

# How To Optimize *Your* Blog For Search Engines



The Definitive Guide To:  
***Search Engine  
Optimization  
For Bloggers***

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## The Legal Section

For the sake of clarity and brevity here are the two most important legal considerations regarding this book, in plain English –

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I don't mind if you quote small sections, a paragraph or two, within your own writing, and appreciate a link back as credit if you feel appropriate.

Here is the slightly more complicated way of saying the same thing.

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### Clarification

Throughout this book I use the term “blogger” to refer to a person who blogs. I am not referring specifically to a person who uses the Blogger.com (blogspot) blogging system, although it can certainly include these people too. I use the term as a generic description for any person who blogs, just like I would call a person who runs a “jogger”.

This book is in no way endorsed, recommended or sponsored by Google, Yahoo!, Microsoft, WordPress, or any of the various companies or entities mentioned within.

# Chapter 1 - Welcome

Welcome!

Thank you for purchasing this guide, **How To Optimize Your Blog For Search Engines – The Definitive Guide To SEO For Bloggers**. My name is Yaro Starak and I blog at [Entrepreneurs-Journey.com](http://Entrepreneurs-Journey.com).

I'm the author of the [Blog Profits Blueprint](#) and the [Membership Site Masterplan](#), the creator of the [Blog Mastermind](#) and [Membership Site Mastermind](#) coaching programs, and co-creator of the [Become A Blogger Premium](#) video course.

To put a long story short, I've been making some form of income from the Internet for over ten years, and since 2005 I've been a blogger. I make multiple six-figures a year thanks to blogging and have made it my mission to help other people launch successful and profitable blogs.

The purpose of this guide is to help you attract a consistent and significant stream of traffic to your blog from search engines, specifically Google. If you can master this skill, you can turn almost any website into a highly popular – and potentially profitable – web asset, and it won't cost you anything more than your time and energy.

## Let's Cut To The Chase

I'm going to jump straight in and start this book off by telling you exactly how I optimized my blog to rank well in search engines, in particular the all mighty Google search engine.

In my opinion, based on experience and testing, I believe there are three key reasons why my blog ranks well in search engines and why your blog could also rank well in the very near future. They are –

1. I have written great content to my blog on a **regular and consistent basis over a reasonable amount of time**.
2. I have attracted **incoming links** from other websites that are viewed as **authority sites**.
3. I've optimized the **internal structure** of my blog to give myself the best chance of attracting traffic for a wide range of **long tail keywords**.

It's important that you have all three ingredients in place or none of them will be effective. Point three is not as vital as the first two points and will not work effectively if you don't do point one and two well.

You need consistent, high quality, regular content, to attract the attention of authority sites, to generate incoming links and **raise the authority of your blog**.

Once your blog is considered an authority, then the internal structure of your blog will have an impact, giving you top rankings for subjects you write about.

There are countless techniques, strategies and theories I could teach you, and I will list some of the most powerful later in this book, but all of them have to do with two things – building **link popularity** and **link authority**.

It's important you realize this so you can have it clear in your head what really counts. As long as you are attracting incoming links on a regular basis your ranking will improve, but you must be patient and work consistently with faith that your ranking will increase over time.

The rest of this guide will teach you exactly how you can go about replicating my success and applying my strategies to your blog. Here is a breakdown of each chapter.

## Chapter Breakdown

**Chapter One:** Introduction to this guide, core concepts and chapter breakdown.

**Chapter Two:** A foundation lesson on how **search engines work**, in particular what Google did differently to become so popular and how Google ranks websites.

**Chapter Three:** How you can optimize your blog from an **internal perspective**. This is the easiest area to implement because you have one hundred percent control of the internal elements of your blog that raise your search engine ranking.

**Chapter Four:** This is THE crucial chapter, teaching you how to optimize your blog from an **external perspective** – in other words, how to make your blog an authority site in the eyes of Google by attracting links.

**Chapter Five:** It's time to **wrap-up** what you have learned thus far and review how to move forward by considering your overall blogging strategy.

**Chapter Six:** The final chapter presents you with a **quick launch checklist**, which you can take away and implement immediately after reading this book. This chapter is all about motivating you to take action now rather than later.

## How I Will Teach You

Before you move on to **chapter two** I've included a brief introduction to how I learned to optimize blogs for search engines. This section of the book is not mandatory reading, but personally I feel better knowing how the person I am learning from learned to do what they are now teaching me, so I have included a

brief explanation of my education process so you know where I am coming from. It may prove useful for your own education process.

## My Search Engine Optimization History

Search Engine Optimization, or SEO as it is commonly abbreviated, is the study and practice of optimizing websites for search engines so as to achieve high search engine rankings and thus generate “free” traffic. I *cut my teeth* so to speak, in the SEO world by studying and implementing techniques on my hobby and business websites, long before blogs became mainstream.

I studied how to build traffic to websites even before Google existed, but nowadays it's all about Google so I tend to focus my energies on that search engine, and you should too. While it is not always the case, **generally** if you do a good job with Google, you will do a good job with other search engines as well.

SEO can be an extremely technical subject and I hate technical things. I have spent most of my working life on the Web and have operated independently, learning how to do things myself. Consequently I have developed **some** technical skills to do with building and managing websites, and this awareness certainly helps when it comes to optimizing blogs, but as I found out – **you don't need to know much about the technical elements of a blog in order to optimize it for search engines.**

This is good news for you, you don't have to go through what I did to learn about SEO for your blog.

## The Two Brads of SEO

The first true expert I found in the SEO field was **Brad Fallon** and until 2006 he had a free e-course called *Stomping the Search Engines*. In October 2006 he removed his Stomping the Search Engines product and replaced it with a high-end club called [StomperNet](#).

Brad Fallon taught me the **importance of linking** – incoming links, links within a website, the anchor text in links and everything that goes with building a good linking strategy for your website. Much of what I will teach you in the proceeding chapters of this book has a foundation in Brad's teachings, so I feel it necessary to mention his contribution to my education.

There is another Brad with a very similar sounding surname – Brad Callen – who also teaches SEO and his free course and software is still available. If you would like further reading on general SEO (not focused specifically on blogs) I recommend Brad Callen's [SEO Elite email course](#).

## Learning How To Optimize Blogs

It was 2004 when my friend Ed Chalmers told me about a new craze hitting the web called “blogs” and how powerful they were for search engines. On his recommendation I investigated and played around with a Blogspot ([blogger.com](http://blogger.com)) blog and later installed a [Movable Type](#) blog on one of my existing business websites.

Very quickly my new blog started to rank well in Google but I found the system clunky to use. I began researching other blogging software packages and it was clear – [WordPress](#) was the best blog software available based on conversations at other blogs, so I made the switch.

### Switch To WordPress

If you want to make the switch to WordPress it's free and easy. This section on [importing content](#) from the [WordPress codex](#) (a codex is like an online instruction manual) will “hold your hand” and walk you through a move from other blogging platforms like Blogspot, TypePad, Movable Type and Live Journal, to WordPress.

## Is WordPress Good For Search Engines?

I was concerned that my new WordPress blog would not rank as well as my Movable Type blog did. My fears were unfounded and eventually my new blog started to rank well too, although it took a while to get going, and I had to make tweaks and enhancements. The delay was more due to having a brand new domain name than any fault of WordPress.

I began implementing my previous education in SEO and went to work optimizing my blog. I was pleasantly surprised by how well optimized blogs were without having to do much to them. Blogs, right out of the box, have a fantastic **internal linking structure**, and if you use WordPress there are hundreds of excellent free plug-ins you can install to further enhance your blog and help boost your search engine rankings, some of which I will introduce you to later in this book.

If you have ever researched blogging then I am probably not the first person who has raved about the power of blogs for top search engine rankings. The problem with this claim – **and what is often not mentioned by other blogging evangelists** – is that blogs are not “magical” and will **not rank well just because they are blogs**. Blogs are a fantastic tool, but it's up to the person wielding the tool to produce the results.

## You Do Not Need To Know “Why”

I do not spend my time attempting to “guess” how the algorithms that govern the search engines work. My interest lies in using blogs to achieve strategic goals – to produce revenue, to generate exposure, to build influence, to “be read” and create an image of expertise in a subject area.

When I test SEO techniques I look for outcomes based on my blogging strategy, I do not analyze my results with a view to understand the mathematics or the inner workings of Google and other search engines. However, that doesn't mean I don't

value the work of people who do research the technical side of search engine formulas. I study the results and assumptions of people who specialize in SEO and apply their knowledge and findings specifically to blogs.

Besides the aforementioned two Brads, I have also read materials by **Aaron Wall** (his SEOBook is fantastic – [I wrote a review of it here](#)) and studied the advice of [Jeremy Shoemaker](#), Google's [Matt Cutts](#), Randfish from [SEOMoz](#), and various other SEO aficionados. I also pay close attention to professional bloggers like [Darren Rowse](#), [John Chow](#) and the [Performancing](#) team to keep up with the latest ideas coming out to improve blogs.

## You Are The Expert For Your Blog

The expertise and advice from SEO and blogging specialists helps you to generate good ideas and theories, but where I have learned the most is from implementing things on my own blogs and seeing what happens.

The result of live testing taught me an important lesson that I want to pass on to you – **there really are only a handful of crucial components necessary for top blog search engine rankings and it's up to you to find out what they are for your blog.**

Some advice you will study is situational, difficult to replicate, not relevant to your blog strategy, you won't understand, is out of your reach – at least for the moment, or you just won't get around to trying.

I would hazard a guess that in a few month's time after reading this book you will have only tested a small fraction of the ideas I present to you. That's okay, as long as you tested **something** and realized a result – either good or bad – **it's the result that matters.**

Over the years I've implemented many different little tweaks and tests and while I'm confident many of them have helped, it's only because of a few key events that I have eventually attained high search rankings. I will relate to you my specific techniques later in this book, but you won't be able to just walk out and replicate what I did to achieve exactly the same results.

I wish I could tell you do **this**, then **that** and finally **this** and you will achieve top search engine rankings, but it's not as simple as that. Your blog is different to mine, you as the author of your blog present unique value to your readers different to any other blogger. You must **leverage** your uniqueness when applying everything you are about to learn in order to optimize your blog for search engines.

## It Is Not Rocket Science

As I said when I started this chapter there really is one core outcome you need to focus on – **attracting the right attention to generate the right type of links to make your blog an authority in the eyes of the search engines.**

Once you are an authority it is very hard for you to lose your position and any new techniques you implement will be that much more effective.

I hope you follow my instructions closely and follow your results in the search engines so you too will learn what works well in your situation. Once you do you can start to adjust your blogging to take maximum advantage of the search engines.

Good luck and enjoy the rest of this book!

## Chapter 2 – How Do Search Engines Work?

### Google Changes The Search Engine Game

I've been online for a long time, since before Google was born. Back when I first started using the web I was a university student and used search engines like [Lycos](#), [Looksmart](#), [HotBot](#) and at the time, Yahoo! ([1997 Yahoo](#)), which was based on a human edited directory. The results were iffy, but that's the best we had at the time and generally people did more "link surfing", clicking links to go from site to site rather than use search engines to find what they wanted.

Google launched with a very basic homepage, a funny name and the key ingredient – amazingly valuable and relevant search results. At the time I had no idea how they did what they did and why they were different, but it was clear they provided the best answers to the questions people went online to ask.

If you have ever studied SEO you will realize there is a lot we don't know about how Google works and the algorithms that power search results in general. We do know some key basic principles and it's these that I have spent my time working on. I recommend you do the same.

The core principle that forms the foundation for everything you do in SEO is **PageRank**. Before we move on I want you to be 100% clear on what PageRank is, so I have included an introduction for you below. In this section I draw upon some content I wrote to my blog. One article in particular explaining PageRank in simple terms was very popular because it teaches you only **what you need to know about PageRank**.

### PageRank Explained - Keeping SEO Simple

#### What is Google's PageRank?

If you have ever done any reading about search engine optimization or were just curious how you can get your site to the top of the Google search engine results, understanding PageRank is vital. I'm going to introduce you to the basics of PageRank and also provide a brief discussion of how much you should really worry about PageRank if you are running a website or blog.

Google's founders, **Larry Page** and **Sergey Brin**, invented PageRank and it forms the basis for how Google works. Google didn't become the best search engine in the world by chance, it became the best search engine because it provided the best results. PageRank is the technology that gave Google its *competitor-killing* edge, a way to greatly improve the accuracy and validity of a search response to a user query.

In essence PageRank provides a means to determine the value of a website for any given search term or keyword phrase. This value is determined by how websites link together with the more popular (and theoretically better) sites receiving more links. It's these incoming links that help the site have a high PageRank value and thus display higher up in search results.

Let's read how Google explains their PageRank system:

PageRank relies on the uniquely democratic nature of the web by using its vast link structure as an indicator of an individual page's value. Google interprets a link from page A to page B as a vote, by page A, for page B. But, Google looks at more than the sheer volume of votes, or links a page receives; it also analyzes the page that casts the vote. Votes cast by pages that are themselves "important" weigh more heavily and help to make other pages "important."

Important, high-quality sites receive a higher PageRank, which Google remembers each time it conducts a search. Of course, important pages mean nothing to you if they don't match your query. So, Google combines PageRank with sophisticated text-matching techniques to find pages that are both important and relevant to your search. Google goes far beyond the number of times a term appears on a page and examines all aspects of the page's content (and the content of the pages linking to it) to determine if it's a good match for your query.

Source: <http://www.google.com/technology/>

The key rule to understand is that it is a combination of variables that determine how well your site performs in Google. These are the most important variables to worry about:

- Incoming links to your site.
- The relevancy (to your site's subject matter) of the pages linking to your site and the PageRank of these pages.
- The keywords that other sites use to link to your site.
- The keywords on your website in particular in places like page titles and headlines.

Some of those factors you can control, others you can manipulate but not directly control. The important thing to understand regarding PageRank is that all the variables will determine how high your site shows up in search engine results. PageRank is the name for the technology that ranks sites and includes all those variables and many more.

## PageRank Ranking Numbers – The Little Green Bar

If you install the [Google Toolbar](#) into your browser you can choose to switch on the PageRank display (it's in the toolbar options). This will make a little green bar appear above web pages you visit.

The green bar represents the PageRank of the page you are viewing in your browser. The ranking starts at 0 (no ranking) up to 10, the highest ranking and can be blanked out completely if the page has been banned from Google or is yet to be indexed. If you don't want to use the toolbar you can try this [free PageRank lookup tool](#) to find the ranking for any web address.



Google created quite a storm when it launched its green PageRank bar. Website owners (Webmasters) became obsessed with methods to increase their PageRank. Sites with high PageRank began selling text links for hundreds of dollars. A high PageRank page – a PR 7, 8, 9 or 10 – can create a jump in the PageRank of any other page it links to. PageRank became one of the most popular tools Webmasters used to value their own pages and the pages of potential link sources.

The problem with PageRank displayed in a little green bar numbered 0–10, is the difficulty in assessing how truly valuable a specific ranking is. **The Google PageRank technology is complex containing many variables and to interpret it as a number from 0–10 is an oversimplification.** Considering only Google really knows how it works, it's not logical to rely on the PageRank number in any critical calculations of site value.

Worse still, the visible representation, the green bar that the public can see, only changes at set specific times, while the “real” PageRank of a page changes on a constant basis. Most of the time you are looking at a very outdated ranking value in an overly-simplified numerical representation.

[PageRank paranoia](#), where Webmasters become obsessed with PageRank, is an affliction that any blogger can fall victim to. As a rule of thumb, watch the green bar with interest but don't take it too seriously or spend too much time trying to force it to increase.

## PageRank As Part Of A System Vs. PageRank As A Ranking Number

It's important to distinguish that the PageRank ranking – the green bar – is not to be confused with the principles behind PageRank and all the other variables that influences Google's search engine results.

I like to think of PageRank as a term used to describe many of the components that influence how a site ranks, such as what I listed above – incoming links, the text used in incoming links, the subject matter of the site providing the link, etc – as opposed to an individual web page’s PageRank ranking, which is just a “trinket” number attempting to value that page.

PageRank is only part of a complete system that Google uses to value sites, which is constantly changing and in my experience, not worth attempting to have an in-depth knowledge of. You just need to understand the basics, which by the end of this guide you will.

The techniques that improve your blog’s PageRank relevant elements, and ultimately, search engine rankings, are what counts, and the focus of this book. Raising the PageRank green bar number is not – but that will probably happen as well if you do what I recommend.

## The Randomness of PageRank

Search engine optimization experts actively track PageRank and investigate things like page backlinks to try and work out what the top search engine ranked sites are doing right, so they can replicate and then surpass them in the rankings (reverse engineering other sites that rank well).

This is a very good strategy for any person running a blog looking to improve their search ranking. There is no need to reinvent the wheel – **copy what works and do it slightly better than the competition.**

This is all good in theory, but unfortunately there is a significant amount of randomness in PageRank and search engine results. Google of course would argue that it’s not randomness and their PageRank system is merely using algorithms that we don’t understand, and no doubt that is true, but for the human blogger trying to get traffic, PageRank and Google can be baffling sometimes.

There are instances of high PageRank sites having little to no backlinks. Given that incoming links are one of the most important variables used in PageRank calculations you have to scratch your head and wonder how a site with no links could have a big green bar. Google’s own backlink lookup tool (see this article – [Beginners Guide To Backlinks](#) – for details) is another phenomenon that

### How Often Does Google Update?

Right now Google and the other search engines are updating their indexes and rearranging what sites rank where. You can assume this is happening all the time, which is why your blog rankings change a lot and you cannot expect any ranking to remain permanent.

However there is a period when Google updates it’s PageRank bar - that’s the green bar from zero to ten. Although during this period Google is only updating the green bar to reflect the current state of PageRank across its datacenters, which in fact has changed way before the green bar changed, it still tends to cause a *frenzy* in the webmaster world and blogging world too, at least to those bloggers who know what PageRank is.

As I said previously the green PageRank bar is fun to watch, but you shouldn’t take it too seriously.

There is one thing I do recommend you do when a Google update has occurred - **go and check how your blog is ranking for some of your top keyword phrases.**

It’s often just after an update that I observe the most dramatic change in my rankings, possibly because Google has instigated a significant algorithm adjustment, which may raise my blog ranking or reduce the ranking of competing sites. Of course it can hurt too - you can lose rankings in the same way - so be prepared for any result!

search engine experts often choose to ignore rather than trust – the numbers just don't make sense.

Thankfully the randomness of PageRank can result in positive outcomes as well, with your blog pages jumping high into search results in places where you wouldn't expect them to. The only consistency is randomness but there is logic that can be followed and smart search engine optimization practices, which implemented well, do work. Just don't expect them to work precisely how or when you want them to.

## **What You Should Know and Do About PageRank**

This is the important part of my discussion of PageRank and you should pay attention even if you were **totally confused** by everything I mentioned up to this point. This advice I offer from experience as an avid PageRank chaser and search engine optimizer.

***The key to gaining PageRank is to ignore it and focus on the variables that control it.***

Having people link to your site has always been a good thing and PageRank was in fact a result of this action. Don't get confused with the order of things, first came the Internet and links and then came PageRank. **Focus on amassing quality incoming links from quality sites relevant to your blog.**

This practice will naturally improve your PageRank and also increase the amount of visitors coming to your blog. Don't get bogged down chasing links from only high PageRank sites or waste energy adding links from just any site willing to link to you. Do things naturally and your site will grow naturally.

Learn about the importance of **keywords** (more on this later). Keywords play a crucial role in bringing the right type of traffic to your site, but you should never spend half an hour in front of a computer trying to come up with the perfect title for your article. Name your content logically and think about what search words your audience would use to find your article, and you can very quickly and easily develop good keywords without spending hours and hours tweaking every little phrase and heading. See what your competitors do in regards to keywords if you are completely lost.

If you build a good website with good content, always keep in mind your important keywords and proactively work every day to earn and create new backlinks to your site you will improve your PageRank. **The best sites with the highest PageRank never worry about PageRank, they simply keep churning out content that people love to link to.** This is a strategy that every webmaster and Internet entrepreneur should emulate for success online.

## Links – The Magic Ingredient

By now you should be well aware that everything about your blog ranking well in search engines comes down to the links that point to it. Keywords, tags, categories, content and everything about your blog has an impact on your search rankings, but none of these things matter if you don't have incoming links. Without links your blog is in no-mans land.

There is a common mistake that many new search engine optimizers make. Once they learn about the importance of links they head out and start chasing as many link partners as they can find. These are the people who always ask for a link swaps thinking that if they can complete 10 link exchanges a day for a month that will result in 300 links and a high search ranking for their blog.

Unfortunately if your blog suddenly had 300 incoming links in a 30 day period and then had no new links coming in over the next few months since you grew tired of chasing link partners, your ranking is not going to last or may not even be that high at all. Plus the quality of those links you "swapped" will likely be very poor.

Generally two way links – a link from your blog pointing to another blog in exchange for that blog linking to your blog – won't help your rankings significantly, if at all. This makes sense because a two way link is contrived. The search engines don't value links that appear to be blatant link swaps because they are not very natural – **they don't tell the search engines that the links were placed because of valuable content**, they were done purely to enhance search rankings.

## The Natural Linking Process

A natural linking process is what you must develop at your blog. I'll teach you techniques to do this in later chapters, but first I want it to be clear in your mind why this is important.

As I said, link exchanges are basically useless because they are not natural. Concepts like PageRank are built to interpret the value of content published on websites. **Content of value should attract incoming links because people want to share that value with other people.** In the case of blogging, when you read an article on another blog that you believe is interesting and relevant for your blog readers, you should link to it. From a human point of view you recommend the content to your readers, but you also tell the search engines that you want to "vote" for this content too.

If you know the blogosphere well then you know every single day bloggers are linking to other bloggers, because that's just what bloggers do (if you don't do this you definitely should be – [don't be an insular blogger](#)). This is the primary reason why blogs dominate search engine rankings. Link recommendations occur

naturally every day while on “normal” websites it doesn’t happen nearly as often because most sites rarely change. Blogs sometimes update multiple times each day.

## Incoming Link Growth Cycle

Let’s look at a typical lifecycle for a successful blog and by successful I’m focusing purely on search rankings, since it is the topic of this book.

Take the first year of a new blog’s life. It begins day one with no incoming links. Our new blogger is motivated and begins writing content on a regular basis, say once a day, leaves comments on other blogs, and also links to articles on other blogs. All these activities serve to bring in the first readers to the new blog.

The pattern repeats over the next few weeks as the blogger writes more content and interacts more and more with other blogs. Then one day another blogger likes an article our new blogger wrote and decides to link to it. This is the first real natural incoming link the new blog receives.

This is a positive “vote” for the blog and will help it start to get a ranking in search engines. In fact this one link, if it came from a blog that is already in the search engines, will be enough to get the new blog into the search engines too. It won’t rank high, but it will be in the index, which is the first step.

This pattern repeats over the next few months and more incoming links are generated. Initially the new blog attracts one new incoming link per week, but this might become one per day then one each time a new article is published. By the time it becomes a very popular blog, perhaps after 6–12 months of consistent blogging, each new article may attract several incoming links – even hundreds per article on really popular blogs.

This process is natural and is what you must aim for. Links come in response to valuable articles published to the blog. As the blog’s public awareness and exposure increases so does the volume of incoming links it attracts each time it publishes valuable content.

The number of incoming links consistently increases and doesn’t come all in a short period of time suddenly, and then stop suddenly. It’s okay to experience spikes in the number of incoming links, for example when you get a link from a really popular blog, but **the overall trend should be a natural growth cycle** and that is what the search engines like to see.

On really popular blogs each new article can attract hundreds of new incoming links because so many other bloggers read and post about that blog. This is the power of providing extremely valuable content on a consistent basis.

## Link Quantity Vs Link Quality

The first rule of link building is **keep it natural**. The second concept to understand is that not all links are equal. Each link has a value associated with it and that value is how important the site linking to you is in the search engine rankings. If a high ranking site links to you, then that is a valuable link and will help your ranking. If it is a not so high ranking site, then the link is not so valuable.

Easy enough to understand right?

As you would expect it's generally a lot easier to build links from low value sites. You could even attempt to do this yourself by getting some software that automatically sets up blogs for you – create 1,000 new blogs and then have them all link to your “real” blog, the one you want to rank well. As you should realize, each of these links will be almost worthless because they come from sites that are not very important in the eyes of the search engines – they don't have any incoming links themselves.

In the old days before Google often what is termed **Link Popularity** – the number of links pointing to a site regardless of the quality of the links – was the most important metric. Now thanks to Google you need abundant links but they need to have a good spread of low and high quality, the more high quality the better as long as you keep things to a natural growth curve and build them over time.

## **How Do You Determine Quality Links?**

The easiest way to find quality link sources is to find quality sites and blogs. The sites that already rank highly, have a lot of traffic and of course the magic ingredient – a lot of incoming links from other sites, which also have a lot of incoming links, are sources of quality links.

Yes that sounds a bit confusing but that's how it works – a high ranking site becomes high ranking because other high ranking sites link to it. The highest ranking sites have been building incoming links over many years and have grown naturally to the point where they are considered an authority site. A single link from an authority site can mean a lot to a new, up and coming blog.

It's by no means easy to attract quality links and you shouldn't expect them to come to you after just launching your blog. Quality links may come quickly if you write something amazing, but you have to get lucky – someone important or who has the attention of someone important (say the owner of a hugely popular blog) has to stumble across your blog and really enjoy your content in order to attract quality links.

When you first start out there are not a lot of people “stumbling” across your blog, you just don't have the exposure yet. I'll talk more about attracting quality links in Chapter 4.

## Authority Sites

The blogs and websites that have a lot of high quality links, and a good spread of all kinds of links (popular and not so popular sites) from other blogs and websites, are considered **authority sites**.

The obvious indicator of authority is top search engine rankings in Google and you can search for any term right now to find them – just look at the first, second and third results for any search phrase you type into google. If you want to determine the really popular sites do searches for really popular keywords. Since the competition is fierce when a lot of traffic is up for grabs, the sites that rank on top for the high traffic keywords are the high authority sites.

If you are looking for the authority sites in your industry be sure to use keywords that you know people use to search when looking for information relevant to your topics. In other words, become (imagine) the ideal reader of your blog and anticipate what search phrases they might use if they were to find your blog.

### Search Volume

If you want help figuring out what the most popular search phrases are, use Google's Keyword tool. It will tell you the highest search volume phrases based on previous month's search data.

Determine what search phrases you would like your blog to rank well for and see what sites and blogs currently rank well. These sites and blogs are the authority sites, or at least they have spent some time gathering incoming links and focusing on those particular keywords.

**To become an authority blog in the search engine you need lots of links from other authority sites in the search engines.** Once you gain some authority your blog will start to rank well for almost anything you write about, depending of course on whether there are other blogs or sites of greater authority that have also written about the same topics as you.

## Keywords

Hopefully you are beginning to see how everything links together. Links are the most important ingredient, and attracting links from existing authority sites is of prime importance in your quest for a high ranking blog. The final ingredient is to understand the importance of keywords.

One of the most common methods to establish a high rankings when your blog is new and generate quality traffic from that ranking, is to **target keyword phrases that are not already dominated by sites with high authority**. That means you need to find relevant search terms that other sites DO NOT optimize for, and optimize for them on your blog.

Since you face little competition your blog can quickly rank highly as long as no strong competition targets the same keywords. Hopefully you can dominate the less popular keywords for as long as it takes to establish some authority, so when competition enters, and believe me – it will happen eventually – you will have

more authority and be capable of competing with the higher ranking sites since your blog won't be as new anymore.

One thing you will quickly learn when you begin to optimize your blog is that you need **patience**. High rankings take a while to develop and I'll discuss why this is later, but for now just accept it. The important thing to do from day one is consider what phrases you want to go after and what type of reader you want to attract from the search engines.

The keywords you use on your blog, in particular in the **title** area of each article you publish, is the number one variable that determines what search phrases that article will rank for. Your authority will determine how high that article will rank, so you can see in tandem – **keyword selection and attracting incoming links** – are key to developing traffic from search engines.

## **Secondary Keywords**

When your blog is young it won't rank well for competitive search terms. Your options are to either accept that search traffic won't be coming in any large quantities to your blog for a few months until you build up incoming links, or during the early months you focus on **secondary keyword phrases**.

Secondary keyword phrases won't bring in as much traffic as the popular keyword phrases, since not as many people search for them, but because of this you face less competition from other blogs and sites. Since your blog won't have much authority yet you need to compete in areas where the competition has even less authority and incoming links than your blog does.

One of the best ways to do this is to focus on keywords that are specific rather than generic. Things like product names, or place names or names in general are good choices because they are focused and narrow. If you wrote an article using a specific product name it will very likely rank well for searches for that product, but there won't be that many people looking for it. The upside of this is that your article will rank well AND the people searching are very targeted – you know exactly what they are looking for and can tailor a very satisfying answer for them (this is a great way to build up a devoted blog readership).

For example on my blog I write reviews of products in the Internet marketing industry. One product I reviewed is called "Butterfly Marketing" and since I used this term in the title of the article my blog article ranks on the first page when searching for the butterfly marketing book and software. You can see the result in a [Google search for Butterfly Marketing](#).

Not many people search for Butterfly Marketing but those who do, do it for a reason, and my review of this product is likely exactly what they are looking for – more information about Butterfly Marketing. There isn't much traffic searching for this term, but what traffic there is has very likely come across my blog. If you do

this for hundreds or even thousands of secondary keywords you can see the traffic really add up.

## The Long Tail

The Long Tail is a relatively new concept, often applied to commerce, which has come about as a result of Web technology.

In the past the biggest sellers in retail markets have been the hits or top 10 lists, which account for the majority of sales and profits in many offline marketplaces, like the movie and music industries. Offline stores carry only a small selection of the entire market of available products because it wouldn't be physically possible or profitable to make available every piece of music, movie or book ever published available.

When the Web came about industries such as books and music went online through stores like [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) where the inventory space, the virtual shelves so to speak, is limitless.

Online retailers sell digital product and can thus carry more than just the hits and cater to many of the smaller niche markets, which in the past were not profitable to support.

If you plot a market on a graph based on the number of sales, customers or users, there is a "head" of the most popular things and a "long tail" of all the niches that individually do not sell as much, but collectively can surpass the few hits in the head of the tail.

**Chris Anderson**, a journalist and author of the book, [The Long Tail](#), is the most prolific writer on this concept and I suggest you visit his blog, specifically his [About Page](#), for a great explanation of the Long Tail.

### Tracking Your Blog Long Tail

If you are not sure what the *Long Tail* of searches are in your industry and you have been blogging for a few months, make use of this web service for bloggers, which analyzes your traffic and suggests long tail phrases to target.

The service is provided by [Hittail.com](http://Hittail.com) and is a very handy tool for any blogger who wants to refine their long tail search phrase targeting.



Source: <http://www.longtail.com/about.html>

You can also read my detailed breakdown of this concept in this article on my blog – [The Long Tail](#).

I mention the Long Tail is because it relates specifically to secondary phrases when optimizing blogs for search engines. Google operates in a long tail as well, as there are a small number of very popular search terms – things like ‘sex’, ‘mp3’, ‘Britney Spears’, ‘Paris Hilton’, etc. – which account for the short tail (head) of searches, and then a much longer tail of niche searches numbering in the billions. Long Tail phrases don’t individually attract as much traffic, but collectively far surpass the most popular terms.

What you need to consider are the long tail of searches performed in your industry that you want your blog to rank well for. Each long tail search query can be an article on your blog, and if you use the right title for each article you can almost guarantee a first page search ranking because of how niche-specific that phrase is.

### **Increasing Competition Over Time**

Bear in mind over time more and more sites will produce content that will compete with your blog articles and as a result your results in search engines, even for secondary keyword phrases, will drop, unless your site authority is increasing consistently to beat the new competition entering the market.

This is the nature of search rankings. You are forever competing with increasingly focused competition as more people come to understand how to achieve better search engine rankings and optimize their sites.

In my blogging I rarely specifically target secondary keywords and focus on crafting a **title that humans find attractive enough to continue to read the entire article**. However, in all my titles and in elements like headings, sub-headings and tags, I am always conscious of using smart keyword choices to target specific search engines results as well.

For the first 8–12 months of my blog’s life I didn’t see significant search traffic coming in, but after my blog increased in authority due to building links, I noticed my older pages began to rank well and I was pleased that I had considered both keywords and humans in each article I wrote previously. You should be doing the same – plan for the future each time you write an article because one day, with work, your blog will have authority.

### **Different Search Engines, Different Rules**

To make things more confusing each search engine treat links differently. Yahoo!, Google and Microsoft each have a different system and value incoming links in different ways. Rankings for my blogs vary, but generally I have found if you build

links you will earn top rankings in every search engine, you just won't get standardized results across all search engines.

I recommend you focus on incoming links and aim for authority in **Google**. Google provides the lion share of traffic and a well optimized blog for Google will, in most cases, result in high rankings for Yahoo! and Microsoft too. Even without considering Yahoo! and Microsoft, the traffic alone from Google is significant enough that you can succeed without top rankings in the other search engines.

When in doubt, test – see what happens when you make changes to the keywords you use in your articles and surf around to see how well your blog ranks for certain keywords in each search engine. Doing research like this can lead to discovering patterns that might allow you to take educated guesses and predict what each search engine responds to.

Remember that search engines change every day and so do the rankings. **Don't ever convince yourself that something is conclusive.** The beauty of blogs is as long as you keep blogging and follow methods to attract incoming links your rankings will hold relatively steady because Google will see that your site is publishing fresh content and attracting links – two signs of an authoritative site.

## **Blogs As A Natural Search Engine Tool**

By now you should understand why blogs have become the “favorite child” of search engines and pull so much search traffic.

Technically blogs are simply a well constructed content management system and an easy way to publish content to the World Wide Web. However blogs were not the first content management systems, and yet they were the first to rank highly in search engines **at such a uniform and steady rate.** Even the average net user can publish a blog and get great rankings, without necessarily knowing why.

It is the human element that led to the rise of the **blogosphere** as such a powerful force in search engine rankings. Blogs are built for link building in a natural way and as a result the search engine algorithms reward blogs with high rankings.

It's your job to take advantage of the tool you have been given. You must build content, choose keywords wisely and attract an ever increasing amount of incoming links from authority websites. If you do these things you cannot go wrong, it is as simple as that.

In the next two chapters we are going to cover practical elements of optimizing your blog for search engines, from two different perspectives – **internally** and **externally**.

## Chapter 3 - Optimizing Your Blog Internal Structure

This chapter is what I call the “easy” part of optimizing your blog for search engines. It’s easy because the **only resistance you face to doing it well is YOU**. Your knowledge and your actions are all that is required in order to optimize your blog’s internal structure. Let’s get to it!

### The First Step – Inclusion In The Search Engine Indexes

The very first thing you need to do, assuming you have set-up your blog and have published articles, is to get your blog into the search engines. This doesn’t mean your blog will rank well, first we have to make sure Google knows your blog even exists.

If you have gone online looking for advice in this area you will probably come across these tips:

1. Don’t ever manually submit your blog to Google or Yahoo! or Microsoft using their site submit tools – it is a **waste of time**.
2. Submit your blog to directories to get your blog indexed in the search engines.
3. If you submit your sitemap to Google Webmaster Tools, you will be included in the index in a matter of days.

When I built my first website back before Google was born I went to all the popular search engines of the time and submitted my sites manually because this was considered a standard practice. It took some time, but eventually you got in.

This does not apply anymore.

There are still manual search engine submission forms but as far as I can tell they are either useless or the slowest method to get indexed, and here is why...

### How Search Engines Find Your Blog

In order for your blog to show up in a search results your pages must exist in the search engine index. Each search engine has an absolutely massive index and it’s constantly updated every minute of every day. The index is basically a database of every single site it has ever come across and it uses this index to deliver search results to people who input search queries. In order for your blog to have a search ranking it needs to get into the index.

The search engines have what are called “bots” or “crawlers” or “spiders”, basically computers that pretend to be browsers surfing the web devouring content like hungry monsters. Their job is to make sure the search engines have the most up

to date index of web pages possible, so when a person uses a search engine they get the most relevant response available. Obviously it's a lot more complicated than that, but I'm into simple explanations and that's really all you need to know.

Your goal is to lure the little spider bot to your blog and convince it to eat up every page of content, to ensure that each article you publish has a chance to show up in search engine results.

In order for a spider to crawl the web and index your pages there must be an **incoming link** for it to follow and find your blog. Once again the importance of incoming links is paramount, but in this case we are starting right at the beginning – the very first incoming link that brings a search engine to your blog.

A search engine spider stumbling across your blog via a link is a natural thing to happen and contains an implied recommendation from the site that linked to you.

In other words, **your blog must deserve to be in the search engine index because it has value**. It wasn't forced to come to your blog because you think it should by filling in a search engine submit form and telling it to do so – this is an entirely unnatural way to find a site. This is the reason why the old way of manual search engine submission is not relevant to today's modern search engines, which use PageRank style ranking algorithms.

### **How About Directories – Will They Get You Blog Indexed?**

Once people learned that search engine submission forms were not very useful and incoming links counted most, they went searching for the **path of least resistance** to create an incoming link in order to entice the search engines to enter a new site into their indexes. Generally, since it only takes a few seconds to do it, a submission to a free website directory became the new “standard practice” to get a site into the search engines.

Does a directory submission still work as an easy way to get your new blog into the search engines? – **Yes**, but it depends on the directory and there are more reliable ways to do it.

There are authority directories, and two in particular are worth submitting to. They are:

- [DMOZ – The Open Directory Project](#)
- [Yahoo! Directory](#)

DMOZ is one of the original directories maintained by human moderators. That means that every link is manually approved by a human being, with the intention of keeping quality high since humans should be able to determine what deserves to be in the directory.

As I write this there are nearly **75,000 human editors** at DMOZ, nearly **600,000 categories** and **4 million included sites**. DMOZ is arguably the directory with the most authority (of directories) and if you get your blog into it the search engine spiders will find your blog and index it. It is an easy way to get your site into the search engines, but don't expect it to happen quickly and there are no guarantees either.

## Tips For Submitting Your Blog To DMOZ

Before you submit to DMOZ be careful to do two things first –

1. Publish some articles – real articles with original content and keep doing it for a few weeks or months before approaching DMOZ. If your blog doesn't have content and look like an established website, the human editor at DMOZ is likely going to reject your submission or you may be waiting a long time to get in.
2. Submit to the best category in DMOZ that clearly represents your blog topic. One sure fire way to delay DMOZ entry is to submit multiple times to multiple categories hoping to get multiple entries in the directory. This **does not work** unless you have connections with DMOZ editors and instead will likely delay or even ban you from ever getting into DMOZ.

The best idea is to select the best category, complete the DMOZ submission process and then walk away. Maybe check back in a month or so to see if you made it in but other than that **leave it alone** – it's simply not worth spending much time on.

## Yahoo! Directory

The Yahoo! Directory used to be the main source of search results Yahoo! relied upon before it switched to a bot-powered index for its main search engine.

Today humans decide what makes it into the Yahoo! directory but, and here's where it is different from DMOZ, you have to pay to get into Yahoo!. This of course helps keep out a lot of junk but also makes it prohibitive for the small time blogger to get in.

I'll be honest with you, I have never paid the (at the time of writing) \$299 annual fee to have any of my blogs listed in Yahoo! but I've heard from some SEO experts that it can be worth it simply because the Yahoo! Directory is about as

### DMOZ Is Dying

It's generally considered in the SEO world, based on what I have been hearing from the experts, that DMOZ is losing ranking authority and will likely become nearly as useless as other directories in terms of helping your blog to rank well.

Due to the rise of social bookmarking sites and other social media (more on this later), which implement user ranking systems to determine the best content, plain old directories are losing their previous position as valuable sources of information because it is difficult - *nearly impossible I believe* - to find good information through them.

Social media makes it easy since it takes many humans approving of something before it becomes popular and as a result you can easily find the best stuff (it's not foolproof of course - but better than static directories).

authoritative (in a search engine optimization sense) a directory as you will ever find.

## Other Directories

I suggest that **you ignore all other directories**. In my experience the results you earn, if any, negate the time it takes to submit your details and I stopped using them a long time ago. I've yet to hear one SEO expert truly rave about them.

On rare occasion, and I can't remember when I last did, if a directory has a high PageRank, the subject matter perfectly matches my blog and the submission process is easy, I'll spend the five minutes it takes to submit.

## How I Recommend You Get Your Blog Indexed

This may surprise you, but today in the modern world if you are a blogger, and I suspect you are if you are reading this, then you really have it very easy in terms of getting your blog into the search engine indexes.

I tell new bloggers to do one thing – **leverage the blogosphere**.

By becoming a blogger you gain membership to a pretty cool club, one that is full of friendly people who by nature, link to each other. As I discussed previously, all you need to get your blog indexed is an incoming link from another site, and one of the easiest ways to accomplish this is to have another blog link to your blog because you did something worthy of linking to.

Producing link worthy content, otherwise known as **link baiting** is a habit I recommend you form, so why not start from day one and get your new blog indexed at the same time.

Remember that established blogs are well indexed in the search engines already, and this means that these blogs are visited by the search engine spider bots on a regular basis – the most popular even hourly if they update their content often enough.

My blog is indexed at least once daily by the major search engines and even little known blogs are spidered weekly. While it's up to the search engines to determine how often a site is visited by their indexing spider bot, I can guarantee you if another blog links to your blog, provided of course that blog is reasonably active and is already indexed in the search engines, your blog will be indexed as well and it will probably take about a week.

**To do this you can try any of the following techniques:**

1. Look at what the other bloggers in your industry are writing about, write content that continues or argues against their topic, and be sure to

reference their article in your article. This guarantees you will at least get their attention. Do it often enough and eventually they will link to you in reference just like you did to them.

2. Several bloggers often do group writing projects, or call for article contributions which they will publish to their blog with a link back to yours. [I have done this on my blog](#) several times when I am looking for content to cover my holiday periods.

Guys like Darren Rowse at [Probblogger.net](#) on a regular basis call for contributions from the public. This is called “guest blogging”. By producing some content another blogger can use, you get a link back to your blog which is a nice win-win relationship, and an easy way to get that first link for search engine indexing.

3. If you can't find any other bloggers in your niche asking for content, don't wait around, ask them if you could **contribute an article to their blog** provided they will link back to your blog. I suggest you have an on-topic article ready to go since you may not to show them the quality of your work before they will even listen to you.
4. Make a bunch of **comments** and **trackbacks** to other bloggers and link to many other blogs in your posts. If you do this enough you will invoke a universal law – give to receive (reciprocity) – and you will have other bloggers link back to you. Just be patient as you may have to give a lot before you receive – remember you are the new kid on the block.
5. Lastly, and this is my all time favorite technique – **make friends with other bloggers**, in particular your **peers**, then when you put the final touches on your latest masterpiece article, email or instant message or facebook message or tweet them and explain how great your new article is.

You don't have to specifically ask for them to link to it, but if it is good enough and relevant to their readers there is a very good chance they will link to it. If you know them well enough, then heck, ask for the direct link. Many bloggers do “weekly roundups” which are collections of quick links to interesting things that happened online in the last week and the perfect place to put a link to your article.

All the above tips are extensions of a theme – **interaction** with other bloggers (people). Some of you are going to struggle with this because it means you have to be creative and include other people in the process.

It's a tough skill to master – focusing on yourself to get work done without ignoring everything else that is going on around you. Some people never spend enough time writing to their own blog because they read other blogs too much, while others neglect the entire blogosphere and wonder why their amazing blog articles never attract incoming links.

You have to find a balance of time spent on your blog and taking notice of other blogs in your industry and what is happening in general in the blogosphere.

## **What About A Sitemap?**

You may have heard that having a sitemap is a good idea and helps your SEO. A sitemap is a page that links to every page of your blog – it's like a "map" of your entire blog structure broken down usually by category or date.

Note there are two types of sitemaps – an XML one which is used to submit directly to search engines (more on this below) and a standard webpage with normal links.

In my opinion, focusing on attracting links to your blog is a smarter practice to get your blog into search engines. The fact is, getting into the engines is easy, rising high in the rankings is hard – and that's why you need to get good at building links.

However it certainly doesn't hurt to also have a sitemap AND submit it directly to Google. This, in most cases, will get you into the Google index. Just don't expect page one rankings for competitive search terms until you start building links.

### **Step 1: XML Sitemap**

An XML sitemap is a list of all the pages and posts in your blog presented using the XML coding language.

Thankfully you do not need to know XML, you just need to create an XML sitemap and then tell Google where it is.

There is a WordPress plugin that will create an XML sitemap for you. If you are not a WordPress blogger you may have to skip this step or find an appropriate plugin for your blogging software.

You can download it and find installation instructions for the WordPress plugin here –

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/google-sitemap-generator/>

I strongly recommend you go do this now.

The next step, once you have the sitemap, is to go to [Google Webmaster Tools](#), log in with your account (it's the same username and password as you use for Gmail – you will be asked to create an account if you don't have one already) and then submit your sitemap.

If you are not familiar with how to do this, please watch the helpful video provided by Tubetorial.com –

<http://www.tubetorial.com/google-sitemap-optimisation/>

This is a critical step, so please take the time to get this done.

## Step 2: Static Sitemap

A static sitemap is a bit simpler than an XML sitemap. In this case it's a plain blog page that lists links to every post and page in your blog in a tree-format style directory listing.

You can see the static sitemap for my blog here –

<http://www.entrepreneurs-journey.com/sitemap/>

To set up a static sitemap once again WordPress bloggers are in luck because you can use the Dagon Design Sitemap plugin here –

<http://www.dagondesign.com/articles/sitemap-generator-plugin-for-wordpress/>

This is not a easy plugin to install, so you may need to seek assistance from your tech person to make it work how you want it to.

Once it is set up it will generate a plain list of links to all your blog posts and pages broken down by category.

## Sitemaps Are Important, But You Can Succeed Without Them

I'll tell you a secret – for a long time **I never had a sitemap** at my blog. I managed to get my blog indexed because I wrote regular content and attracted lots of incoming links naturally. When you do this the search engine spiders return to your blog over and over and you don't have to worry about having a sitemap.

Another reason why blogs are so good for search engine rankings is that they usually have “next” or “previous” links at the end of each content page, which a person can use to navigate back through all the older content. Blogs also contain category and date based archives. These features are generated automatically by the blog software – you probably have them already.

All of these internal linking systems mean that every page of your blog is interconnected to every other page of your blog, which the search engine spiders can follow to index your content. **This is the key to a good internal linking structure for SEO.**

You can analyze your linking structure and make changes to focus links to your most important pages, but even if you did absolutely nothing, your blog, especially if it is WordPress, is already structured well. So you can breath a sigh of relief now :-).

### **Should You Buy Links For Your Blog To Help With SEO?**

The simple answer is **no**, especially in light of Google's crackdown on link buying.

Google don't like you buying links to improve search engine rankings. It's okay if you do it to purchase raw traffic (i.e. people clicking the link and visiting your site), but if Google thinks you are doing it to artificially inflate your search rankings you can get slapped with a penalty – which will decrease your search rankings – the opposite effect.

**A blogger never needs to buy a link just to get into the search engines.** It's very easy to accomplish this simply by blogging and interacting with other bloggers.

Another important point to remember is that once you have one site that is indexed by the search engines you can put a link up on it to your new blog to get it into the search engines. If you already have established websites online or have friends with blogs or websites that have been online for a while, all you need is a link from these to achieve your first goal of search engine optimizing your blog – inclusion in the index.

Traditional commercial sites sometimes buy links since they do not update content regularly and need to attract incoming links in other ways.

People rarely link to a site that is filled only with sales pages, hence the flurry of commercial sites making use of text link brokers and buying links directly from high authority sites. However this is not a natural linking process and is one of the reasons why commercial sites are adding blog components as part of their overall search engine optimization strategy – so they can attract natural links.

## The Google Sandbox

Once your blog is in the search engine indexes you will probably develop a nasty habit of spending way too much time monitoring your rankings.

It is okay to watch how well your blog is ranking but don't spend too much time on it, it's not the most productive use of your energy - **focus on building incoming links instead.**

If your blog is brand new, as in you only recently purchased a domain name for it or signed up at a free blogging service like [Blogger.com](http://Blogger.com) or [WordPress.com](http://WordPress.com), you may have to go through what is called the **Google Sandbox**.

The term sandbox was coined by search engine optimizers when they observed over and over again that brand new sites take a long time to establish a good ranking in Google. A "long time" can be anywhere from **3-12 months** on average.

In my experience my blog was around for a good eight months before I started to see good page rankings in Google.

While there is no official term or definition from the individual search engines for the sandbox effect, people who work for Google have stated that the way search engines are built would potentially cause a sandbox effect.

The reason for a sandbox is Google doesn't want to send copious amounts of traffic to a site that turns out to be of poor quality. One of the ways they can control this is by placing a higher value on sites that have been operational for longer. You will notice that most of the top ranked sites have existed for a number of years. If you commit to **long term blogging** you will enjoy improved search rankings.

Some people attempt to "beat" the sandbox effect by accumulating a lot of incoming links to a new site within the first month of its life. Unfortunately since this process often attracts low quality and subject matter irrelevant links, the result is the opposite of what is intended. The site remains stuck in the sandbox possibly for even longer.

### Register Your Domain Name For 5+ Years

When you go to register your domain name for your blog I recommend you register it for a good five to ten years. I realize that is a big commitment and may cost you up to \$100, but there is a reason behind my suggestion.

The search engines look up things like a domain name expiry date and when they see you have committed to a domain for a long period you may reduce your blog's time in the sandbox and enhance your rankings.

I can't prove this, and it may not make any SEO difference at all, but it makes sense.

Fly-by-night spam bloggers won't want to or think to invest in a site for longer than a year, possibly even months, so they don't register for longer than the minimum one year term. They expect their spammy sites to get banned eventually anyway - they are only doing what they do to make quick money and leave a trail of hundreds or even thousands of "dead" domains in their wake.

Remember if you decide to abandon a domain you have registered for 5+ years you can always sell it and at the very least recoup your initial investment. You also won't have to worry about forgetting to renew your registration for a long time too - and believe me, that is more important than you might think - some people have lost good domains because they forget to renew.

My advice to you is to assume that it will take 3–8 months before your site ranks well. During this time build links naturally, produce content and monitor your search results so you can see how you are doing.

One day you will notice your blog turning up in search engine results and you should also notice an increase in search engine referred traffic in your site statistics. This is the first sign that your blog is coming out of the sandbox. From here on things should only get better as your blog increases in authority.

## Optimize Your Page Titles

From an internal perspective the most important ingredient that impacts how your blog ranks in search engines is the **title of each article** you publish and the main title you use for your blog.

The title is the text you see at the very top of your browser window. From a coding perspective it is the text you place between the <title></title> tags at the start of your page code.

For most blogs the title of your blog remains the same throughout every page but is pushed to the right for each individual article page. For example, my blog <http://www.entrepreneurs-journey.com> has the main title:

**Internet Business Blog – Entrepreneurs–Journey.com by Yaro Starak**

Each sub–page article has a title like this:

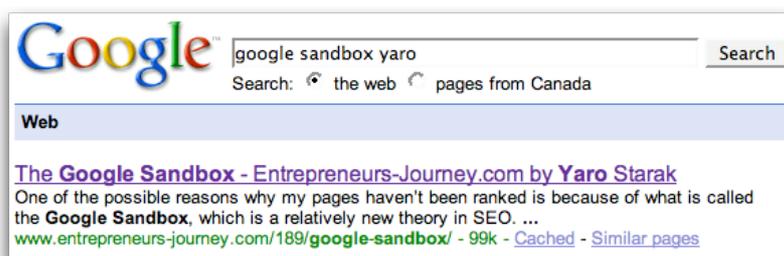
**Article Title – Entrepreneurs–Journey.com by Yaro Starak**

Or a real example:

**The Google Sandbox – Entrepreneurs–Journey.com by Yaro Starak**

See it live here: <http://www.entrepreneurs-journey.com/168/google-sandbox/>

This is the most important element in terms of SEO because Google will take the text in your titles and place it as the main part of what it displays in the search index. The links you click to visit whenever you do a search in Google are the titles from each page of the websites that show up for the search you just did.



This is critical because it impacts both what your page will rank for in terms of keywords and whether a human being will be compelled to click it when they see the link in the search result pages.

## **Titles + Keywords**

The keywords you use in your titles are the number one factor that influences what your individual blog pages rank for. If you write an article and call it “How To Grow A Cactus” this phrase contains the most heavily weighted keywords for that page in the search engine results.

In other words, your blog article will rank best for the exact phrase when entered into a search engine – “How To Grow A Cactus”. How high it will rank for that phrase depends on your blog’s authority, the keyword density of that page and other factors, but the title is the most significant element.

Outside of the exact title match, the keywords in your title will also be picked up for related queries containing some of the keywords, so continuing with the cactus example – “Show Me How To Grow Cactus” – as a search phrase will also pick up your blog article somewhere in the search index. There will be thousands of related search phrases that may pick up your article if some or all of the keywords match.

## **Why Are Titles So Important?**

When other bloggers link to your articles they usually use the title of the article in the anchor text (the text that is clickable – usually underlined and blue like the links in this book). This is considered a “vote” for that article using those keywords (remember what I talked about regarding Pagerank).

When you combine that vote with your title keywords, and assuming you gain many incoming links all “voting” for your page using similar keywords, you can comprehend why your blog article will rise in the search engines for that search phrase – and all this goes back to what title you gave to your article.

## **What About Permalinks?**

Each blog article you write has a Permalink. A permalink is the URL or web address that article resides at. Usually the permalink is the bit added on to the end of the domain name to specify the unique location of that article.

For example my **About Page** is at

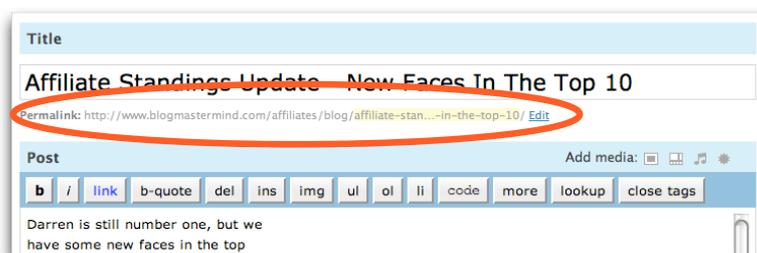
<http://www.entrepreneurs-journey.com/about/>

The keywords you use in the permalink are relevant for how well that page ranks and what keywords it ranks for.

Once again the importance of choosing the right keywords is critical. The combination of the title you choose for your blog article, the anchor text other bloggers thus use to link to that article and the permalink you use for it, all contribute to how that blog article will rank.

## Controlling Permalinks

I use [WordPress](#) to run my blogs. WordPress has a little input box called a permalink for each blog article and page I produce. Whatever I type into the box is the permalink for that article.



If you don't use WordPress you may not have the option to directly manipulate your permalinks. Some blogging software systems will use the title you give your article as the permalink, inserting hyphens to separate the words, **which are generally considered the best method to separate words in a permalink** (never use spaces and underscores can be confusing).

Services like Blogger.com will truncate your title for the permalink based on a certain number of characters.

If you don't have one hundred percent control over your blog page permalinks I suggest you either consider switching to WordPress or ask your blog host/provider/tech person to show you how to set your permalinks – it is an important consideration for your blog SEO.

## Optimize Your Internal Linking Practices

Your blog internal linking structure refers to how all the pages within your website link together. This is important because search engines look at each individual webpage, so for a blog – each individual **article page/blog post** – and analyze the links pointing to it and leaving from it. To maximize search engine optimization benefits internally, **you need to link to your most important pages from every page of your blog.**

We know that incoming links are important for your blog's search ranking. Generally, on 99% of websites, the homepage has the highest PageRank because it has the majority of incoming links pointing to it. When someone links to your blog they will usually link to your main URL (your domain name). They may also directly link to your individual blog articles, but I'm confident that your homepage will get the most attention over time because it's natural for people to link to it as the

“starting point” for navigating your site. Thus your homepage ranks best of all the pages in your blog.

What most people don't realize is that **you pass on ranking when you link to your own pages within your blog**. While external links play the biggest role in determining your overall search engine rankings, you can help things by creating an internal linking structure that **favors your most important sub-pages or articles**.

Since your homepage has the highest ranking, the pages in your blog you link to from your homepage should be your most important pages. Likewise, the pages that you link to from every page on your blog – for example in your navigation links area – should also be your most important pages.

The mistake most people make is to link to pages that are not important. Things like your *terms of service* page, your *disclaimer*, your external links page (like a blogroll or link directory of other blogs or sites) and other areas that don't have much content or take people away from your blog, should not take valuable real estate in your main navigation bar.

### **Site Placement Counts**

Another concern is where on the page you place links. The top left area and middle areas are the hottest part of your blog, both in terms of the way people read websites (eye tracking tests confirm this – [see the Google Heatmap](#)) and the way search engines index content.

When a search engine indexes your site it reads your code from top to bottom and left to right, just like a human reads text. What ever links come first in your code receive more weighting.

### **What Should You Worry About?**

Analyzing your blog code might be beyond your abilities, so for the purposes of teaching you internal linking best practice, here are some basic tips that you can follow, or ask your tech person or blog designer to help you with.

### **Here' are some tips to improve your blog's internal link placement:**

- Create a navigation menu of your most important pages that help people find your best content. Keep the number of links in this area down and if possible use large fonts (this is for humans, not search engines).
- The most important pages you link to from your navigation bar should then link to your most important articles. For example, put your best blog posts in an “Articles” page, therefor passing on the PageRank “juice” to where it matters most.

- Put the navigation links either in the area across the top of your site or down the left side starting from near the top left corner. This should ensure your most important pages in your navigation bar are easy to find for humans (people expect site navigation to appear in one of these areas). This also ensures your link code comes early so the search engines will know these are your most important pages.



- If you must have a blogroll or links page put it on a **separate page**, not on every page of your site. I would never recommend having links away from your blog on your homepage or on every page of your blog unless you charge money for these links.
- Link to your less important pages like disclaimer, terms of service and privacy policy in your site's footer or consider linking to them from your 'about page' so they are not linked from every single page of your blog.

You could also use a special code in the link called NoFollow, which you can [read more about here](#). The NoFollow code tells search engines not to follow or value the links you apply the code to.

- Make sure you link back to your homepage from every page in your blog. I do this by including a "Home" link in my navigation bar right at the start in the top left corner. You should have something like "Homepage" or "News" or similar that is very obvious on every single page of your blog so if a person enters your blog from an article they can easily click to see your blog homepage. This really isn't so much a search engine optimization tip, it's simply good navigation design.

Site navigation primarily must be about helping your readers navigate your blog. However provided you heed a few small SEO considerations like the above points when designing your layout, you also enhance your internal structure for better rankings.

## Deep Indexing

Google and other search engines have rules regarding how often a spider bot will come to a site and how much content it will index while there. The rules are governed by how often you update your site and other variables like how frequently you attract incoming links, how many links you generate and the age of links pointing to your blog.

If the spider “learns” that your site is updated daily because it finds new content each time it visits, it will increase the frequency of visits to be certain to index your new content in a timely manner.

I’m not one hundred percent sure, but I believe the Google spider bot comes to my blog every single day because new content published to my blog enters the search engine within hours after I publish it.

If you only update your blog once a week then the spider bot will learn that it shouldn’t come back as often and your blog may only be indexed biweekly or monthly. The frequency of updates at your blog doesn’t just impact how often human readers come back to your blog – it also influences the search engines.

People complain that despite interlinking all their content and working very hard on their blog internal structure they still can’t seem to convince Google to index all their pages. To achieve **deep indexing** and have all your articles show up in the search engines shortly after publication you must, as usual, prove that your blog is an authority site. **The more authority you have, the deeper the spiders will index your content.**

As should be becoming obvious to you, **links and regular content lead to authority**, and in the case of achieving deep indexing, this is yet another situation where the more work you put in to attract links and produce regular content the better your results are. Your blog will show up for more keyword searches resulting in increased search traffic because you have more content out there tapping into [Long Tail](#) queries. The more web pages you produce full of great content, the more potential to show up in a search query and thus get traffic.

## Anchor Text

To recap, **the anchor text is the words you use to link to things**. If you use standard [blue underlined text](#) for your links, then the text that is underlined and blue is what is called the “anchor text”. As I mentioned previously, the anchor text is important because it determines the keywords the page you are linking to will rank well for.

If you do a Google search for my name, [Yaro](#), you will see my blog is the first page result. I’ve “owned” that keyword now for several years. It’s partially because there are not many people named Yaro in the world, but also because when people link to my blog they very often use my name as the anchor text. Over and over again people are sending a search engine ranking vote for the keyword “Yaro” when linking to my blog.

It’s very important you grasp this concept because it applies also to your internal linking structure. It’s not just **which** pages you link to within your blog structure, but also **what** keywords you use to link to them. Again it’s important you do a little homework to figure out which keywords you are chasing in terms of search

engine rankings, but don't get too tricky – humans have to understand what a link means too.

Many people make the mistake of using words that don't have any relevant meaning when they link through to pages. A very common link phrase is “click here” yet that anchor text means nothing about the page it links to, so try and avoid using it unless SEO doesn't matter.

If you write a page about how to grow the best tomatoes, then you should link to it using anchor text like [Click here to learn how to grow the best tomatoes](#), or even just [how to grow the best tomatoes](#). This is a very clear indication to Google what this page is about and will help the content at that page rank well for that search phrase.

The important thing about your **anchor text** when it comes to internal linking is to be **conscious of SEO when deciding what keywords you use**.

Whenever you link to something – anything – you are passing on ranking value for the keywords you use in the anchor text. Stop and think about what keywords you use before publishing your article and you will help your blog's search engine optimization. Just don't stop for longer than a few seconds – I don't want you to agonize over every link, but I don't want you to use “[click here](#)” for every link either.

## Link To Your Own Blog Posts

One final point before we move on from internal structure discussion. One of the techniques I use on nearly every article blog post I make is to refer back to my previous articles whenever they are relevant.

When I first started blogging I decided to employ a strategy where I would write articles defining terms that I knew I would blog about on a regular basis. That way whenever I write a new blog article that includes an industry term I can link back to my article for further explanation, passing on ranking votes and helping my previous articles rank higher in search engines. It also helps guide readers through my blog archives so they read more content.

For example, whenever I discuss PageRank, I link back to the [article I wrote](#) introducing the PageRank principle to my readers. If you do a Google search for “[PageRank Explained](#)” you will see my article ranks well. This isn't a direct result of my internal linking practices, but it certainly helps.

### Avoid Over-Optimization Penalties

A word of warning - don't use the same keyword phrase over and over again in your anchor link text. This may trigger an over optimization penalty which could hurt your rankings.

Mix-up your link text, rearrange the words, use similes, plurals and variations of your secondary keyword phrases when linking to pages you regularly link to, especially if all the links appear on the same page.

You can replicate my method or at the very least, whenever a previous article you have published is even slightly relevant to what your current article is about – link

to it! Do this often and each time you are helping your overall blog site structure improve and you are telling the search engines what keywords your individual blog article pages should rank for.

This is a much smarter practice than linking out to a definition on someone else's site, like say the Wikipedia entry for that term. It's important to help your readers first, so if you don't have a definition of your own, link to another site's definition and note down that you should produce your own article defining that term.

### **The Long Tail of Search Results**

As your blog gains authority, each individual page will rise through the rankings. As you can imagine, having 10, 20, 50, 100 or even 500 of your previous blog articles all ranking on the first page for thousands of different search keyword phrases, results in a nice consistent flow of incoming new readers.

It's not actually that hard to achieve good search engine traffic if you focus on producing content and interlinking that content together when it make sense. The concept is simple, it's the execution that takes effort.

## Chapter 4 – Your External Linking Strategy

We covered the **internal structure** of your blog in the previous chapter, which is an area you have a lot of control over. Now we cover your **external linking strategy**, which is an area you ultimately have very little control over, but that is a good thing.

Why is that a good thing? Because if we all could control who linked to our blog then the search engines could no longer use links as a good measure to determine a site's value. Since incoming links are "rewarded" to you for producing valuable content (at least in theory) this is the current best method the search engines have for determining the authority of your blog, and thus how your blog should rank in the search engine index.

Once you accept how search engines value sites, you can knuckle down and go to work attracting links from other sites and in particular sites with a higher authority than your blog.

### Don't Forget It's Real Traffic That Counts

Before we move on to exactly how you attract links I want to point out that the practice of optimizing your blog for search engines will improve many areas of your blog and it can be tempting to celebrate or overanalyze the wrong things.

If you attract enough links from sites at many different levels of authority, you will raise your blog's PageRank, the PageRank of all the articles in your blog and raise the overall authority and trust the search engines give to your blog – all great things – however you should assume this is happening behind the scenes and don't get obsessive about watching it happen on a daily basis.

The most important thing is to raise your position in the search engine rankings for your key phrases, thus **bringing in targeted traffic to your blog**. This is the metric that really counts and should be the area you measure your success in. I'm not saying you shouldn't celebrate the little achievements in other areas, but be realistic with yourself, your goals and what your blog is achieving where it counts – real traffic.

If find it easiest to focus on one goal and while I love seeing my PageRank increase the true test of whether your optimization strategies are working is whether you are attracting incoming links. This is one of the main metrics to watch every day and as long as you see new incoming links you know you are on the right track. You may not receive search engine ranking benefits immediately when you get a new link, but you know that in a matter of months all the new incoming links will impact your ranking.

Watching your incoming links build is a good measure of your future SEO potential, but don't forget today's reality too. Along with daily incoming link

analysis, also watch your site statistics to see what search phrases are bringing in traffic and which search engines are delivering it.

It's all well and good to have a number one ranking, **but is that ranking bringing in any traffic?**

Is that traffic targeted and if so, do the incoming visitors you attract from search engines do what you want them to do – possibly buy something from you, or subscribe to your RSS feed or email newsletter or read your article from top to bottom and leave a comment?

These are the real results that count and traffic is always your main concern.

It's great to see a first page ranking, but it's near-useless if that ranking has little traffic or traffic that doesn't match what your article is about (untargeted).

If you are diligent and strategic you can tweak and plan and strategize what to write about, how to write about it and what keywords to use, and react and adjust things based on your current search engine successes. Once you know what works to get high rankings you can make changes to go after the keyword phrases that really matter – the ones with people searching with questions that your blog has the answers to.

I suggest you focus your energy watching your **incoming links** and **server statistics**. Your trend data over time is particularly valuable as you can see the

increase in search traffic your blog receives and monitor what phrases are bringing in results. Don't worry if statistics are not your forte – they're not mine either – you don't have to be good at calculations, just be aware of the what is going on and test things by writing new articles focusing on new keywords and see how much traffic you bring in from search engines.

Another thing to be careful about is misleading statements about how good a particular search ranking is. It's actually quite easy to get a number one ranking for a search phrase provided you pick one with little competition from authority sites.

A trick in the SEO industry to “prove” to potential clients that you know your SEO, is to parade around some of the first page rankings you have achieved for your own sites or clients.

This can be misleading, because the true measure of successful SEO is an **increase in incoming targeted traffic** (and some would take that one step further and say **conversion of that traffic too**). Top rankings in a search engine doesn't necessarily translate into copious amounts of traffic, so beware anyone who talks only about rankings.

#### How To Track Your Incoming Links

Currently I use two tools to track links to my blogs.

##### [Technorati.com](#)

Technorati is a blog search engine, which indexes millions of blogs and tracks who links to who. You can create an account with Technorati and claim ownership of your blog and review a history of incoming links to any blog.

This is a valuable service because you can locate other blogs that link to your blog, read what they say and leave a comment to let the other blogger know you appreciate the link.

The problem with Technorati is that it doesn't pick up all links and often has only a tiny selection of sites that actually link to you, so don't be dismayed if Technorati has limited data about your blog.

##### [Google Alerts](#)

Google has a fantastic tool that will search the web for you based on the keywords you tell it to look for. It will send you back reports as often as like - daily, weekly or any time increment you specify.

For example I have an alert set up for my name, the name of my blog and keywords related to what I blog about, and have Google send me back daily reports. Each day I receive an email that lists what other blogs and websites used the keyword phrase I stipulated, in the past 24 hours.

This is a great way to conduct research and see what new incoming links your blog is attracting on a day to day basis, without lifting a finger - Google does it all for you!

## How To Attract Incoming Links

**Now it is time to get down to business.** This section is all about techniques to build your incoming links and I've included virtually every technique I could come up with, and a bunch other people thought of too.

It's hard to say anyone can lay claim to owning a specific technique or who really was first to implement something, but I want to pass on credit where credit is due. I have included a list of blogs and websites in the appendix that I have read and studied over the years, many of which provided the techniques I discuss below and help inspire the methods I use on my blogs. If you are looking for further reading on SEO any of the sites listed in the appendix are great starting places.

A lot of the ideas in the list below come from other SEO experts, bloggers, and webmasters. I have compiled them here all in one resource for ease of access and to stimulate ideas for you to build links to your blog.

I doubt you will find as comprehensive a list of blog link building tips anywhere else on or offline and you will never be stuck for things to do if you work your way through this list. Bear in mind **I wouldn't expect you to do everything I've included** – that would be beyond what one person could achieve – but if you sample from the techniques and test them on your blog, I guarantee you will get results.

I have not personally tested every technique, but when I have had some personal experience with a method, or I believe a method is particularly powerful or the opposite – near useless – I include my opinion to help guide you when deciding which techniques to implement on your blog.

I've attempted to explain each technique with a brief summary, but I have not gone into too much detail otherwise I would never finish this book.

I have broken this list down to three different levels of link building techniques based on how much effort and/or money, if any, it costs to implement the technique.

The first section includes the easiest techniques to implement but generally will not build your site's authority because the links are not difficult to attain – **they will be lower quality links** – but still of some value. Don't focus your energy only on this section, but don't ignore it either.

The second list of techniques requires extra effort and the final list takes the most energy and/or financial investment, but will reward you with the best quality links.

These are not guarantees – an easy technique may reward you with a top link, or a difficult technique may bring in poor quality links. On **average** the breakdown of techniques listed below is indicative of the relationship between how difficult it is to attain a link versus the quality of that link.

I suggest you implement techniques from all three sections below and experiment to see which work best for your blog.

## **Link Building Techniques - Part One**

### **The Path of Least Resistance**

These are the link building techniques that are easiest to implement, but rarely attract quality links to your blog. They are all free methods and shouldn't take more than a few minutes, up to an hour at most, to implement.

## #1 – Ask For Links from Friends and Family Who Have Sites/Blogs

If you have friends, colleagues or family members who blog ask them to link to your blog. This is especially good technique if you happen to socialize with a lot of bloggers in your industry or similar industries, as you can end up creating a mini-blog network just by working with your friends.

## #2 – Submit Articles to Article Directories

[EzineArticles.com](http://EzineArticles.com) is the leader in the article syndication industry and I suggest you go there first to learn about article marketing and see what other people do.

I've written extensively on how ineffective my article marketing efforts were to promote my blog in a report that Brian Clark and I produced called [Building Traffic with Article Marketing](#) [PDF], which you should read before you begin an article marketing campaign.

My article marketing results have been poor but I honestly think it's because of the industry I wrote articles for – Internet marketing – which is terribly competitive and it is difficult to break out of the hype and stigma created by all the “get rich quick” merchants who also use article marketing.

I'm reasonably confident, provided you do not write in overly saturated marketplaces, if you submit articles today and keep at for long enough, you will build links. Other websites will re-publish your content and you will also get direct traffic from [EzineArticles.com](http://EzineArticles.com), which is a very popular site itself.

The trick is to submit on a regular basis and don't stop until you hit 100 articles (or thereabouts) and always monitor where your articles are published so you can see what type of incoming links you are building. **If the quality is consistently low then don't prioritize this task** – maybe one article a week. If you do well, keep it up and you will earn significant rewards that go way beyond just links – the direct traffic, exposure and branding for your blog and you can be significant.

## #3 – Buy Links

I mentioned buying links in [Chapter 3](#) in the discussion about initially indexing your blog in search engines. This is certainly a very easy method to build incoming links, but it's also a costly way to do it.

You can buy links directly from other blogs and websites selling them (look for advertising or sponsorship sections or simply email the owner ask how much text links cost) or you can use a broker like [Text-Link-Ads.com](http://Text-Link-Ads.com), [TextLinkBrokers.com](http://TextLinkBrokers.com) or [Linkshare.com](http://Linkshare.com).

The price of links depends on all kinds of things usually relating to the traffic and authority (sometimes PageRank) of the site, where the link will be placed and on how many pages it will be placed.

Be certain you pick sites with a related theme to your blog and try and mix it up in terms of the quality of links you buy. Don't buy too many at once because remember we are looking for a natural linking process here – not 1,000 links suddenly overnight from unrelated sites.

A word of warning about buying links – Google is cracking down on this practice and if they find you have purchased links that they deem was designed to artificially inflate your search rankings, they will penalize your site.

Also look out for the “no-follow” tag, which some people who sell links use, and will negate any SEO benefits. The links I sell from my blog are “no-follow” links, which mean they don't pass on any SEO benefit, but I don't get into trouble with Google penalizing my blog either. In this case the links are sold for direct click traffic rather than SEO benefits.

#### **#4 – Use Directories**

I discussed directories in Chapter 3 and I can honestly say I rarely bother with directories any more at all. I personally believe they are almost worthless and are becoming even less and less relevant thanks to social recommendation services like [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us), which are much more useful as tools for human beings to find good content.

If you decide directories are the way to go, take half an hour of your life, write out a good title, description and keyword list relevant to your blog, and then submit to a handful of directories and then **forget about it and move on**.

#### **#5 – Blog and RSS Directories**

With the recent popularity of blogs new specialized directories launched focusing only on blogs and RSS feeds. It is beneficial to submit your blog and feed to these directories since the theme is more relevant and other bloggers link to the directories increasing their authority. I still wouldn't expect much in terms of quality links or exposure for your blog, but they can help you find similar blogs to yours.

A good selection of blog and RSS directories are available from Robin Good: [Best Blog Directory And RSS Submission Sites](#) or if you don't have much time, go straight to the [Blog Catalog](#).

#### **#6 – Use Del.icio.us and Technorati Tags**

[Del.icio.us](http://Del.icio.us) is a social bookmarking site that provides tools for users to bookmark their favorite sites, including a tag cataloguing system. What makes Del.icio.us

powerful is that it uses the accumulated rankings of all the bookmarks lodged by it's users to determine what is popular.

[Technorati](#) is a blog search engine I mentioned previously, which also uses tags to catalogue content.

A tag is a human assigned keyword used to describe a webpage or a blog article. Tags help to categorize and make it easier to search and explore services like Del.icio.us and Technorati. By conducting a tag search or by browsing tags you can see all the pages and blog posts which were tagged with a certain keyword.

You can place tags on your blog entries which tell Technorati and Del.icio.us to include that specific entry in their tag search results and listings. Most tag based results are based on freshness, so until another blogger or person creates or tags a page with the same tag as you just used, your blog article will show up first in the results for that tag.

Once again this is an area where secondary keywords, or in this case – secondary tags – can be powerful for attracting niche traffic. Unfortunately the with the proliferation of tagging and blogging, the most popular tags are repeatedly used, so your pages do not last long at the top of the listings and very quickly drop down into the archives were it doesn't receive much attention.

Because tagging is not very difficult to implement it has become a **very weak method for bringing traffic and building links**, since so many bloggers do it.

Tagging is a relatively complex topic and can be confusing at first. There are full books and courses available on tagging, but besides the internal tags I use on my blog currently (more on this later), I have yet to experience any tagging methodology that is significantly powerful for SEO.

## #7 – Ask Your Friends To Digg/Del.icio.us Your Blog Articles

Continuing on the theme of leveraging your friends for help, you can ask them to submit your site as a bookmark to [Del.icio.us](#). If you have 20–50 friends do this in a short timeframe you may quickly see your article hit the popular page, driving thousands of new visitors and most importantly, prompting many other bloggers to write about and **link to your post**.

[Digg](#) is a similar site to Del.icio.us, but instead of bookmarking favorites, the users of Digg.com “dig” the blog pages and web pages that they believe offer something interesting or valuable. Bring in enough digs in a short space of time, raising your article to the Digg front page, and the result is waves and waves of traffic and the exposure necessary to prompt other bloggers to link to your post.

Bear in mind that both Digg and Del.icio.us frown upon people cheating their system, since they want generally good content to become popular. If the same people repeatedly vote for pages from your blog you may very quickly become

banned. The 'trick' to make this work is to only highlight your very best content, which will attract digs and bookmarks from other people outside of your friends – **you only use your friends as the initial boost to get momentum started.**

It's a very hit and miss technique since there are frustrating nuances (and people) in the communities behind these sites. Digg has a lot of technical users and if you have non-tech articles you may experience difficulty tapping Digg for traffic. Del.icio.us has a more generalized audience, so bloggers who write about non-tech and web related topics should focus their efforts there.

## **#8 – Post in Forums, Mention Your Blog In Chatrooms, Myspace, Facebook.**

One of the very best, free and original methods to build traffic, is **forum marketing**. Most forums allow a signature file where you can link back to your blog in each post you do. I currently use this feature in any forum I participate in to link back to my blogs. Be sure to choose forums that have the right target audience for your blog and are reasonably popular.

If you are careful you can actually weave a link or two directly to articles in your blog within discussions on forums. Be careful not to blatantly advertise your blog because forum moderators will delete your link or post. If you add some value to the discussion AND link to your blog article in reference to the topic, you generate traffic and build backlinks, both from the forum itself and from when other bloggers discover your blog via your forum contributions.

You can take this technique and apply it to any of the social sites like [Myspace](#) or [Facebook](#). These sites usually have plenty of appropriate places, both within your own profile and by contributing to conversations (bulletin boards, walls, and guestbooks for example) where you can mention your blog or specific articles from within your blog. Again it's very important you focus on relevancy for this to work.

## **#9 – Post In Newsgroups**

A similar technique to forum marketing is newsgroup marketing, where you post to theme-relevant discussion groups. Newsgroups on the Usenet system used to be the main discussion center on the Internet before the rise of forums. If you have never heard of them before, read the [Wikipedia entry on newsgroups](#).

I used to do newsgroup marketing on a regular basis and unfortunately, had near-zero results from doing it. I did notice the links showing in my backlink results but I really doubt it does much for search engine rankings. You may attract a little incoming traffic too, but I'll be honest with you – **I don't recommend you bother with this method.**

If you do decide to spend some time testing this technique try [Google Groups](#) as an easy method to search and access newsgroups. You may want to do a little

research and see if there are any particular newsgroups that are very active and spam-free in your industry, but don't count on it.

## #10 – Write Pillar Articles

Pillar content is the core concept behind my blog's success and I cover it in-depth, with plenty of pillar article examples, in my coaching course, [Blog Mastermind](#). There is also a great introduction to the concept in my free report, the **Blog Profits Blueprint** and the email newsletters I send you ([you can subscribe to get both here](#)).

In a nutshell a **pillar article is a blog article worth linking to**. Nearly every technique I mention in this section on building links is based on creating pillar content, however pillar articles are the key ingredient. Without valuable text centric content in your archives and planned for the future, you will struggle to build a blog with search engine authority. Content is king for SEO purposes as well.

If you can't produce pillar articles on a consistent basis by yourself, I recommend you hire or partner with someone to do it for you quickly. Without a steady stream of pillar content, your blog will not attract many incoming links naturally, which as discussed in Chapter 2, is vital.

**A blog is a content resource and without good content your blog will never rank well in the search engines no matter how many optimization techniques you implement.**

## #11 – Write Introductory Definition Articles Using Simple Language

Write a nice and simple article as if you were attempting to teach something to your grandma. Define and explain a basic term or common system in your industry. Write it from your point of view and reference examples from your life as case studies. Refer to official definitions if possible.

Definition articles often attract incoming links from other bloggers who haven't written their own definition and consider yours of value and worth recommending to their readers as a source of further explanation. By creating authoritative definitions you demonstrate your expertise and build links as well.

My [PageRank Explained](#) article and [What Is RSS?](#) article often attract such links.

## #11 – Ask a Question or Post an Answer to Ask Yahoo!

Yahoo! is obviously an authority site and links from it are valuable. The [Ask Yahoo!](#) service is a great resource that you can manipulate to include links back to

your blog. As always you must be certain you focus on relevancy and provide genuine answers or real questions that just happen to reference to your blog or an article within your blog because **it makes sense to do so** – do not spam Ask Yahoo!

## #12 – Create a Wikipedia Entry About Your Blog or You

If you haven't heard of [Wikipedia.com](http://Wikipedia.com) then you really need to go check it out now. Wikipedia is a user generated and moderated encyclopedia where any person can create or edit an entry, on any topic. I wish this site was around when I was in school!

Wikipedia is the world's largest encyclopedia and why we care about it is because it ranks well in search engines. Millions of websites link to the entries in Wikipedia as a reference source. As a result the authority of the site is significant – likely in the top 100 most authoritative sites online, at least from a search engine perspective.

**You can leverage Wikipedia to help with your blog rankings by doing a few different things:**

- **[Create a new entry](#) specifically about yourself and/or your blog**, including links back to your blog and individual blog articles (only a handful though – don't link to every entry in your blog or you will quickly have your entry deleted from the encyclopedia). Unless you are famous already you won't gain much from doing this since no sites will link to your specific entry on Wikipedia, but it helps and is an easy way to generate a backlink to your site.

Be sure to add value – don't think “advertisement”, think “resource”.

- **Find existing entries in Wikipedia where it would make sense to link to an entry in your blog.** At the end of every entry in Wikipedia is a “related links” section where external links are permitted. It's very important that if you decide to add your link to a page that whatever you are linking to on your blog is a very authoritative or valuable to the people interested in that topic. If there is even a hint that you are adding your links for search engine benefits it will quickly be deleted.

About six months into blogging at [Entrepreneurs-Journey.com](http://Entrepreneurs-Journey.com) I went to Wikipedia and added links to a few pages, such as the “entrepreneurship”, “pagerank” and “blog” entries. This was during 2005 when Wikipedia was just getting started. I went back about a month later and if I remember correctly two of my links were still there. When I check now, they have all been deleted and I doubt if I added them again they would last very long.

**Now that Wikipedia is mature and an authority site, you can't expect to have success adding your blog to a mainstream generic entry in the**

**encyclopedia, so don't even try it.**

This is a situation where secondary keywords apply. You need to look at less popular "long tail" entries in Wikipedia where your blog or an article on your blog would fit very appropriately with the topic. Another advantage of doing this is that the "deeper" entries are not moderated as heavily so it is less likely someone will take offense at your link and remove it.

As with secondary phrases in Google searches, don't expect a high quality link from a secondary phrase in Wikipedia. The relationship between popularity, competition and link value is always like that - **if it's easy to create and less competitive, expect less traffic and reduced ranking benefit.**

### **#13 - Include Your Blog Link in Your Email Signature**

This really is a no-brainer. Do you send email? Of course you do, so why not use every email you send out as a little advertisement for your blog.

Use the signature system in your email client to set it up so you don't have to retype the link in every email. It should automatically append to the end of every email you mail.

## Link Building Techniques - Part Two

### Moving Up The Food Chain...The Path of Moderate Resistance

These techniques are harder to implement or require significant financial investment for the average blogger. You can expect, on average, to earn better quality links and more of them using these methods. If you test these techniques be certain to follow them through from start to finish or at least for a solid period of time. Without follow through your results may be disappointing.

#### #14 – Pay Someone or a Service to Submit Your Articles to Article Directories

If you read the report I provided for you about my article marketing results you will see that I wasn't too impressed by this method for my own blog.

Despite this, I have a lot of faith in this method of building backlinks because I have seen others do well in other niches, but only if they stick to it for the long term and work on putting a ton of content out the door.

If you can get 100–200 articles submitted and on average they are each syndicated at least 2–3 times (I've heard cases of one article syndicated across hundreds of sites if you really nail a topical subject) then you are looking at generating around 500 incoming links.

The links won't necessarily be high quality (I wouldn't expect more than a couple of authority links), but they should be a nice natural spread provided you submit articles over a period of time like three months to a year (remember the importance of a natural growth curve when building links).

#### #15 – Buy Links in Top Trusted Directories

If you have the money to spend and search optimizing your blog is a high priority, buying entries in the top authority directories is definitely worth it. Personally if I had the money to spend I'd spend it on link baiting ideas (more on this coming up), but if you don't have the time or the patience, then a few quick directory entries is a good launch pad for high rankings.

Try these to start with – [Business.com](http://Business.com) and the [Yahoo! Directory](http://Yahoo! Directory)

#### #16 – Create a Resource (Dictionary/Glossary/Link Collection)

I've seen this method implemented in industries that have a lot of technical concepts. Create a glossary or dictionary of relevant terms or acronyms. This can bring in a consistent stream of new incoming links as other bloggers link to the resource whenever they quote a definition. It takes a bit of work to get it set up – you might consider outsourcing the creation of it – but the value it brings to your blog is obvious.

A link directory is another way to garner incoming links. You let people add their site to your directory provided they link back to your blog. This is a triangular linking structure – your directory has outgoing links to other sites, the other sites link to your blog and your blog should link to your directory. I wrote extensively about this technique in a blog post here – [Testing a new reciprocal link exchange management system](#).

I set up a system like this for a small business I created called [BetterEdit.com](#). I had a link directory running off software, but unfortunately the software was eventually hit by excessive spam so I stopped monitoring it. While it was running it did bring in a steady stream of low quality links. I don't consider this a very powerful method of link building because you get very poor quality links, but it can certainly be of some use – just make sure it is automated if you decide to implement it.

Try these sites for link directory scripts:

- [Hotscripts](#)
- [The PHP Resource Index](#)

## **#17 – Create a PowerPoint Slide Presentation**

While PowerPoint is becoming somewhat dated and many bloggers are using online video instead to teach people with, there is no reason at the very least you can't leverage your existing PowerPoint slides and packaging them up for web distribution via your blog.

If you have ever done a presentation chances are you have some PowerPoint slides left over. Dig them up, update them, and then give them away from your blog. This is a nice and simple way to build links and add value because other bloggers will link to you to share the slides.

## **#18 – Circulate a Press Release**

Press release circulation is a lot like article marketing. When you combine the magic ingredients to grab the interest of journalists from around the world, the result is fantastic. Not only do you build incoming links as your press release is published on other sites, you may also score interviews from newspapers, magazines, radio shows and even television. Just don't expect miracles when you first test this method unless your story is very unique and compelling.

I recommend you read this free report on press release writing – [The New Rules of PR by David Meerman Scott](#) [PDF] – then come up with an interesting story and write your press release.

The standard press release circulation site is [PRWeb.com](#), but they no longer have a free service, however it is worth paying the fee – this is the leading service for online press release distribution. Be certain you go in with the very best story you

can coin around your blog (think human interest) so you do not waste your money, and track your results – **see what links you generate and what caliber of site they show up on.**

Personally I have never had much success with online press release circulation, although I have only done it a handful of times and each time it did bring in a few backlinks – just very low quality links. I've had better success by contacting the journalists and editors directly with my press release and attempting to get coverage. This can work well on a micro scale by focusing on smaller media sources local to your area or industry.

### **#19 – Submit Articles to Other Blogs and/or Invite Guest Bloggers to Your Blog.**

This is one of my favorite techniques because it is a win-win system to help two blogs. One blog receives fresh original content and the other blog gains an incoming link. If you want to test this technique find similar blogs to your own and email the owners. Ask about a content exchange or submitting an article to them for publication.

Bear in mind you might face resistance for a whole range of reasons with this technique, but if you persist I have no doubt you will quickly see the power it – it's a great way to build links and attract new readers to your blog, AND build relationships. I consider this the new form of reciprocal link exchange – but it actually works because it is natural – publishing valuable content with a link to the source of the content in exchange.

### **#20 – Publish a Picture that is Sexy, Interesting, Funny, etc.**

Photographs posted to a blog are easy to consume and appeal to the instant gratification nature of blog readers. Best of all, people like to share pictures. It takes a lot less time to publish a picture than write article, but sourcing entertaining photographs or pictures is not simple, especially if you want to be original.

A captivating picture will circulate around many blogs, with each blog (usually) linking back to the blog that they sourced the picture from, so in this sense you don't have to be the creator of the picture – just one of the earliest to publish it – first in, best dressed.

**Be careful about copyright** – most artists who publish images don't mind if you reproduce them as long as you link back to their site as the source, after all, they want to benefit from links too!

If you are already an artist of some sort, placing your artwork on your blog is a logical step to take to encourage backlinks. If you are not, look to sites like [Flickr](#) where you may stumble upon interesting graphic work, which you can blog about. Always get permission from the artist first.

You can also try photography sites, some of which contain royalty free photos you can publish immediately. Two of my favorite sites are:

- [Stock.xchng](#) – Lots of great free stuff in here.
- [istockphoto](#) – High quality with a small fee.

## #21 – Write Original Articles for Authority Sites in your Industry and Submit them for Publication.

Previously I recommended content exchanges with other bloggers as a means to generate backlinks. If you want to take this a step further and get higher quality links, focus on approaching the authority blogs in your industry and ask if you can submit an original article, which they publish on their blog, and in return you receive a link back to your blog.

To accomplish this task I recommend you target a few key blogs (look for high traffic, high pagerank and high backlink counts) and write the article first. Then, one at a time, email the blogger and attach your article. Be sure to point out how well your article fits in with the theme of their blog or how it continues a concept/argument they wrote about previously, and ask if they will publish your article provided they link back to your blog. If one blog refuses move on to the next, **but don't offend the blogger, say "thanks anyway" and continue to foster a relationship even though they may not have helped you this time.**

You can also try this technique by approaching non-blog sites like popular magazine portals, news sites or any authority site in your industry. If you think your article is good enough, submit it to offline magazines or publications as well – you would be surprised how much you can milk a few good articles for links – just don't forget to write articles for your blog too!

I know that is a lot of writing, but do you want a successful blog or not?

## #22 – Create a Survey

A survey is a good linkbait tool, provided it is about something **relevant to your readers, not just you**. Ask your readers questions pertinent to your entire industry and then publish the results to attract new links. This only works as long as you have enough people respond to the survey, hence only consider a survey if you have some traffic, otherwise you may not receive very many responses.

For WordPress users there is [survey plug-in](#) you can use or go to [SurveyMonkey.com](#) to set up your survey.

## #23 – Write a List

Ahh, list blog posts – a staple link building tool. A list blog post has an uncanny ability to attract links. Lists work well because they cut to the chase, they are easy to scan and appeal to time-poor readers. List posts you publish to your blog are read more thoroughly than full text paragraph posts, and consequently have great impact.

Lists have performed well for my blog. My best list articles, which were each linked to many times include:

- [8 Pitfalls To Avoid When Starting An Internet Business](#)
- [The Truth About Online Marketing](#)
- [Blogging For Beginners And 10 Blog Traffic Tips](#)

I caution relying on the list style too heavily. So many bloggers have written about the effectiveness of lists, usually by using a list, that the technique is becoming overused. It's always a highly effective technique, just **don't write a list about something that another popular blogger has already created a good list on.**

The list format is a great way to display content – that will never change – but the potential to attract links from lists relies on your ability, as always, to provide valuable content.

#### **#24 – Write a Review at [Amazon.com](#), [Epinions.com](#), [Bizrate.com](#) or other Theme Relevant Shopping/Review Sites and Link to Your Blog Posts.**

Personally I have never used this technique but it is something I am itching to test because it seems easy and powerful. Amazon.com and other shopping sites have facilities that allow the public to write reviews. If you find a popular product that is relevant to a blog post you have made, leave a review and include a link back to your blog.

Most shopping sites have reasonably high authority and if you pick particularly popular products you may even generate a little stream of traffic back to your blog as people click the link.

For example, on my blog I've written a few reviews of books I have read that I think my readers would also enjoy. I usually link to the Amazon.com page with my affiliate link but I could also do the reverse. Go to the Amazon page for that product, write a quick micro review and at the end link back to my book review on my blog if they want the extended version of my review.

#### **#25 – Blog About Unusual eBay Auctions**

[eBay](#) is amazingly powerful as a tool for press coverage. People conduct crazy auctions such as selling their body parts, or [their virginity](#) or [space on their](#)

[forehead](#) for tattoo advertising, which become huge publicity hits. If you can come up with a big enough or weird enough auction, which you write about on your blog, or be the first to blog about someone else's crazy auction, you can win big time in incoming links.

I've not attempted this technique myself but I've been exposed to multiple successful campaigns by other people using eBay to build links and traffic. Then again, I don't know how many people attempt this technique and are not successful since you don't hear about the failures. It really is a gamble with eBay – very hit and miss – but that is always the case with publicity stunts.

eBay is quick to take down auctions if the details break their terms of service. If you think the auction in question is a rule-breaker you need to act fast and seek results quickly if you want this technique to work for you, although I never recommend you break another site's rules.

If you are the first to find a crazy auction at eBay, which you believe has link building potential, quickly write about it and then email other bloggers, in particular the high traffic blogs, who would be interested. You should also attempt to get your post into Digg and/or Del.icio.us as the source of the news. In this case you **need to be first to have any chance of benefiting**.

If you attempt to create an auction that has publicity potential by yourself try and not break the eBay rules so you can maximize the time you enjoy in the limelight. **You don't have to sell body parts to get attention – just do something big enough or unusual enough to get the attention of, at the very least, people in your industry.** If things get crazy your stunt may even go global.

## **#26 – Track Trends at Technorati/Google News and Write Articles About Hot Topics.**

Many bloggers use this technique as their bread and butter. By tracking current news and hot trends within an industry, and writing about the news before anyone else, you attract incoming links and your blog becomes a well known **hotspot** for news. This technique suits those who have regular net access and can watch for breaking news. You only have a small time frame in which the news is considered “hot enough” that you may garner links when you blog about it.

If you use this technique be sure to take advantage of all the tools available to you to track and search for news, including [Technorati.com](#), [Google News](#), [Google Alerts](#), RSS feed readers like [Bloglines](#) or [Google Reader](#) and any news-specific sites for your industry.

It's okay if you reproduce news that was already broken by a mainstream media site, if you add your own take or opinion or speculation when you blog about it. This adds value and makes your post more linkable. Also be sure to refer to other bloggers who have covered the same news because in the future they may return the favor with links back to your news posts.

## #27 – Be the Source of a New Hot Topic

If you happen to attend an event, create an event or just find yourself in the right place at the right time, as the first blog to break hot news you can bring in a tremendous amounts of links. Other bloggers, social sites like Digg, Del.icio.us and [Reddit](#), and even mainstream media sites may link to your blog as the source of the news.

## #28 Post Links to Craigslist

I used this technique in my business BetterEdit.com, to, at the time, generate first page Google results for popular search terms. By leveraging extremely popular and authoritative classified sites like Craigslist, you can create entries using the right keywords in the title of the Craigslist entry. This can be a complicated technique so I suggest you read my full article if you want the whole story:

[A Simple Technique that Got Me a Number One Ranking in Google](#)

## #29 – Sponsor a Charity or Cause

I love this technique – it’s a great community builder and if done well builds links too. Let’s not forget it also helps a worthwhile cause.

This technique is simple in principle but takes some organizing. You run a charity drive or competition from your blog and encourage your readers to help out. I used to run a charity to keep two children sponsored under the World Vision program (now I just sponsor them out of my own income). You can see my 2006 charity drive post here:

[Child Sponsorship Charity Drive 2006](#)

Bear in mind copying me will not work unless you already have a group of hardcore supporters following your blog. If you have few readers you won’t have many sponsors either.

**Here are some charity sponsorship ideas for you to use if your blog is just getting started:**

- Run a competition with a prize. Say your goal is to raise \$500 for a charity you admire and you put up a prize, perhaps an iPod or something similar – cool enough to get people’s attention – and give it away randomly to one of the people who donates.
- Say you will donate \$X dollars to a charity to every legitimate blogger who links to your donation drive. This might cost you a few hundred dollars (or more if you are willing) but it will generate links to your blog because of the “buzz” of the idea and best of all, raise funds for charity. It’s win-win.

Note you may have to manually email bloggers to let them know what you are doing if you implement the above charity techniques – but it should catch on and if done well may go viral helping to bring in hundreds of links to your blog.

### **#30 – Create a Squidoo Page About Your Area of Expertise and Link to Your Blog**

[Squidoo](#) is the brain child of well known blogger and marketing expert, [Seth Godin](#). Squidoo is a community site where you create what is called a “lens”, essentially a page on Squidoo created and maintained by you, which demonstrates your expertise in a given area.

Squidoo has blog specific lens templates, which are structured to help you show off your blog and best blog posts you have made. The system takes a little getting used to, but it is not complex, you will be able to create links and add content to your lens within a few minutes of setting up an account.

Squidoo itself is an authority site and if you build a comprehensive lens it will rank well in search engines. Each link you point to your blog from your lens(es) will help your search ranking, but don't expect miracles, remember since anyone can create a lens, the links from “average” lenses will not be that valuable.

**The real power comes when you create a lens that itself becomes popular, both within the Squidoo community and outside on the Web.** Then the links you point towards your blog from your lens are more valuable. This takes time and you will need to create value (content) at your lens – this is where the labor comes in and as usual, you are rewarded for investing your energy.

### **#31 – Establish Yourself In A Social Media Hub**

Most social media sites reward people who spend time establishing reputable profiles by contributing the community.

If you become someone well respected for contributing to a site like Digg, Delicious, Sphinn, Stumbleupon, BlogCatalog, Facebook, MySpace, etc, then you have power in that community.

This obviously takes some time, but once you have status, simply telling people about your latest work on your blog using the social media service will bring in links.

Just don't abuse this power, it only works if most of the time you link to other's people's great content, that earns you the right to occasionally reference your own.

### #32 – Pay to Advertise Your Blog in Email or Print Newsletters/Ezines

This is another way you can spend your marketing budget to bring in links. Sponsor an ezine online or a print magazine or newsletter offline and you will enlarge your sphere of exposure. The more people who know your blog exists the more likely they will link to it. If the ezine is a web based publication you may gain direct link(s) when you purchase an advertisement.

I've not used this technique before but I have been on the reverse side of the transaction – I have sold advertisements in previous email newsletters I managed.

Most advertisers use this method for the direct traffic that comes from clicking the advertisement link. However if you get the attention of webmasters or other bloggers the exposure can result in links as well, especially if you promote something worth linking to in your newsletter advertisement, like software or a widget.

I suggest you do a [Google search for ezine directories](#) to find possible online newsletters you can advertise in. If you don't find options that way, try asking in community sites like forums based on your subject matter to find out what newsletters and ezines people subscribe to and recommend.

### #33 – Post Comments at Blogs that Make a Difference to Peoples Lives.

Too many bloggers take the traffic building advice “post comments” and go and leave nothing but crappy one-liners on other blogs. **If you really want to build links using a commenting strategy you need to make an impact when you comment**, and there are two groups of people you need to focus on:

1. The author of the article you are leaving a comment on, and
2. The people who read the article and comments

To truly impact these people you need to present **ideas** when you comment. Don't just compliment an article, compliment it and extend upon it by talking about an example from your life. If you disagree, explain why you disagree with an argument that makes sense, not just an insult or blanket statement with no evidence.

If you know a particular blog has an audience who would benefit from your blog, aim to be the first person to leave a comment on each article and become prolific. If you show up everywhere on a blog I guarantee the author will take notice of you, as will his or her readers. I certainly recognize and appreciate the regular comment makers on my blogs and take more notice of their blogs as a result.

Commenting on other blogs can build links to your blog but only when the comments you leave convince other people to visit your blog. When they see how interesting/smart/experienced/passionate you are just in comments, they are

more likely to click through and read your blog. This can then lead to links when they find something they want to share with their readers.

### **#34 – Make Lots of Comments, Period.**

There is something to be said for quantity of exposure. Although I advocate the previous technique regarding comments – adding ideas and quality content when you comment – you can go another approach and attempt to be seen commenting everywhere.

The risk with this style is that you will be labeled a spammer because you never actually contribute, so be careful how you go about it. **I recommend spreading your comments across multiple blogs so no single blogger is bombarded too much with your enthusiasm.** If you are seen to comment at every single blog in your industry you may just become ubiquitous in that industry, which will result in ample exposure for your blog and once again, the more exposure you have the more potential for incoming links.

However I strongly recommend you attempt quality over quantity even if it means you can't focus on many blogs at once with your commenting strategy. Focused energy on just one good blog is enough to attract attention from the right people who will then watch your blog and link to it when you publish something they like.

### **#35 – Send Lots of Trackbacks and Pingbacks**

Just like commenting, if you send enough trackbacks and pingbacks to other blogs, in particular if you shine your light several times on one particular blogger you are bound to get their attention and they may link back to you if they find some great content on your blog.

Remember **when you send a trackback your article must add value to the conversation that the blogger you are sending the trackback to started.** Make sure whatever you are writing about actually makes sense to send a trackback from. If you just send them out will-nilly you will quickly be labeled a spammer – quite the opposite of what you are aiming for – and you will face great difficulty capturing the attention of the other blogger.

### **#36 – Use Hittail.com and Write Articles Focused on Long Tail Topics**

[Hittail.com](http://Hittail.com) is a tool for bloggers that lets you target the long tail phrases relevant to your blog traffic. This is an in-depth concept and you need to understand what The Long Tail is before you will realize why it is effective.

Read my introduction to [The Long Tail](#) if you have not done so already and then start targeting the right phrases in your article titles based on what Hittail recommends.

### #37 Email Other Bloggers Who Link to Your Blog and Say Thank You

Here's an extra friendly link building technique. Whenever someone links to you, email them to thank them personally (alternatively leave a comment, **but a personal email is more powerful**). Then if it makes sense in the future, send them some link love and link to their blog.

Over time this process repeats again and again as you build your relationship, produce great content and send links back and forth to each other's blogs. Of course I don't do this with every blog who links to mine, but you will find that you can very quickly establish a peer group of bloggers who are at a similar stage in their blogging career as you. Why not work with your peers to improve all your search engine rankings by interlinking as often as it makes sense to do so?

This technique guarantees you will make new blogging friends, who will watch your blog daily. **It's so much easier to link to friends** and strong friendships can be built with the benefit of links flowing back and forth.

### #38 – Join 9rules.com and Network with the 9rules Bloggers

[9rules](#) is a blog network that is free to join and can do wonders for your link building. When I say it is free, I mean it doesn't cost money, but you do have to wait for an invitation round to begin before you can apply to join. Thankfully there is no limit to how many blogs they accept into the network, the qualification is based purely on the quality of your blog. Because of this I wouldn't recommend applying until you have some history demonstrating quality at your blog.

Joining 9rules was one of the most effective link building experiences I ever enjoyed at my [Entrepreneurs-Journey.com](#) blog because it brought my blog to the attention of hundreds of bloggers already in 9rules. Not only do you benefit from direct links from the 9rules.com authority site, but you also join a community of great bloggers who you can mingle with to increase your exposure.

### #39 – Create an Awards Badge

One effective way to build incoming links is to create an award that is given to other bloggers who do something special. Design or outsource the design of an awards badge graphic the recipients of the award can display on their blog, which links back to the page on your blog that explains what the award is, or your blog homepage.

Each time you give out the award you receive a link back to your blog and the blogger who receives the award gets a credibility boost – another win-win technique.

Liz Strauss came up with a simple badge concept called an SOB, which she awards to good bloggers. See how Liz implements this at her [SOB Hall of Fame](#).

Liz is also one of the most prolific comment makers in the blogosphere and if you want to see how to successfully build a community at a blog see her [Successful Blog](#).

#### **#40 – Rant About a Topic with Passion**

The age old art of the “rant” can build links to your blog. You have to be good at ranting for this to work so beware if this is something new to you.

Similar to the link bait technique of **controversy** which I discuss in the next section, a rant blog post is a slightly “edgy” topic that is focused on your strong opinion about the issue. Strong opinions capture attention if you pick a hot enough topic and rant about it in an interesting manner.

Often rants work best if you focus on other people because you can stir up strong emotions. There is nothing more compelling than strong emotions – just remember you may need thick skin if you find yourself the target of a rant sent back at you.

Ranting sent your way is often just as good too, so you might consider targeting or mentioning a popular blogger, who is well known for going a little nuts and see if you can provoke a heated cross-blogging discussion. You will garner all kinds of attention and links when the discussion spreads to other blogs, but try and keep things above the belt, to avoid damaging your reputation.

#### **#41 – Cover an Event via Your Blog**

Robert Kingston, who was one of my writers at [Small Business Branding](#) when I owned that blog, attended an event called [Mplanet](#), which was a technology, Internet and business related conference held in Florida. Robert was invited to the event to do blog coverage and given a free press package. This was the result of a relationship he established, via blogging, with one of the people involved in organizing the event.

Robert is from Australia so it was a long way to go for him to come to Florida, but he had a great time and blogged “live”, completing daily recaps of the conference and posting them to Small Business Branding. You can see some of his coverage here – [Mplanet – Day 3 \(The Final Day\)](#).

There were several other bloggers who also attended to do coverage and of course they all linked to each other, collectively helping to raise the search engine rankings of all the blogs involved.

You don’t have to be purposefully invited to do coverage, just show up at an industry specific event, conference, party, show or carnival and blog what’s going on live as it happens (remember to bring your camera!). If you decide to do this be sure to email the event organizers and let them know your plans, you may be given special press access and, more importantly, your blog may gain some extra

links and coverage from the official site for the event, or any other bloggers interested in the event.

## Link Building Techniques - Part Three

### How To Attract Authority Links... The Path of Most Resistance

Here is the final section on building incoming links. These are the techniques of greatest difficulty or cost to implement, but which you can expect to attract the highest quality links. Pull off any of the techniques below on a regular basis and you will build an authority blog, appearing on the first page of search engine results for different search terms.

#### #42 – Linkbait or Link Bait

A central theme to many of the techniques I am about to introduce to you is what has become known in the blogosphere as **Linkbait**. Linkbaiting is to create something at your blog that “baits” other bloggers to link to it.

Matt Cutts, a Google employee and well known SEO figure, is usually credited with coming up with the term linkbait and you can find his initial blog post about it here – [SEO Advice: linkbait and linkbaiting](#)

There is no strict definition of linkbait and many bloggers have published their take on it, with explanations varying significantly. Some bloggers take issue with the term because of the negative connotation of *baiting* others – you are trying to trick other people into giving you links.

I take a broader view of the subject and look at in a less fiendish way. Linkbait is **to create something worth linking to**, specifically with the intention of generating a significant quantity and range of quality links in a natural manner. Whether or not the value you create is based on controversy doesn't matter.

In a sense you could say every blog post you publish is a form of linkbait, if your focus is indeed on building links. The distinction or label linkbait should only be applied when you undertake the creation of something particularly link worthy and your focus is more on generating the links than the content itself, even though those two motivations overlap in many ways.

**It is best to consider linkbait as a mindset or methodology rather than specifically a single technique.**

As you progress through the final list of external linking techniques below you will see that they all focus on the concept of linkbait.

#### #43 – Leverage Top Bloggers

Find a popular blogger who published something you don't agree with, or can add to, and write a post with a counter-argument or extension of their ideas. Be certain to trackback and/or leave a comment so he/she knows about your article.

This is one of the traditional linkbaiting techniques. If there are bloggers in your industry who are famous you can attempt to specifically target them by counter-arguing against a post they have just made or by adding to it extensively with intelligence, which you write in a new article on your blog. You must make it clear you are specifically targeting them and their point of view.

This technique only works when you have a valid point to make. You should aim to continue the conversation, not viciously denounce the famous blogger – although that can work too. **There's no point damaging your credibility by arguing for the sake of it**, when you really have no valid point to make, or clearly what you are saying makes no sense. You might get some links, but only to show how much of an idiot you are!

Intelligent counter-arguments, alternative points of view or extensions of the ideas presented by the famous blogger, can bring in links and enhance your reputation as a quality blog author. There's nothing better than when a famous blogger links to your post recommending it as further reading for the topic in focus. This not only brings you a high quality backlink and valuable exposure, **it also enhances your reputation** – in this case it's a real world vote of confidence in your blog as well as a search engine vote using a link.

Bear in mind this technique can be hit and miss. If you present a weak point, or the blogger you target just doesn't care, or rarely links to other blogs – some top bloggers don't – then you may not get any rewards. My advice is to seek out the bloggers in your industry who seem approachable and have a history of linking out to other blogs. It doesn't hurt to throw in a little praise too, everyone likes a little ego-stroking.

#### **#44 – Write Your Opinion of a Guru, A-list Blogger or Famous Person**

A similar concept to the previous technique is the blogger or celebrity review. As I mentioned, spreading some praise often brings links and one of the best ways to do this is to create a “my favorite bloggers/blogs” top 10 list.

For example, a reader of my Entrepreneurs–Journey blog [published an article on his blog](#) nominating the bloggers that most impacted his life during the year 2005. He included my blog and three other reasonably famous bloggers as the top featured blogs, including photos of each of us (taken from our blogs) and a few honorable nominations in other categories. He put some effort into it and explained what he found valuable from each blog. I was flattered and linked back to the post, as did plenty other bloggers, and not just those nominated.

This is another hit and miss technique, which depends heavily on who you target. My blog has since been included in several top lists published by other bloggers, so I started getting used to it (yes I know, it's tough to receive rewards so often!). Hence I don't link out every time I see myself on a list anymore.

You will find many of the top bloggers will have the same reaction – they won't link back – so it is smarter focusing on the slightly less famous bloggers in your industry, who will be flattered and more likely to link back to you since it doesn't happen to them often.

#### **#45 – Write or Do Something Controversial – Sue Someone, Be Sued, Talk Politics.**

A number of times I've witnessed blogs benefit from undesirable situations like potential legal action.

**Remember, there is no such thing as bad publicity.** If you find yourself in trouble you may as well milk it for all it's worth in links and traffic.

Well known SEO expert [Aaron Wall](#) found himself the target of a possible lawsuit due to comments left on his blog by other people. If you take a look at this [Google search](#) you will see how many incoming links from top authority blogs he received as a result of the news generated by his potential legal problems.

I have a story about an uncomfortable event – at least from a personal standpoint – that occurred at my blog, which was definitely beneficial in terms of building links. Everyone loves to watch an argument and when two high-profile bloggers start fighting, people tend to stop and see what all the fuss is about. I experienced just such an event in mid 2006 when another blogger took issue with something I did at my blog.

I won't go into detail because it's a very long story, but if you are interested you can follow the events from the comment stream in this post – [How To Make Money With Blogs + AdSense – Free E-Book](#)

I don't recommend you go and sue anyone or get yourself sued just for the sake of building links, but you can take the principle behind this technique and apply it to your blog.

One way to do so is pick a highly emotive topic, one with polarized view points and mainstream attention – for example the war in Iraq or any political issue – and put your opinion out there. You will likely receive some very critical backlash from people who don't agree with you, but if you can endure it, the incoming links make it worthwhile.

#### **#46 – Take Photos, Record Audio Podcasts or Video at Conferences**

I previously mentioned the potential to build links to your blog by doing basic coverage at an industry event, but you can take this technique much further with the help of technology.

If you attend an event or even just a local gathering with other bloggers or famous people, take advantage of the chance to photograph, record an audio interview, or if you have the capabilities – capture some video of the event. Once you post the media to your blog there is a good chance the target of your camera lens or microphone will link to your post and possibly many other bloggers if the person is famous enough and/or the interview content is interesting.

## **#47 – Viral Marketing**

Viral marketing is an absolutely massive topic and there are full books devoted to it, hence I won't be going into much depth here.

When something goes viral it spreads across the web effortlessly, you don't have to do anything once a tipping point is reached. Your content, which can be words, audio or video, or a combination, is entertaining or valuable enough that people will be compelled to pass it on.

Humans enjoy a feeling of importance when they are the source of something unique, valuable or entertaining, hence they are motivated to spread the word. The only thing you may have to watch out for is whether your web server can handle all the traffic you receive when something you do goes viral!

Successful viral campaigns can generate huge amounts of incoming links to your blog, especially if your blog is sourced (and linked to) as the producer of the viral content.

In my case, the free reports I've released have gone viral and continue to spread to this day, as do many of the podcasts and top articles I've released on my blog. They spread because people enjoy the content so much that they want to share it with other people, thus will publish links to the content on their blogs and social media profiles like Twitter and Facebook.

**The best tip I can offer is whenever you produce something that has viral potential make sure it is easily shared.** When you reduce the resistance to pass something on, like making simple copy-and-paste code available for other bloggers to publish the content, or use a Twitter "tweet this" option to blog posts (try the [TweetMeme plugin for Wordpress](#), it's amazing for encouraging Tweets of your blog content). You could also build in some form of email forwarding mechanism into your blog design so people can easily forward your content via email.

## **#48 – Hire a Publicist, Online Marketer, SEO Expert, Link Building Service or Consultant**

If you are extra busy (or some may say smart) you can outsource your link building and promotion efforts. The advantage of doing this is the level of professionalism you can bring to your project, but as with most consultants, it won't be cheap – you do have to pay for quality.

There are various levels of outsourcing you can consider, from something as simple as asking an advisor for strategic guidance, to hiring a team of off-shore outsourcers to build links for you, or hiring a professional PR agency or a dedicated SEO expert.

I've never outsourced link building for my blogs, but I know plenty of my peers do, especially if they are building sites for clients or have a range of blogs in many different niches, which require too much work for just one person to build links for.

If your blogging project is significant and you have something unique enough that it could generate some serious offline media attention, a PR agent may be a smart choice. Expect to pay in the thousands or tens of thousands for this type of service though.

SEO consultants, who can help with your overall search engine marketing and link building strategy, charge anywhere from \$500 an hour or \$5,000–\$50,000 per project. This is a growing area as many talented individuals are benefiting from companies hungry for assistance with their online marketing.

## #49 – Networking

You might think a simple technique such as “networking” should be in the first part of this chapter in the easier link building techniques list, but I have placed it here in the final section for a reason.

**As a technique, leveraging your network for incoming links takes a concerted effort.** You can't simply make a few friends and see the links coming in, you need to plan and act in order to stimulate your desired action from your network contacts.

Make a conscious effort to attend events where high profile people in your industry gather. Then make an effort to meet and introduce yourself to as many of them as possible AND attempt to form a meaningful relationship with each person. **To do this effectively you have to take an interest in WHAT THEY ARE DOING**, don't just ramble on about your project.

Once you start to form relationships with important people (who have important, authority websites and blogs) you can start to leverage your newly developed personal access by staying in contact with them, at least via email and if possible via instant messenger and Skype as well. Then, when you do something interesting at your blog that you think is relevant to your powerful contacts, you

can directly communicate to them and potentially earn incoming links from their sites.

As you can see this is a long winded way to build links but it's potentially one of the best ways to do it, and best of all you make like-minded friends along the way.

## #50 – Start a Podcast

If you know about blogging chances are you know about **podcasting** too. A podcast is like an Internet radio show that can be time-shifted (listened to at any time). You can read my longer explanation if you have never heard of podcasting before – [What is a Podcast and How Can I Use One?](#)

I jumped into podcasting shortly after starting my blog, more out of curiosity and a chance to hear my voice in public – I am a closet radio-jockey wannabe – than any marketing motivation. Initially I used the voice recorder on my portable MP3 player with a headset and microphone, which would record my voice in .WAV format. I would then take that .WAV file and use iTunes to convert it to MP3 and upload it to my blog.

I have since gone advanced and use software along with [Skype](#) to record live interviews (I use [Call Recorder for Mac](#) presently). When I was on PC I used a free open source program called [Audacity](#) to edit the file, add some intro music and then use [iTunes](#) to convert it into MP3 and then upload to my blog. The [Podpress Plug-in](#) for WordPress will help you to customize the output on your blog.

As you can see podcasting is more technical than blogging, however if all that I just described is beyond you there are easier alternatives. [Gcast.com](#) offers a free service where you can record a podcast simply by using a normal telephone line. There are several similar services, such as [AudioBlog \(Hipcast\)](#) and [Audio Acrobat](#) that charge a fee to record and host your podcasts.

Each podcast I do is downloaded initially between 1000–2000 times during the first week or two, and then continues to be downloaded at rates of a few hundred a month per episode, which means every month there are thousands of people listening to my voice. It's a great way to increase your exposure and since you host the podcasts from your blog you build links each time you release a podcast too.

Each time I interview someone in my podcast I am almost guaranteed at least a link from the person I just interviewed. Depending on how well known the person is you can expect links from other bloggers who follow that person.

**A simple formula for gaining a link from a popular authority blogger is to interview them in a podcast.**

If done right, your podcasts will syndicate across the web via podcasting directories and services. iTunes is the most popular and is known to account upwards of 90% of a podcaster's audience. It's important you get your podcast show into iTunes and here are [instructions from iTunes](#) on how to do so.

## #51 – Write a Free Report

A free report, sometimes known as a whitepaper or a small e-book or e-booklet, is a fantastic way to build links to your blog. If you really hit the nail on the head in terms of meeting the needs of your readers, your free report will go viral, bringing in hundreds or even thousands of links.

From a link building point of view, a free report on a topic that is timely, relevant, interesting, challenging, controversial, and above all else – valuable – can be a link builder for many months, even years, as new people discover the report and link to it. However the initial rush when the report is first released is usually when most links are generated as the “buzz” spreads around the blogosphere.

Free reports are often used by business bloggers to demonstrate their knowledge and experience in a specialized topic. As such their blog acts as a distribution mechanism for their advice and a marketing tool to generate leads for their business (usually a consultancy or similar business structure).

One of the best case studies I know of using free reports to build links was conducted by the Internet business coach, [Rich Schefren](#).

Rich started with a hugely popular report called “**The Internet Business Manifesto**”, followed it up with an sequel report called “**The Missing Chapter**” and a few months later came up with what he called “**The Final Chapter**”, the third in the trilogy. All the reports were released at and discussed from his blog, [Strategic Profits](#), which very quickly went from new and empty to 200 comments on average left on each post Rich wrote.

Rich reported that he generated somewhere in the vicinity of 2000–3000 links during the launch of his first manifesto. Although he did have the advantage of partnerships with many prominent marketers to help promote the release of his first report, you can see the potential for building links to a blog centered on the release of special reports.

**If you want this to work for your blog you need to focus on adding value to your readership and offering unique information.** If someone has already covered a topic and their free report has already circulated far and wide, chances are when you release your report on the same or a similar topic you won't make nearly as big a splash.

Rich Schefren did well because his reports were designed to zero in on the problems of a very specific group of people, people he wanted to attract as

clients. However you don't have to release a report to generate business, you could produce a whitepaper that explains how to do something in your industry, like repair a broken engine, or mix cocktails, or win at poker, or how to raise twins or fly a kite – the key is the focus on your industry and the value the report offers.

Quality free reports can benefit from social media too, such as the aforementioned Del.icio.us, Digg, Twitter and Facebook, where users at these sites recommend the free report attracting additional traffic. Often if you can tap just one high traffic source – such as exposure on a popular blog, or Digg's front page – that event is enough to kick start the spread of awareness, at which point you can sit back and watch the links come in.

## **#52 – Write a Book**

You can apply everything I just wrote about a free report to writing a full sized book.

For example, I could have decided to give this book you are now reading away for free and use it as a link building tool. Provided the advice in this book strikes a cord with people, I could possibly bring in up to a hundred, or even hundreds of new links and spread the word about my skills as an SEO expert for blogs.

At this point my strategy for this book is different, however the example I present is very relevant. I have seen many authors of books begin by selling their book and then after many months or years they decide to give the book away for free, either because it is no longer selling or to bring in more links or to generate buzz for a new book. If your blog obtaining high search engine rankings results in you making money, then the “value” of incoming links may be worth more than the potential revenue from selling the book.

If you have any books you created in the past, dig them up and give them away in digital format, you might be surprised how many links and traffic come your way as a result.

## **#53 – Pay for Links to Your Free Report/Book**

One last point on the free report/ebook link building technique – lately, with more people releasing free reports, especially in certain popular markets like Internet marketing and making money online, it is difficult to stand out from the crowd.

Even if you write a fantastic free report you may not enjoy much exposure or incoming links as a result. In some industries there is information overload and people don't take notice of yet another free report unless you have some way to demonstrate serious credibility or you tap into a key issue that others haven't yet.

Recently some prominent Internet marketers have paid money to encourage people to refer others to their free reports. They don't give away much, usually \$1

per person referred, but this extra motivation is enough to bring in links numbering in the thousands.

If the value of a link to you is more than the cost of generating the link, then this system makes sense. Be warned though, the two marketers I have seen use this technique spent \$15,000+ and \$60,000+ in each case, but they had backend products about to be launched or extensive plans in the future to monetize the traffic they brought in, so it made financial sense for them to do so.

I only recommend you attempt to pay for referrals in this manner if you are certain you have a means to capitalize on the links and traffic you bring in.

#### **#54 – Present at an Event**

Industry events are fantastic marketing opportunities for all who attend, **but the people who really benefit are the presenters**, since their message and personality are broadcast to a wider audience at one time.

Conferences and seminars are attended by people who share a common interest. Large scale events focused on the industry you blog about collect thousands of people from your target market and put them all in the same room. Hence the chance to present at such an event is a golden opportunity to place your blog URL in front of a lot of people, who are very interested in what you offer.

Everything I have discussed about networking, making friends and creating linkbait apply to presenting on an event stage as well. Provided you make a big enough splash in your presentation, either through **value creation, education, controversy** or **entertainment**, many of the event attendees who witnessed your presentation will return home and blog about you (or may even blog while at the event), or email you to make contact opening up future link building possibilities.

Many prominent bloggers are invited to speak at industry events purely because of the exposure their blog generated. You need to be good at what you do, but provided you demonstrate your value, doors will open for you eventually. I've been invited to present at many conferences and smaller social meetings, all because of my blog.

#### **#55 – Create a Video or Screencast**

With the proliferation of video sharing services such as [YouTube](#), it is easy to reach a lot of people all over the world in a short period of time provided, as usual, you create **hot content** that captures attention and compels people to spread the word for you.

With access to affordable video recording tools such as digital cameras, the technical barriers to video production have dropped considerably, empowering the amateur computer user with the ability to produce video that can be uploaded and shared via a blog in a matter of hours. Programs such as [Camtasia](#) for PC and

[Screenflow](#) for Mac let you create screen captures, which are ideal for distributing web tutorials.

As with many of the techniques I have mentioned that leverage the power of media to draw attention and build links to your blog, **the key to making this technique work for you is to first pick something that you know people will value, create something that serves this value and then make use of the all distribution tools available to help your media spread as far and wide as possible.**

Using just YouTube alone can result in very wide exposure for your work. If you embed your YouTube videos into your blog, people may link to them, or they may embed the video content on their blog, bring people back to your YouTube profile, which of course links to your blog.

### **#56 – Develop Software and Give it (or a Trial) Away**

If your business is creating software or you have the talents to do it yourself, don't overlook the power of giving some of it away as a link building tool. If your software serves a need then people will link to it. You could give away full access to your software or access to a trial period which switches to a limited use version after a certain period.

Don't forget that you don't have to build the software yourself. If you have an idea for something that you think would be helpful to other people (targeting bloggers is especially smart) then outsource the creation of the software and release it on your blog. Sourcing contract software development from sites such as [Guru.com](#), [Rentacoder.com](#) and [Elance.com](#) is very affordable.

In my experience I have not had much like with freelance outsourcers found via sites such as I just mentioned. I've had better results by searching within my network, by asking friends and colleagues and even contacting bloggers who seem to know the software industry well or appear to have good contacts.

**Recommendations (referrals) are by far the best way to source talented people if you need some tech work done.**

### **#57 – Create a Hook**

A **hook** is what it sounds like – a reason for a reader to return to your blog. There is no strict definition of a hook because it can be anything – a tool you make available at your blog, a marketplace where things can be bought and sold, a searchable database of information – anything that people return to on a regular basis.

I had the most success creating hooks by installing forums (I use the [Vbulletin](#) system) along with a blog, but this is a difficult method to create a hook – **forums are challenging to get started, but once they take off, they grow automatically and will attract a lot of links and traffic.**

The hook is the element that brings people back and often relies on some form community interaction to create the value. Other examples might include an online game, a trading site (swapping a product, like cards or collectables), a music sharing facility or a social networking service based around a specific niche.

These sorts of resources naturally attract links, but take user engagement to work, so you can spend just as much time building a “hook” resource as you do the blog itself.

## #58 – Buy a Blog or Website that Already has Search Engine Authority

Here’s another favorite technique I use to quickly build links to a blog – **acquire someone else’s blog!** The key benefits from purchasing an already established blog are the existing incoming links, traffic and history. The problem is that you will pay hefty fees, and the more popular and well linked the blog is, the more you pay.

There are bargains available if you know what you are doing but remember buying web property has similar risks as buying real property – if you don’t know what you are doing one bad purchase can end your campaign.

What many people don’t consider when they buy a blog is the potential to use that event as a **publicity tool**. The blogosphere is monitored by news blogs – blogs that blog about the blogosphere, other blogs and blog networks (how many times can you use “blog” in one sentence!). At the very least you can inform these news blogs about your new acquisition and possibly receive coverage and incoming links as a bonus.

Here are some popular blogs that cover blog news –

- <http://www.blogherald.com/>
- <http://jackofallblogs.com/>
- <http://www.bloggingpro.com>

To continue the news flow you can podcast and blog about the purchase, explain why you bought it and what your plans for the future are, produce press releases, do interviews – anything you can think of. You can make your blog purchase into a publicity event and just like big business mergers and acquisitions in the real world, use a blog acquisition to generate a lot of buzz online.

A couple of years into my blogging I purchased the established blog [SmallBusinessBranding.com](http://SmallBusinessBranding.com). That one acquisition brought in several incoming links from top authority blogs and even more from lower authority blogs.

Besides the publicity, the value of your new blog counts too. It can be tricky to find a blog that matches your goals and strategy for blogging, but it can be done. Small Business Branding could easily have been turned into a personal blog for a

small business consultant. I chose to turn it into a blog “magazine” with multiple authors, but provided you look in your industry you will find relevant blogs for sale. Several years later sold the blog for a nice profit as well.

If you don’t have a blog yet buying an established blog in your niche can be a quick entry strategy, with the added benefit of bypassing the search engine sandbox effect, which I discussed in [Chapter 3](#). Buying a blog is not something I recommend you take lightly, you have to know what you are doing or you could risk destroying the built up value in your new blog shortly after you take it over.

A good place to start looking for blogs for sale is at the [Flippa Marketplace](#). If you take this strategy seriously, I suggest you read my two articles on this subject to help you understand what you are doing –

- [How To Buy A Website And Flip It For Profit](#)
- [How To Sell A Website – How Much Is Your Website Worth?](#)

## #59 – Buy Several Blogs/Websites

If it works once, why not try it again! Blogs go up for sale every week and you can very quickly accumulate a portfolio of high ranking blogs, if you have the funds to buy.

There are a few approaches to this method. If your funds are tight you may consider buying a few lower traffic blogs (cheaper) that have reasonable authority or a couple of high authority blogs and use them to link to your main blog. This is like an expensive way to buy links.

Alternatively integrate each blog as a component of a **blog network**, interweaving each blog with cross linking on a regular basis, so they all rise in rankings.

For this to work you need to ensure each blog is updated regularly, so unless you have partners or you hire blog writers, you may quickly find yourself snowed under in writing responsibilities.

If you know what you are doing, blog acquisitions are an efficient way to improve your search engine results in a very short period of time, but for most bloggers the cost is prohibitive.

I wouldn’t recommend a solo blogger go crazy buying blogs or you will find your life becoming very stressful as you attempt to write to multiple blogs. Try it once and see how you go and always have your overall strategy in mind. If you don’t know what you want to do with a potential blog acquisition, or what it can potentially do for you, or you don’t have the resources available to integrate and manage it, **don’t buy it**.

## #60 – Buy an Aged Domain

For many people the idea of spending thousands on a blog purchase is out of reach. You can still enjoy the benefits of established incoming links and traffic, by buying an aged domain. While not always cheaper than buying a complete site (some domain names have sold for millions of dollars), there are certainly a lot more options in the used domain marketplace, many priced at under \$100.

**The smart practice is to look for a domain that fits your blogging strategy,** has incoming links that have been in place for a significant period, is well indexed in search engines and has been for a long time, preferably for several years. You can avoid sandbox effects via this method and you also gain the benefit of **aged links**. The age of a link – how long it has pointed to a website – is known to impact the search engine authority of the site, and if you start a blog with an aged domain it may have several aged links already pointing to it.

If you are looking to buy a “used” domain do a [google search for expired domains](#) or visit either of these sites –

- [Flippa: Domain Names For Sale](#)
- [Digital Point: Buy, Sell or Trade Domain Names](#)
- [NamePros Forums](#)

## **#61 – Premium Press Release Circulation Service**

Press syndication services such as [PRWeb.com](#) offer many different tiers of promotional packages. I personally have not used anything beyond the very basic, however if you have some success with press releases you may consider testing the premium service. Some packages include additions like a podcast recording interview with you about your news conducted by the PR agency and syndicated for you or additional SEO enhancements.

View the [PRWeb service catalogue](#) to review what packages are available.

## **#62 – Network with Influential People**

I’ve already mentioned networking as a technique in the previous section of this chapter. I’m mentioning it again here in the advanced techniques section because I believe it to be vital for building authority backlinks.

**Nearly every link I generated to my blog has come about as a result of a relationship I built with another human being.** The same can be said of the reverse – most links I have sent to other bloggers, and remember my blog has high authority too, were made because I got to know the other person and started watching what they were up to on their blog. Once they did something I thought was interesting or relevant for my readers, I sent them a link.

Compare this to a situation where someone contacts you out of the blue without any prior relationship and asks you to take a look at their latest blog post, with of course the hope of a link back. I can appreciate many people who do this probably have a fantastic blog, yet because I have no relationship with the person I have little motivation to even respond to their email. In fact most authority bloggers won't – they will delete your email because they just don't have to time to respond to every person fishing for attention.

I can't stress the importance of **networking online** enough. Most of the top blogs are where they are today because other top blogs linked to them. Sharing of audience is one of the most powerful ways that bloggers can build incoming links. By doing so we all rise to the top of the search engines together. Just don't expect complete strangers to help you out, some might, but it's A LOT easier with friends and colleagues.

### **#63 – Pay-Per-Click Advertising**

Unless you are very new to the Internet you will know about Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising, with [Google AdWords](#) the frontrunner in the industry. If you don't know what PPC is read my introduction here and get yourself up to speed – [What Is Pay-Per-Click Advertising?](#)

Don't worry if you are confused still after reading my introduction. PPC is an area that requires special attention. I recommend you keep your studies of SEO separate from PPC because it's a significant subject, although aspects of PPC overlap with SEO, especially keyword research.

PPC allows you to buy traffic by paying for clicks on specific search terms. This doesn't directly bring links to your blog, at least not links that search engines count, so it won't help your search rankings, but it can bring you attention of the right people who may then link to your blog. This is however a very roundabout way to generate links.

I would not recommend a PPC campaign for the sake of helping your search engine rankings. I've never used PPC as an SEO tool, there are much more effective ways to spend money to build links, however if you just want raw targeted traffic quickly, PPC is one of the BEST ways to get it.

### **#64 – Write for other Websites and Link to your Blog**

This is a method I have noticed many up-and-coming bloggers use lately. With the proliferation of blogging it has become very hard to get attention, as I outlined in this article – [Competing For Attention In An Attention Deficit Blogosphere](#).

While the popular blogs remain popular it is difficult for a new blogger to break through the *glass ceiling* and must turn to new ways to attract attention.

By signing up to effectively become a “columnist” at an established blog, a new blogger builds exposure for his or her writing and personality, and receives permission to send links back to his or her own personal blog. While the downside of this technique is producing content for a blog you don’t own, the upside is the exposure you receive from the existing audience at the blog and the right to send a few links to your own blog in your profile and articles.

When owned [SmallBusinessBranding.com](http://SmallBusinessBranding.com) I had a team of writers, some of which have their own blogs. In exchange for producing content for Small Business Branding each writer has a special area on the blog where they can talk about themselves, link to their own sites and blogs, and place advertisements to generate revenue. Small Business Branding has an established audience, which the writers can capitalize on in many ways, including sending links back to their blog.

Many group blogs have similar arrangements – and sometimes you can even receive pay for submitting articles to another blog.

If you want to use this technique to build links to your blog look around using a tool such as [Technorati](http://Technorati) and find the authority blogs in your niche and then approach the owner(s) about a possible guest writing gig. It helps if you do this once you already have some content on your personal blog since it serves as a “portfolio” of your work. Also be sure to look out for any instructions regarding how to apply to write for a group blog and follow them if available.

Be careful you target the blogs that accept additional writers. Generally blogs that are already multi-authored and not the personal blog of one individual will consider new writers. I know personally I was happy to have other small business writers approach me to write for SBB when I was in charge, provided they know about small business and could write quality content. Just don’t assume every blog is open for contributions.

## **#65 – Create an Affiliate Program**

If you have a product or service you sell from your blog an affiliate program is a system you can set up that encourages other bloggers and websites to link to your blog, motivated by the potential for commissions they earn from sales.

There are many plug-n-play affiliate systems you can subscribe to, such as [1shoppingcart.com](http://1shoppingcart.com), which offer external affiliate management services. There are also downloadable standalone software packages you install on your own server, such as –

- [Post Affiliate Pro](#)
- [iDevAffiliate – Affiliate Tracking Software](#)
- [AlstraSoft Affiliate Network Pro](#)

The problem with this method as a means to build links is that often the link structure for affiliate programs is not good for SEO purposes. An external affiliate

system doesn't use your domain for affiliate links and if you install an affiliate software program on your domain the URL still isn't exactly what you want – something like [www.myblog.com/affiliate-software/id?=12](http://www.myblog.com/affiliate-software/id?=12) – which won't help your SEO much, although it will work better than an external system.

I've yet to find an affiliate program that considers the SEO aspect of links, which is a shame since a hot selling product can bring in a lot of links. **Nothing motivates people like money does.** For the time being the best you can hope for is run-off links from other sites thanks to the attention generated by your affiliates.

I would only consider an affiliate program primarily from a **marketing stand point**. As a **pure SEO technique it is not very sound**, but it still pays to be aware of the SEO implications of your affiliate program before you decide which system to use.

## #66 – Run a Competition with a Big Prize

Here's a guaranteed way to bring in links – give away a car, or a boat, or a trip overseas or any significant prize. I don't think I need to explain why this works as a link building technique, however to make it more effective I suggest you integrate a prize into the content strategy of your blog.

For example if you blog about tennis you might want to give away tennis equipment, or a coaching session from a professional and ask people to submit their top tennis technique tip to enter the competition. By asking for contributions you create additional link worthy content for your blog and increase the leverage you generate from giving away a prize.

You don't have to give away something significant to use this technique. You can focus on providing regular prizes, perhaps once a month, but give away something that doesn't cost you as much – perhaps a copy of your book or an hour of consulting with you over the phone or a gift voucher from Amazon.com.

Bear in mind the larger the prize generally the more links you attract, but as per usual a lot rests on how much attention you generate for your competition by leveraging your network and using publicity.

## #67 – Create a Widget for Bloggers

A widget is software that bloggers can place on their blog, usually in the sidebar. There are literally thousands of widgets, from map widgets that tell you what bloggers are near you, to traffic widgets that tell you how much traffic your blog has, or picture widgets that rotate photographs from your online photo album.

Widgets are a fantastic way to generate incoming links. Obviously when you create a widget it should link back to your blog as the source of the widget. This means that every single person who places that widget on their blog sends you back links.

Most bloggers place widgets in their sidebar, which means the widget will be on display from every single page of their blog. If you consider thousands of different blogs all using your widget, that can result in thousands of incoming links.

**You should not let your lack of technical skills stop you from creating a widget if you have a good idea for one.** Again you can look to outsourcing sites like [Rentacoder.com](http://Rentacoder.com), [Guru.com](http://Guru.com) and [Elance.com](http://Elance.com) as sources of contract programmers, or ask around your network.

## **#68 – Create a Custom Theme for Your Blog**

If you are not a designer you won't realize this, but the design community is very big on appreciation of peer work. Just like artists who admire each other's paintings, web designers often pay homage to fantastic digital imagery or CSS coding (code that formats web pages). If your blog has some exceptional design elements you will attract links from design sites (blogs too) as examples of clever design.

Some of the largest CSS sites have a lot of search engine authority. A few timely links from them commenting on a unique stylesheet technique you implemented on your blog will significantly help your search rankings.

I am not a designer so when I first decided to have a custom design created for my blog I searched my peer network to find a friend who did the custom template. While my blog design back then wasn't anything revolutionary, it was one of the first to integrate audio buttons into the layout, and later video as well. This one innovation attracted several incoming links from other popular blogs as an example of how to use audio in a blog.

Being an innovator, even with simple tools like audio and video, can result in incoming links simply as an example of how to use a tool.

## **#69 – Create a Plug-in or Template for Popular Software**

There are many software packages, most of which are free, that are extremely popular and used by millions of people. [WordPress](http://WordPress), the web content management system I use to run my blogs and recommend to all my blogging students, is extremely popular and free, is one such program.

One of the reasons WordPress is so popular is because of how easy it is to create custom themes and plug-ins (if you are a designer/programmer anyway) which adds to the functionality of the software. As a result many free theme templates and plug-ins are produced and, just like with widgets, the creator receives a lot of links back to their blog or website as thanks.

If you produce a popular theme or plug-in or template or software extension you can attract thousands of links from people who use your add-on and from other sites that recommend your blog as the source of the add-on.

Other popular software packages include the browser [FireFox](#) (releasing a FireFox extension is a great way to build a lot of links) and the content management systems [Drupal](#), [Joomla!](#) and [Mambo](#). There are literally thousands of free programs online that you can leverage for links by creating an add-on tool or template, but it helps if you pick the most popular and offer something unique and valuable.

## #70 – Promote Your Blog Offline

I've read about some crazy people who take this technique quite far – for example tattooing their domain name to the back of their shaved head – but you don't have to be quite that drastic. Consider detailing your car with your blog domain name, or advertising via a billboard, or sponsoring an event within the theme of your blog – like a local basketball team if you blog about basketball.

Offline promotions are limited only by your **imagination** and your **budget**. There are many established advertising media, some of which might be out of your financial range – like television and radio – but there is no reason why you can't think local to reduce costs.

Get yourself a copy of a [guerilla marketing book](#) and you will find hundreds of traditional offline marketing ideas you can use to increase the awareness of your blog.

## #71 – Use a Keyword Research Tool

Two of the most popular keyword research tools are:

- [Wordtracker](#)
- [Keyword Discovery](#)

You use these tools to track phrases that people put into search engines to find things, and the number of people who do so.

The key to leveraging a keyword tool is to **seek out secondary phrases and target them specifically based on the current competition for a phrase and the amount of available traffic**.

You do this by writing articles targeted at the secondary phrases and then watching the search traffic come in. It may only trickle in for each article, but enough trickles combined can become a stream.

Use a keyword tool to amass a nice list of secondary phrases that **collectively** have a lot of traffic. As I discussed earlier, this is a good tactic when your blog is

new since you won't have much authority and will not be able to effectively compete with other blogs and sites with more authority.

Repeat this technique to dominate many secondary phrases and you will generate quality traffic, but it does take some planning and research, and a very clear focus on what type of reader you want to bring to your blog.

Keyword analysis can be complex but in principle it is very simple. If the whole idea of keywords turns you off, don't worry about it, but if you have the kind of brain that likes to research the little things, keyword research can be an extremely effective means to attract target traffic. If this is new to you do some research and test, you will only get better at it in time.

### **#72 – Complete Research and Publish Results**

Here's one for you academic bloggers. If you do research – and I mean real research with verifiable tests – be sure to blog your results, if appropriate of course. You may even consider this as the sole focus of a blog and keep a journal of your research process over time.

If your results have significant impact, cover controversial topics or are valuable to society, you can expect incoming links possibly from very high authority sites like educational institutes and mainstream news media publications. Even if your research thesis is very specialized, the potential for attention from other bloggers and niche educational institutions makes it worthwhile.

Domains with a .edu extension are high authority, since to attain one the site owners must operate an educational institution. A few links from university web pages can do wonders for your blog's search engine authority.

Publish to your blog as much content from your research as you can, including statistics, graphs, interviews – even your entire paper if it makes sense to do so. Just remember a blog is public, so don't go posting anything you shouldn't before it's ready for public scrutiny.

You don't have to conduct research as part of a university qualification to use this method, but it sure helps improve your legitimacy if you are coming from a formally recognized educational institute. If that is the case be sure to leverage your credibility as an academically qualified expert.

### **#73 – Offer Games, Quizzes or Puzzles**

If academic research is not your thing, perhaps the video gaming crowd is the market you can leverage for links. If you provide web-playable games from your blog, you might just have the perfect hook – a reason for people to keep coming back.

This technique tends to work best when you can offer originality and of course, addictive gameplay. Bear in mind thousands of sites already offer games, so this may only be an option for bloggers who have access to original content or blogs that already have an established game playing audience.

The blog of a game software manufacturer is an ideal outlet to distribute playable demos of upcoming games, generate user feedback via comments and attract hundreds of incoming links. If your blog subject matter is somehow related to gaming or you believe puzzles or quizzes would appeal to your readers and you have a means to source the content, it doesn't hurt to release them via your blog.

If you don't work for **Nintendo** that doesn't mean you can't leverage this technique, all you need is some creativity and coding skills, or you could outsource the creation of a game for your blog. A financial game for a stock market blog comes to mind as a good example of matching themed entertainment as a hook strategy at a blog.

## #74 – Group Writing Project

I have to give full credit to Darren Rowse at [Problogger.net](http://Problogger.net) for this one. Darren regularly runs group writing projects where he invites his readers to submit content. Sometimes Darren request content for publication at his blog, and other times he links to other bloggers who have written a post on their blog for contribution to the project. Either way, the author of the content gets a link from Darren's blog, a very high authority site.

You can see an example of one of Darren's group writing projects here –

### [Lists – Group Writing Project](#)

Nowadays Darren's writing projects are extra worthwhile to participate in. Darren arranges prize sponsors who, in exchange for providing some form of prize, also receive publicity on Problogger.net during the group writing project series of posts (there's another technique for back links – offer Darren a prize when he does a group writing project). Not only do you get some link love from Problogger.net as thanks for contributing your content, you might even win a prize!

Obviously participating in one of Darren's projects is one way to gain a valuable back link, **but you can take this further and start a group writing project at your blog too.** Bear in mind you need some readers for this to work, so I wouldn't recommend a group writing project until you build up an audience to draw participants from.

This technique works in almost any niche where there are enough other bloggers to support it. By acting as the host of a group writing project you gain links from the bloggers who participate because they link to your blog to tell their readers they contributed an article. If your project receives a lot of quality submissions

you may end up with a fantastic resource of content stored at your blog, which will generate links over time.

Be careful if you decide to implement this technique that you prepare to **proactively seek participants**. Most bloggers don't enjoy the loyal following that ProBlogger.net does and as a result starting a group writing project may not be as simple as asking for contributions.

You will need to personally invite other bloggers from your niche to contribute and offer enticements for them to do so. There has to be something in it for the participants and if your blog isn't an authority yet links may not be enough – you may need to offer prizes to encourage participation.

### **#75 – Write One Blog Post Every Day For Ten Weeks**

At last, my final technique for you to help plan your external linking strategy.

This one might be a bit beyond the part time blogger since it takes time, however it offers a method for you to focus on your blog and treat it seriously. If you write one blog post each day for ten weeks, **and those posts provide value**, you will build links – **provided you take additional steps to show people your posts**.

If you launch a new blog and follow this technique without doing anything else to tell people your blog exists, you will have trouble leveraging your hard work because no one will know about them. So, in addition to writing the new articles every day, take steps to bring in new readers – leave comments, network with other bloggers, become a guest writer at another blog, or pick any of the other 74 techniques I've just taught you.

This technique works well to bring in incoming links because of the breadth of scope of your content. You offer so much material and cover so many topics that you grab the attention of other bloggers. The other benefit is people come back to your blog regularly. I can't say it works 100% of the time but nearly every blogger I have spoken to reports that their traffic increases the more often they post – which is the same for me too.

Just be careful you don't set yourself up for burn out or create unrealistic expectations in your readers. It's one thing to keep up the pace for ten weeks but you **don't want that commitment for the rest of your life**.

I used to write one article every day, nowadays I write two or three a week. However when I first started, one article a day really helped me to attract an audience and build links, which was more important back then because my blog was new. Today I can "rest on my laurels", but you have to earn the right to do this due to your previous hard work, so get busy writing!

Once you are happy with your link building slowly reduce the frequency of posts you publish – but do it gradually. Take a few weeks and drop the post rate down to something you feel comfortable with.

The beauty of this technique is it builds your blog at the same time as you attract incoming links. If you focus on writing one solid post each day for ten weeks at the end of the ten weeks you will have 70 articles – that’s more content than most bloggers produce in their blogging lifetime.

If you can keep it up and reach 500 articles, your blog archive will bring in more search engine traffic because your blog articles will rank for a variety of search terms – you will access more of the long tail and “own” more of the Internet. The more pages of valuable content, the more traffic you receive.

## Going Beyond Links - Building Communication Channels

All of the techniques I have just presented are about building links to your blog to improve your search engine rankings. Most of the techniques will also bring in **raw traffic** as well and essentially focus on one thing – increasing **exposure** for your blog.

While building links is vital, for the overall success of your blog it is just as important to build **communication channels**. This principle is the main outcome I recommend every blogger focus on.

Top search rankings should be a by-product of good blogging, which is a combination of a content strategy with a synergistic marketing strategy. If you want to make money from this, add a monetization strategy once you get a handle on the content and the marketing.

If all of this sounds a bit daunting, but also exciting to you, I recommend you consider enrolling in my [Blog Mastermind](#) program. Over 27 lessons I take you through the process of setting up your blog, help you to develop a content strategy, give you the steps to market your blog and finally, turn a profit from your hard work.

It’s a complete course that extends your work in this guide, holding your hand as you go through the process. All the details are here –

<http://www.blogmastermind.com/coaching/>

## Chapter 5 – Wrapping Up

### The Big Picture

If you take the previous chapters and sew all the concepts up together, you have a framework for producing an optimized blog that will rank well in search engines.

I've provided you with the most crucial ideas and techniques, which my own experience blogging and via studies of other SEO expert's materials, I have concluded are vital for success. Consider this book your filter for what matters when optimizing your blog for search engines.

Looking at the big picture there are only two elements that you need to consider – your blog's **internal structure** and your **external linking strategy**.

If you ensure a few key elements are in place from an internal perspective, when your external linking strategy starts to take effect you maximize your return on investment. By combining a solid internal blog structure with a steady increase in incoming links, building your blog's authority, you are assured of success.

Of course that is easier said than done. The big picture makes it sound simple, but once you break things down, all the various elements can become overwhelming. Just considering every technique I listed in chapter four for generating links, is enough to keep you busy for an entire year, probably even longer if you were to seriously implement every technique I discussed.

The real secret is to realize that you don't have to complete every technique you study – you only need to implement the techniques that best match your abilities and your overall blogging strategy. Of all the techniques I taught you I only personally implement perhaps ten percent at most on my blogs. I implement what works best for me, over and over again.

When I learn a new technique, I consider whether I have the resources to implement it, and if so, will run a test. If the results are worth the investment and there are no other techniques that I know from experience offer a better return on investment, then I will continue to use the technique.

I also consider other variables like my own state of mind, how much time I have available, my access to other people who can do things for me, and my immediate goals. When I weigh up all the options and my desired outcomes I come to a decision regarding how I want to market my blog.

## Your Blog Strategy

You will earn much better results if you have a clear picture in your head as to **why you want to blog**.

In terms of search engine optimizing, deciding what keyword phrases you use, what tags you apply, how you write your titles and even the very first choice – what you decide to blog about – will impact your search rankings.

Be certain you know what you want to **be** to your readers and what type of reader you want to **attract** before investing heavily in your search engine marketing strategy.

Everything stems from your **core mission**, and this includes your SEO strategy.

## Focus on Humans

Beware the trap of thinking too much like a search engine that you forget your humanity. **You should always write for humans** as your priority and consider search engine implications secondary. Having knowledge of how to optimize your blog for search engines is valuable, but it can be dangerous because the awareness you gain adds an additional dimension to your writing, which may turn people off.

Over the years as I have written content for blogs and websites I've occasionally become so involved in all the little search engine optimization details that I've hindered my results – the exact opposite of my intended goal.

From this experience I learned that the best thing I can do is to first **produce the content**, make sure at the very least you have content that appeals, and while doing so stay aware of keywords. It's amazing how important keywords are.

**Titles, tags, linking text and other core textual elements related to keyword selection are the most important technical elements to consider while optimizing your blog for search engines.** If you can think like a human, and apply the right words that a human would use to find your content, the search engine will handle the rest. Your job is to place the right words in the right places **while** you produce valuable content. If you get this combination right you will be rewarded by Google and the other search engines.

By focusing on humans and enhancing their experience at your blog you encourage the most crucial element for successful blog search engine optimization – **incoming links**. Targeting humans in fact also focuses on search engines, since after all, search engines are there to help humans.

If you write something another human values, they will link to it, which a search engine will see as a vote for your content, helping your content rise up the search engine rankings.

If you really think about it – **humans are the key element to successful search engine optimization.**

## **Success Breeds Success**

Two core concepts I talk about in my coaching program [Blog Mastermind](#) are a **Tipping Point** and **Compound Effects**. They are not specifically relevant to this book's topic, so we won't look at them in-depth here, but essentially they refer to a point when your blog is considered reasonably successful. Once this happens, the results of implementing search engine techniques **magnify**. The more exposure you currently enjoy, the greater your results for each additional SEO activity you undertake.

A blog that already has great search engine rankings and traffic has a distinct advantage. A technique that brings in five new links for a lesser known blog, results in fifty new links when a popular blog implements the same technique. In a sense, *the rich do get richer*.

Keep this in mind as you struggle with your new blog and remember the longer you toil the better your results over time. On average, you can expect greater rewards from each technique you implement as you build on your previous work. In a lot of ways it's hardest at the start because you are not well rewarded for your efforts, but have faith, and stay focused on your goals and you will see the power of a well optimized blog.

## Chapter 6 – Quick Launch Checklist

To finish this guide I'm leaving you with a **quick launch checklist** of practical activities you can undertake from day one to get your blog optimized for search engines. Bear in mind you don't have to do everything in this list and some of the suggestions may be out of your reach because they cost money.

If you implement each technique below, your blog will have a great start in the search engine world. Note despite calling this a "quick" start guide, your results may not be that quick. I call this a quick launch checklist because you can tackle these activities immediately after finishing reading this book to get your blog search engine strategy off to a good start. The idea here is you actually **take action** and get used to regularly taking action, so consider this checklist as a motivational tool to start you down the path to success.

Again I have to apologize to bloggers who do not use WordPress because many of the activities below require you install plug-ins which are only available to WordPress. Many of the best search engine optimization plug-ins are only available on WordPress and I hate to sound like a broken record – but here's yet another reason to make the switch if you currently are not a WordPress user.

Which leads to the first activity...

### Step 1: Install WordPress

The single best thing you can do for your blog's search engine rankings is to publish your blog on your own hosted domain name running the WordPress blogging system. Before you do anything else I strongly suggest you take this step first.

You can [download WordPress from here](#).

If you need help installing WordPress, you can follow the video instructions my friend **Gideon Shalwick** created at the [Become A Blogger](#) training site. If you like to see how to do something via video to learn how to do it yourself, you will LOVE this site –

<http://www.becomeablogger.com>

### Step 2: Make Sure You Understand And Use Permalinks

Make sure permalinks are switched on for your blog and take careful consideration of the URL of each article you write. Always consider the keywords, but don't go overboard. A short permalink is a good permalink.

In WordPress you may have to switch permalinks on and depending on how your web hosting server works you might need to make a few adjustments to get permalinks working.

If this is beyond you consult your favorite IT geek or seek out my friend Joel Williams, who is known as the Blog Tech Guy and is willing to help you with any of your technical challenges, for a small fee.

His site is: [www.BlogTechGuy.com](http://www.BlogTechGuy.com)

### **Step 3: Install The SEO Title Tag Plug-in (WordPress Only)**

SEO Title Tag is a simple plug-in that changes how titles appear on your blog. Instead of the name of your blog always appearing **before** the name of the article in your page title, this plug-in switches things around so your blog title appears **after** the name of each article you publish. You can also control titling of your tag pages, and pretty much any page or post in your blog, plus a few other handy SEO benefits.

You can find download and installation instructions here:

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/seo-title-tag/>

You already know that keywords, and in particular keywords in your page titles are very important. The keywords that appear first in the title are given the most weight, hence you want each article's unique title to appear at the start, otherwise every single article you publish at your blog will begin with your blog's name.

### **Step 4: More SEO Plugins (WordPress Only)**

Here are a few additional plug-ins that will help with your blog's search engine optimization. None of these plug-ins are miracle workers – they are not mandatory installations – but they do provide that little extra bit of help.

#### **[Google Sitemap Generator](#)**

This plug-in will automatically generate an XML sitemap that you can submit to Google. Theoretically this should help Google index all of your pages. Be sure to follow the instructions carefully for this one because it can be a bit tricky.

#### **[Dagon Design Sitemap Generator](#)**

Once you have an XML sitemap, next you need a plain HTML sitemap, and this plugin can do it for you. Install it and it will continue to update as you add more content and categories to your blog automatically.

#### **[Greet Box](#)**

This plug-in will let you provide a short welcome message to every visitor who comes to your blog from search engines and other sites like Twitter and Digg. It offers quite a high degree of personalization, which makes it a great tool for prompting a call to action (for example, ask them to subscribe to your RSS feed or give them access to a special report).

## Step 5: Get Your Blog Into Google

Next you need to work on raising your blog's authority and trust within the search engines. This only comes in time, but you certainly can speed up the process by doing the following **today**.

I assume you have a brand new domain name and a brand new blog, which you need to index in the search engines quickly, and you want **deep indexing** – that means you want to ensure every page of your site is “spidered” from day one. This will result in every page of your blog having the potential to show up in a search engine result, meaning more traffic coming your way.

By doing the following you should be able to get your blog indexed in Google very quickly.

- Create an XML and standard HTML sitemap. The previous step on plug-in installations handled this.
- Write at least ten articles to your blog, preferably “Pillar Articles” and then continue to publish one article per day.
- Buy directory listings in the most trusted directories – [Yahoo Directory](#) and [Business.com](#).
- Find authority blogs in the same or complimentary niche as your own blog and keep asking until you find one who will accept and publish your guest article, attracting your first organic incoming link (you get the link back to your blog along with your article).

If you complete all four steps above, I guarantee your blog will be indexed in Google and start to show up in search results in a matter of days.

## Step 6: Analyse Your Competition

If you want specific rankings for specific terms (make sure the traffic is there first!), then all you need to do is figure out what the pages that rank for the terms you want are doing, and then do it better than them.

You can use services like the [SEOBook Tools](#) to locate the most important backlinks pointing to any website to make your link research job easier. Once you find the links pointing to your competitor's blog or the top ranking site, you can attempt to attain the

same link partners, or better ones (you will know how much link building work is ahead of you if you want to beat them).

You can also find plenty of tools on the [SEOBook Tools Page](#) to help you analyse your own blog's link building results, page authority, Pagerank and other variables.

## **All Done**

Complete all the recommendations in this chapter and you start with a good base for success. Bear in mind this is just a beginning. You must continue to naturally build links from a variety of sites with high trust and authority, to raise your rankings and remain well indexed in search engines.

## **The End!**

Congratulations on making it to the end of this book. I wish I could tell you your education is complete, but this is really only the beginning.

The search engine world changes on a daily basis and what works now may not work tomorrow. The algorithms that drive search engines are regularly modified with the goal of increasing search result relevance and reducing the impact of spam. The result is a very dynamic playing field.

Thankfully, there are fundamental rules that will not likely change any time soon. Most search engine optimizers agree that incoming links will remain the main valuation tool search engines use to rank and distribute authority. It's safe to assume as long as you keep building links your rankings will improve.

I hope after reading this book you walk away with a better understanding of core SEO principles and with a reinvigorated motivation to enhance your blog's search engine optimization.

## **Key Outcomes**

1. You understand search engine optimization basics – the relationship between keywords, links and how search engines work.
2. You begin to think about why you are blogging and formulate a strategy based on your motivations.
3. From your strategy you pick a few key tactics and implement them each week, testing the techniques until you find the methods that work best for your unique goals and blogging direction.

## **Further Study**

To stay up to date with the changing search engine landscape I suggest you participate in forums. Here are a handful of the best that I frequent on a regular basis –

- [SEOChat](#)
- [Digital Point](#)
- [Sitepoint](#)

Outside of forums, learning from professionals who make a career out of search engine optimization, is another fantastic way to get the best information.

If you come across information products about SEO, written by experts, who appear to provide an answer to your problem or contain unique techniques you haven't studied before, don't hesitate to purchase if you have the time to absorb and implement what they teach.

One good technique from a resource that helps improve your ranking can easily recoup the financial cost of acquiring the information, if you have a means to profit on the traffic you are rewarded with.

## **Do You Want More Hands-On Help?**

I run two coaching programs that are designed specifically for bloggers who want to create a successful blog and then profit from it.

If you enjoy learning through video and you can afford \$50 a month for six months to complete the entire course, you will definitely enjoy and benefit from the Become A Blogger Premium video training course.

You can find out more about this program here:

<http://www.becomeablogger.com/signup/>

The other program I run, Blog Mastermind, is a 27-week training course, with hand written lessons from me, taking you from zero, to having a fully developed blog as part of a successful online business.

If you enjoy my blog and writing, want to grow an authority blog of your own and make a full time income from it, please consider taking my Blog Mastermind coaching program at a cost of \$97 a month for six months.

Information is available at this page:

<http://www.blogmastermind.com/signup/>

## Support

If you have any questions or problems please contact me here:

<http://ReplytoYaro.com/>

## Happy Blogging and I'll See You Online

That's all from me!

If you want to keep up to date with what I am doing, you can read my blog – [Entrepreneurs-Journey.com](http://Entrepreneurs-Journey.com).

If you want to leave a thank you note, and I really appreciate all feedback, please do so at my [forum](#) [guestbook](#).

Bear in mind you will not get a response to guestbook comments.

Thanks again for purchasing my book and I hope you leverage your new blog search engine optimization knowledge to reap the results you are seeking.

Here's to your blogging success,

*Yaro Starak*

Yaro Starak



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- [Blog Traffic School](#)
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- [Blogherald.com/](#)
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- [Technorati.com](#)
- [Textlinkads.com](#)
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