

# Linking to Success

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## CHAPTER 2 OF 'FIVE STEPS TO A MORE SUCCESSFUL WEBSITE'

Peter Cornish March 2010

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This article provides practical information on how to make your website more successful with links.

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## INTRODUCTION

This is the second in a series of five articles providing practical information about how to make your website more successful.

Understanding how links can influence a website's search engine ranking , and acting on this information is one of the most effective activities in improving a website's search engine ranking.

If you would like to access other articles in this series please visit [www.succinctideas.com.au](http://www.succinctideas.com.au)

## WHAT IS A LINK?

A link is an object in a website which when clicked will take you to another page or another website.

## THE VALUES OF A LINK

Links provide three separate sales values for your website:

- **Bring prospective clients**  
Visitors to the remote (or referring) site may click on the link and end up on our site where they can become a client.
- **Build Google PageRank™**  
Google's web page quality score PageRank is directly related to the quality of inbound links to a page. Increased PageRank will lead to improved search ranking.
- **Focus Keywords**  
Text in a link influences a search engine's assessment of the website's keywords.  
i.e. a link with the text Widgets will reinforce that web site's keyword emphasis for *widgets*

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF LINKS

There are at least three types of links:

### ***Inbound links***

These appear on other websites, and when clicked bring visitors to *your* site.

Sometimes referred to as *back links*, these are the link type that is most desirable for your site as they bring visitors, PageRank (hence ranking opportunity) and keyword focus to your site.

### ***Outbound***

Outbound links are links that take visitors *out* of your site to other sites.

From a sales perspective these links are counter-productive as they take visitors and Google PageRank away from your site.

### ***Reciprocal***

Reciprocal links are a pair of inbound and outbound links. Often used as a compromise to attain an inbound link. i.e. 'I'll link to you if you link to me'

While this is not optimal, it is a common strategy to attract new links into a site

## GETTING LINKS

To get an inbound link from another site, the remote site's webmaster needs to add a link to your site on their site.

To attain links you need to persuade the remote website's owner to act and possibly even spend money on your behalf to install the link. This arrangement may be part of a commercial arrangement, a membership value or leveraging business relationships.

### *What are the best links?*

The best quality links are those from web pages with a high authority where there are few other outbound links.

Ideally the link tag will contain your target keywords hence a text link is more desirable than a linked image.

### *Measuring Link Quality*

Google's PageRank is a measure of page quality score ranging 0 for low to 10 high authority.

The best quality links are those with a high PageRank, which can be checked using Google's Toolbar and its optional PageRank meter.

This article describes this in detail: <http://theinternetmarketer.com.au/2009/04/google-pagerank/>

### *Buying Links?*

Paid links were once commonly available, but using them now is high risk because Google has determined that purchased links misrepresents a site's quality.

Google now actively dissuades paid links by penalising sites that use them, and even offering a "dab in a link seller" program.

It is still possible to buy links, but we recommend that you don't.

### *Links that don't work*

There are several scenarios where a link will not provide the expected level of value for your site:

#### **Nofollow**

It is possible to configure an outbound link to not pass on PageRank using a *nofollow* tag.

While this prevents PageRank from being passed on, the link may still bring prospective clients to your site.

#### **Link farms**

If there are many outbound links on a page, the link 'value' for each is reduced accordingly.

Link farms where there are tens or hundreds of links on the same page offer little if any value as inbound links.

***Bad links?***

While links from anti-social websites are probably not ideal, the worst links are those from a compromised site that can infect visitor computers with 'malware'.

Malware is software designed to invade and compromise a visitor's computer and can be installed surreptitiously by visiting a malware infected website.

Typically these sites have been silently compromised by hackers and are passing on the malware without the owner's knowledge.

Infecting prospective clients systems is at best not likely to result in a sale, and may even expose you to litigation.

For more information including tools to test if your site has been hacked visit:

<http://googleonlinesecurity.blogspot.com/> and <http://www.stopbadware.org/>

If your site is linked to a site known to be compromised, Google will intercept visitors to your site and display a warning message which is not likely to entice prospective clients to visit.

**LISTING YOUR LINKS**

Finding out what inbound links you already have to your site is an important confirmation that your link building efforts are working.

***The link command***

The easiest method is this variation of a Google search that lists pages that link to your site.

Use the search format of: link: <your website address> eg



Search:  the web  pages from Australia

***Google Webmasters Tools***

The powerful Google Webmasters Tools facility allows access to information and settings about your website from Google.

The Links to Your Site report provides a list of inbound links, where they are from, where they go in your site and the last time Google detected them.

This authoritative report is ideal for confirming the progress of your link building campaign.

Note that configuration to access Google Webmasters Tools for your website may require technical assistance.