

# What google doesn't want you to hear about link-building for seo

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Search engine optimization (SEO) is intimidating to the casual observer. Not only is it a field that demands knowledge of hundreds of individual variables that contribute to the ranking algorithm, it also bears a noteworthy risk: Practicing this strategy improperly could end up setting you back more than it benefits you.

Related:

One of the key tactics vulnerable to this potential setback is link-building, where building too many “bad” links or engaging in manipulative practices could .

The fact that link-building can cause a Google penalty that from engaging in a link-building campaign. However, because , to earn higher rankings, you've got to have links.

And if you want links, you have two options:

1. Wait/hope/pray that people link to your content (this is what Google wants you to do)
2. Go build some links yourself.

While I'm all for appeasing the Google Gods, I prefer (and recommend) a more pragmatic approach for marketers who don't have the luxury of waiting, hoping and praying that other people link to them while their competitors race up the rankings with the help of strategic link-building campaigns.

## **Google in a nutshell**

Google tries to provide the best content possible to users, and ranks sites accordingly. There are two main considerations the algorithm bears when evaluating these rankings: relevance and authority. The relevance of a site is a measure of how appropriate it is for a user query.

As a simple example, if a user searches for “baked potato recipes,” Google will naturally favor sites that actually have baked potato recipes. That’s relevance.

Authority is more complicated; it’s a measure of how trustworthy a site is. , and as you’ll see, the best way to earn more authority is through links.

Related:

## **Page and domain authority**

Authority works on two different levels for websites -- the domain level and the page level. is a relative measure, on a scale of 0-to-100, of how likely an entire website is to rank well in search engines. Page authority measures the likelihood of any individual page of ranking in search engines.

So, where do links come into play? Both domain authority and page authority are calculated based on the quantity and quality of inbound links to the domain as a whole, or an individual page.

## **The link factor**

From a search-engine perspective, links work by “passing” authority from one site to another. For example, if you build a link pointing to your latest

blog post, that link will transfer authority both to that page and to your overall domain. The higher the authority of the site on which the link resides, the more authority will get passed to your site; therefore, building links on more trustworthy sites is much more valuable (but also much harder).

You'll also need to build links in a natural way to avoid Google's ire. Google designed its to identify and target manipulative links, and the algorithm does a good job. Too many links deemed "manipulative" by the algorithm will cause a significant ranking penalty that can be very difficult to recover from.

For this reason, many search experts have suggested that all links be earned naturally; that is, you let other people build links to your content, while never engaging in any tactics specifically meant to acquire more inbound links.

While Google would love it if everyone took this approach, it's not exactly pragmatic.

## **The problems with “link-earning” as a “link-building” strategy**

Producing good content and waiting for the links to come in may work for some brands, but there are a few problems with it:

- Inconsistency. No matter how good your content is, there's just no predicting how, when or why people are going to link to your site. Your content might get thousands of social shares and lots of engagement, but receive zero links back to your page; or you might earn a few dozen links without much social visibility or engagement at all. If you

want predictable and sustained results, you can't rely solely on this approach.

- Relative authority scores. You'll also have trouble getting suitable authority from the links pointing to your site when you don't influence the source of those links at all. As I mentioned, higher-authority sites pass more authority to you, but if your only "link-building" strategy is to sit back and wait/hope/pray that people link to you, you may be stuck with low-to-mid-authority sites that don't offer much value (at least, compared to high-authority publications). Manual link-building offers you far more control.
- Speed. The speed factor is also an issue in earning links naturally. Because you won't have any control over how or where your links are earned, you won't be able to plot a course for natural scaling. Instead of increasing your target authority sites higher and higher, you'll be forced to rely on the whims of the people reading your content.

## **The modern way to build links**

Instead, a good link-building strategy consists of a healthy dose of both "link-earning" and "link-building." You'll just need to be careful how you build links manually to avoid a Google penalty.

For starters, that involve paying for or exchanging links. Participating in any link scheme will almost certainly and immediately earn you a penalty.

Instead, focus on building links through guest posts; provide well-written, thoughtful content to publishers looking for contributors, and include a

relevant, value-adding natural link pointing back to your site within those guest posts.

Repeat this process, gradually scaling up the authority of the publishers with whom you work, and you'll scale up your page authority and domain authority, along with your organic search rankings. It's a slow process, but it's a reliable one -- and, I'd argue, a necessary one. For a more thorough overview of how I recommend building links, see .

Don't shy away from link building just because it has the potential to earn you a penalty. If you want to earn higher search engine rankings, you need links. There are tactics you can employ to earn links naturally, but it's more effective, reliable, and consistent if you build them manually yourself.

Related:

As long as you do so with users' best interests in mind and prioritize high-quality, you'll have nothing to worry about and everything to gain. In the words of Michael Jordan, " Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen."