

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION:



**Tips for Getting
More Inbound Links
to Your B2B Web Site**

BY DIANNA HUFF

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION: 10 TIPS FOR GETTING MORE INBOUND LINKS TO YOUR B2B WEBSITE

Written especially for those managing B2B Web sites, this guide offers 10 practical tips for encouraging high-value Web site links. Because search engines often offer positive weighting to those sites with more inbound links, seeking out links is a proactive SEO strategy that has long-term payoff.

Inside, you'll discover:

- Why the extension of your inbound link matters
- What *else* you should be doing with your corporate newsletter
- How to maximize press releases
- How to catalog your white papers and other resources
- What you should do with blogs and why it's not what you think
- Why you should make friends with your resellers' webmasters
- How to maximize online tools as a linking strategy
- What to do with articles beyond posting them on your corporate website
- Which directories you want to be in ASAP

These tips will help you develop a long-term strategy designed to increase your corporate Web site's search engine rankings.



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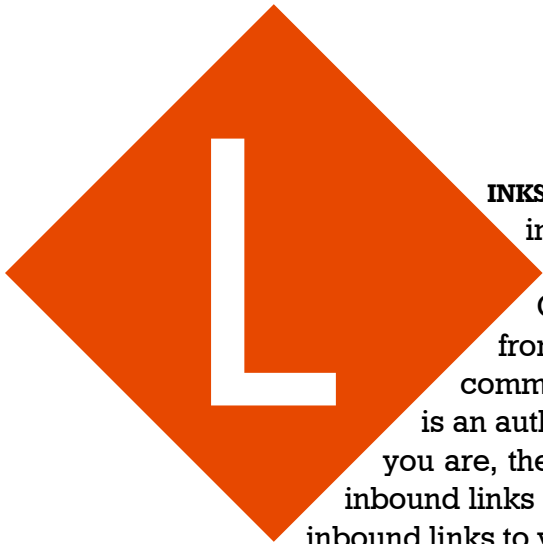
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LINKS FROM OTHER WEB SITES GO A LONG WAY TOWARD increasing your site's ranking in the search engines. However, inbound links can't come from any old site. Google likes to see that your site has inbound links from relevant sites—that is, sites that have something in common with yours. Relevant inbound links prove your site is an authority to Google, and the more of a “trusted authority” you are, the higher you go in the rankings. Plus, lots of relevant inbound links generate targeted traffic. Here are ten tips for getting inbound links to your site:

“Trade publications are especially good about including a link.”



Ensure all online press releases carry a “live” link.

TRADE PUBLICATIONS, MEDIA OUTLETS, AND BLOGGERS cull sites like Yahoo News for fresh news and information. Trade publications are especially good at reprinting your press release verbatim—and including a link back to your site. When submitting a press release to the online wire services, be sure your releases have a “live” link—both at the beginning and end of the release if possible.



Develop an online tool and encourage people to link to it.

USEFUL, INTERACTIVE TOOLS ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO LINK TO YOUR SITE. As a copywriter, I have a link on my site to the We We Calculator offered by Bryan and Jeffrey Eisenberg at FutureNow, Inc. Simply type your URL into the box and the We We Calculator scores your Web copy on whether it is focused on your customers or your company. B2B sales lead expert Mac McIntosh offers site visitors a sales lead calculator—to which dozens of sites have linked. This handy tool allows sales and

marketing professionals to determine how many inquiries and qualified sales leads are needed to meet their company's revenue objectives. Both these companies understand the value of having tools worth linking to.

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Send out press releases about your online tools, reports, white papers, etc.

ONCE YOUR TOOL IS DEVELOPED, WRITE AN OPTIMIZED PRESS RELEASE AND submit it via PRWeb. You can also do this for your free reports, white papers, new products or any other corporate news. (PR Web is a relatively new wire service that allows smaller companies to send out releases to the Web at no cost. Publicly traded companies usually use the more traditional wire services.)

Once your release goes out, media outlets, trade publications, newsletter publishers, and bloggers will run the release or mention your tool or report as a service to their readers and will include a link back to your site. PR Web also distributes your release to Yahoo Search, Yahoo News, Google, Google News, and a host of other search engines. These are all valuable links back to your site.

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List your white papers and reports on syndication sites.

BECAUSE THE B2B SALES CYCLE IS LONG AND COMPLEX, purchasers and influencers are online searching for information about products and services months in advance. You can help them find your white papers and case studies by listing them at content sites such as BNet, Bitpipe and KnowledgeStorm. These sites are regularly crawled by search engine spiders; if your white paper fits a search phrase, it will show up in the Google listings.

“List white papers at content sites which are regularly indexed by spiders.”

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Get quoted in online publications and news stories.

“Expect online articles to take on a life of their own—resulting in many links to your site.”

JOURNALISTS, REPORTERS, AND WRITERS ARE CONSTANTLY LOOKING FOR experts to quote for their news stories and articles. Instead of waiting for one of them to find you or your company, you can sign up as an “expert” at ProfNet Experts. Journalists use ProfNet to send out email queries looking for experts on specific topics or they can look for one through the ProfNet database. If you get quoted as so-and-so of Widget Corp. for an online article, you most likely will get a valuable link back to your site.

Online articles also take on a life of their own as they get reprinted, picked up by other newsletters and media outlets, and talked about in blogs—adding still more links back to your site.

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Post an archive of articles you've written and encourage other Web sites to re-publish them.

THE INTERNET IS A HUNGRY BEAST—NEWS SITES, NEWSLETTER PUBLISHERS, portals, etc. need fresh content on a regular basis. You can meet this demand for information by posting an archive of articles you or anyone in your company has written and encouraging people to reprint them. (Caveat: if an article was written for a publication, make sure you aren't infringing on the publication's copyright.) Tell people how to handle attribution—i.e. “When reprinting this article, please be sure the byline remains intact and add the following info: 'John Smith is a Product Manager at Widget Corporation (www.widgetcorp.com) and can be reached at 555-123-4567.”

To keep track of where your articles appear, set up a Google News Alert using your company name or the title of the article. Also refer to your Web analytics reports (look under “referring sites”).



Archive past issues of your corporate newsletter.

IF YOUR COMPANY PUBLISHES AN E-NEWSLETTER, BE SURE TO LIST PREVIOUS issues on your site. This not only helps with search engine optimization (newsletter articles are usually full of keywords), it also gives other site owners content to which they can link or republish. Make it easy for people to find your archived newsletters by posting an archive link on your newsletter page.



Become an active participant in blogs and forums.

STARTING AND MAINTAINING A BLOG IS A MAJOR COMMITMENT, WHICH IS one reason many B2B companies don't have one. However, adding your comments to respected industry blogs or forums is an excellent way to build inbound links. To find blogs in your industry, search the Technorati database or type “keyword + blogs” into Google—for example, “healthcare + blogs” for a listing of blogs in the healthcare space.



Encourage your resellers and distributors to link to your site.

IF YOU'RE AN OEM AND SELL THROUGH THE CHANNEL, encourage your distributors and resellers to link to your site. Make sure your site is packed with white papers, reports and other materials that help end-users make buying decisions—your resellers and distributors will be more likely to link to this “high value” content if it helps them drive sales.

“Pack your site with white papers, reports, and other high-value content.”



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“Joint projects with an **academic or governmental** institution should include links.”

Get listed in industry directories.

DOES YOUR INDUSTRY HAVE DIRECTORIES WHERE BUYERS go to find product information? Global Spec (www.globalspec.com) and ThomasNet (www.thomasnet.com) are two such directories, but there are dozens of others. Although it costs to get listed, these sites are crawled by search engine spiders and company and products listings do show up in the search results.



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Bonus Tip:

Get links from .edu and .gov domains.

DOES YOUR R&D TEAM HAVE TIES TO ACADEME OR THE GOVERNMENT? Great! These types of links are quite valuable because they are so hard to obtain. Find the right person in your company to ask the university or government entity to link back to your company site. You might find your company is already mentioned on the site due to a joint project and all you need to do is ask them to make a “live” link.

About the Author



DIANNA HUFF—MARKETING WRITER

Dianna Huff is the editor of *The MarCom Writer*, a monthly e-zine for business-to-business marketing communications professionals.

She is also the president of DH Communications, Inc., where she specializes in B2B marketing communications consulting, copywriting, and search engine optimization.

Dianna's clients include MarketingSherpa, Cabot Corporation, Constant Contact, The Lead Dogs, and numerous small and mid-sized companies.

What's Next?

If you're interested in discussing the search engine optimization of your corporate Web site, contact Dianna Huff for details on her full service SEO packages. SEO is a complicated process that requires knowledge of linking strategies, keywords, meta tags and more. You could spend hundreds of hours learning how to do it right!

Instead of spending that kind of time, let Dianna save you time. To get in touch, simply visit her website at <http://www.dhcommunications.com> or call her at 603-392-8093.

