

SEO

How Real Marketers Create Backlinks That Matter

Cheap, easy SEO tactics won't cut it.



Image credit: Compassionate Eye Foundation | Hiep Vu | Getty Images



DAN BLACHARSKI
GUEST WRITER

Author of "Dotcloud Boom: How born-in-the-cloud entrepreneurs are shaking up the world's biggest tech companies and creating the next generation of startup millionaires."



430
Shares



MARCH 16, 2017

Backlinks are the most needed and most misunderstood tactic used by marketers today. The biggest mistake being made by marketers is thinking of these inbound links as commodity items and focusing on ramping up numbers quickly rather than placing those links in proper context.

"Inbound links are extremely important," said Jessica Thiele, marketing manager at [Virtual Logistics](#). "They're part of the social cues algorithm that Google uses to help determine the relevancy of links it provides in any Google search. That's why it's so important for businesses to be genuine in their link building efforts. This, of course, takes a lot more effort compared to just paying some black hat SEO 'expert' to 'work their magic.' But the payoffs are long-lasting and positive, as opposed to risking being blacklisted by Google where your website won't even show up in search."

Roman Kowalski, vice president of marketing for [KidsToyStop.com](#) said marketers face "a conundrum" when creating a backlink strategy. "On one hand, everybody needs them, and as many as possible. On the other hand, Google doesn't want you to actively build a body of backlinks just for the sake of SEO."

Related: [10 Strategies to Drive More Backlinks](#)

The solution lies in acknowledging the true definition of a backlink. SEO specialists claim that a backlink is nothing more than a do-follow

[CONTINUE TO NEXT ARTICLE](#) ➤



Meet These 7
Innovative New
Franchises for 2017



GOOGLE

Google Wins Some and Loses Some in Florida SEO Case

DAN BLACHARSKI

From Our Partners Sponsored Links



Xbox unveils Wireless Controller Tech Series

by Taboola [▶](#)



STARTUP FUNDING

4 New Ways to Self-Fund Your Startup

DAN BLACHARSKI



MARKETING

5 Reasons Why Nobody Cares About Your Big Idea

DAN BLACHARSKI

hyperlink which is placed in a third party website. "By that broad definition, backlinks can be anything from an entry in a list or a directory, to a link in a spammy article in a private blog network," said Kowalski. "The theory there is that any type of link, in any outlet and regardless of context, is positive. It's clear now that it is not. An inbound link without appropriate context is useless and potentially harmful to the brand."

The rules of the game have changed.

Attorney James Goodnow of the law team [Lamber Goodnow](#) at Fennemore Craig, said, "The rules of the game have changed. If you think you can rocket to the top of Google by paying a 'tech geek' who can outsmart Google by building a backlink profile that will rocket you to the top, you are flat wrong."

Goodnow describes a three-step process for organic link building:

1. A comprehensive content campaign is developed. Innovative, cutting-edge, industry-leading ideas are developed and used. This is the most important step because it's the foundation for everything else you do. If you don't have an amazing idea or informative content, you will not get amazing, legitimate links.
2. A comprehensive content strategy is developed around that idea that includes articles, video and more. This is how people learn about your game-changing ideas.
3. A targeted and sustained communications strategy is realized. A targeted, sustained, non-internet based communications strategy is developed. This includes presentations within your industry, authoring articles, sharing ideas on industry newsletters or forums, speaking with industry authors and touching base with key media contacts.

Related: [A Simple Formula for Mastering SEO the Easy Way](#)

Goodnow shares a real-world example of how it worked for his firm. "When iPads first came out in 2010, we were among the first legal teams in the country to use them as a client communication portal and to present video presentations for opposing lawyers that relied heavily on computer-generated images (CGI) and animation. We spent a lot of time and a lot of money developing apps to allow us to be on the bleeding edge. And the product we created worked, leading to strikingly strong outcomes for clients. The word of mouth buzz generated by this led to presentations we gave on our new use of the iPad."

Those presentations led to a feature story in the *Arizona Republic* newspaper. The article got picked up on the wire, which led to a larger article in *USA Today*. Following the *USA Today* article, Apple contacted Goodnow's firm and profiled it on their website. The Apple profile led to articles and features from legal publications around the world. "In each step of the process, we gained more and more links and citations

[CONTINUE TO NEXT ARTICLE >](#)



Meet These 7 Innovative New Franchises for 2017

SPONSORED FINANCIAL CONTENT



The Fastest Way To Pay Off \$8,000 Of Debt
NerdWallet



Beginners Guide to Trading Options Shows How To Make \$59,590 Profits Run



Generate \$480/Wk oOf Extra Income With "Perfect Retirement Business"
Oxford Club



Retire Fearlessly. Retirement income planning & asset protection.
Thrivent

dianomi™

Videos You May Like



For Better Conversations, Replace 'How Are You?' With This One.



How to Be a Better, Stronger, More Engaging and Respected Leader.



'Rack the Shotgun': Using the 80/20 Rule to Identify Your Best Customers (Video)



The 80/20 Rule and How to Supercharge Your Sales and Marketing (Video)

by Taboola

from authoritative and real sources," Goodnow said.

It's the context, not the inbound link, that matters.

To frame the discussion of context, it is important to look at it as a byproduct of the post-dotcom era of "dotcloud," defined by [Cloudipedia](#) as "the emergence of a new class of born-in-the-cloud startups which are driven by an imperative for speed, convenience and personalization on the part of the consumer, and which are built on as-a-service infrastructure, software and development tools that allow a more agile startup cycle with low initial capital requirements."

With barriers to entry lower than ever -- and more websites competing for eyeballs -- simply placing links with no context and no attention to the quality of the site where they are placed is a recipe for failure.

Chris Brantner, founder of [CutCableToday.com](#), uses a backlink strategy that has helped him reach 500,000 to a million visitors a month. "Most of that traffic can be attributed to the impressive backlink profile we've put together," said Brantner. "The fact is that Google still values links to your site more than anything. You just have to make sure you get good, high quality ones. I achieve this through connecting and engaging with industry reporters and offering my two cents when applicable. I've also been building my name as an expert in the field, which has landed me with important contributor roles at Business Insider, VICE and others. Each of these roles allows me to get my name out in front of a new audience, which ends up sending more traffic to my site."

There are plenty of backlinking tactics that just don't work that well any more -- forum spamming, contributing to websites that exist only for SEO, link exchanges, private blog networks, directories and "friends" lists. These tactics are likely to backfire and result in being downgraded or even de-indexed by Google. Plenty of SEO providers still use those tactics, and at a tempting low cost, but those budget providers may wind up costing you more in lost business.

Related: [8 SEO Trends You Need to Pay Attention to in 2017](#)

"I am currently working with a client who used an overseas 'cheap' SEO company for her SEO and linking strategy," said [Kate Walker](#), freelance SEO strategist and content writer. "I've had to undo links that were bringing her down in SERP, because they didn't follow good practices. Now we are beginning to develop some quality links that will benefit the company, boost its ranking in SERPs and stand the test of time. My advice is, don't shoot yourself in the foot trying to do things the easy or cheap way. Cheap and easy hasn't been good since you dated that cheerleader in high school, and it isn't any good now. Quality is all that really counts."



DAN BLACHARSKI | [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [e](#)

Dan Blacharski is a thought leader, advisor, industry observer and PR counsel to several Internet startups. He has been widely published on subjects relating to customer-facing technology, fintech, cloud computing and crowdsourcin... [Read more »](#)