the HP of the blog

and archives indefinitely. You are provided with the archived location.
- ☑ **Blog Comment Links** – A relevant comment is posted on a blog with a frequent cache and/or PR. The signature is the keyword link or, where possible, a keyword link is dropped in the content of the comment. These are primarily used to get you a quick boost.
- ☑ **Directory Links** – Your keyword link is submitted to the relevant category in one of the 1,000`s of web directories on-line. The submission is monitored and the links guaranteed, we will keep submitting until we get the guaranteed number of live links.
- ☑ **Directory Submissions** – Similar to Directory Links, links are submitted to relevant categories within directory sites. The difference is we will submit in mass and the links aren`t monitored for a guaranteed location.
- ☑ **Forum Links** – We participate in relevant threads within forum sites and link back to your site through either the signature or in the comment where possible.
- ☑ **One Way Links (by cache or PR)** – We place one way (meaning non reciprocal) keyword links on a wide range of sites. They are ordered by guaranteed cache and/or PR. Where possible we use a description along with the keyword phrase.
- ☑ **Press Release Links** - The client can provide their own news piece or we write the press release on the subject of 3 of your key phrases. The press release is optimized using title attributes, keyword density and a copyright footer. 3 keyword links are included in the piece. The press release is then syndicated with a minimum amount of guaranteed locations. Press Releases can continue to syndicate for months or years to come.
- ☑ **Social Bookmarking Links** – We use established accounts on popular social bookmarking sites to place keyword links as bookmark. A description is included where possible.
- ☑ **Social Media** – We use popular social media style sites and link back to you from the profiles or content pages, such as: Facebook, MySpace, Squidoo, etc. We offer custom social link building packages as well as Social media profile creation and on-going maintenance.

We also offer reputation management services, branding and awareness campaigns, video marketing, Google local (maps), dedicated blogging, Google base and more. If you are looking for custom services, just ask! We offer many custom solutions and can create a package just for your specific needs.

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