

SEO BASICS

Off-page SEO

FOR BEGINNERS

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OFF-PAGE SEO BASICS

Off-page SEO, or in other words, the credibility of your website, is crucial to your performance in search engine ranking algorithms.

Credibility is built through popularity. In the SEO world, popularity refers to backlinks (references or mentions by other well-known, high-ranking and/or credible pages). This system of mentions is referred to as *PageRank*, and was conceived back when Google and its algorithm was first introduced by Larry Page and Sergey Brin.

What is a backlink?

As previously mentioned, a *backlink* is a link which connects one domain to another. The website which links out is called the *outbound link*. The website which it links to is called the *inbound link*.

Why are backlinks important? Multiple investigations and tests concluded that web pages with a higher amount of inbound links are preferred by users. Thus, backlinks are undoubtedly accurate representations of credibility.

Link Building

The process of acquiring and accumulating backlinks is called *link building*, and is essential to achieving high rankings in Google.

In the past, webmasters tried to "cheat the system" by creating low-quality websites for the sole purpose of generating additional backlinks to their main website. This resulted in many sub-par and unoptimised websites reaching the top SERP positions. Today, these *PageRanks* are referred to as *link farms* or *article directories*.

Seeing as Google prioritises user experience above all else, measures and barriers are put in place to ensure that users are protected.

Google Penalties

Backlinks are no longer assessed by the algorithm on just their amount, but their quality also comes into consideration when ranking of a website. As such, websites with "spammy" backlinks are penalized with reduced rankings.



What is a "good" link?

A "good" link can be classified as a link that:

- Is generated without monetary compensation.
- Is found on a related website.
- Is coming from a website that Google already deems as credible (thus, with an advanced and credible *PageRank* of its own).
- Provides additional information and value to the users of the website.

In simplest terms, the best and safest way to link-build is naturally (organically). The issue with this is that high-quality content can still exist on low-ranking pages, and therefore goes unseen. Generating backlinks *safely* to effectively boost rankings can be complex. But it's definitely worth the trouble.

Next Steps

SEO algorithms are constantly changing. Thus, as an SEO, it's essential to change, grow and adapt with it. All this means is that you should always continue learning to ensure your website's consistent growth and rank in the SERP.

It's important to note that SEO is not about "cheating the system". Remember that Google caught up with the link-farmers who tried to outsmart it, and presented them with penalties which can take a long time to recover from.

SEO is about easing the job of the algorithm and its crawlers. This process begins with ensuring streamlining and smoothing out all technical SEO aspects, to make sure there are no bumps in the road. Once we ensure your page can be adequately and easily read by crawlers, we can begin working on page content and features to improve its rankings.

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