

Link Building Strategy **Guide**

Ethical link building tactics for UK businesses. Learn how to earn high-quality backlinks that boost your domain authority, improve search rankings, and drive referral traffic — without risking a Google penalty.

#1

RANKING FACTOR
AFTER CONTENT

3.8x

MORE ORGANIC TRAFFIC
WITH BACKLINKS

DA

DOMAIN AUTHORITY
GROWS WITH LINKS

Free

LINK BUILDING
GUIDE

What Is Link Building?

Link building is the process of acquiring hyperlinks from other websites to your own. Search engines use backlinks as a signal of trust and authority. A page with more high-quality backlinks from relevant websites will generally rank higher than a page with fewer or lower-quality links.

White-Hat (Safe) Tactics

- ✓ Guest posting on relevant, authoritative sites
- ✓ Digital PR and newsworthy content
- ✓ Creating linkable assets (guides, tools, data)
- ✓ Local directory and citation building
- ✓ Broken link building outreach
- ✓ Unlinked brand mention reclamation

Black-Hat (Risky) Tactics to Avoid

- ✗ Buying links from PBNs (Private Blog Networks)
- ✗ Link farms and automated link schemes
- ✗ Excessive reciprocal link exchanges
- ✗ Spam comments and forum link dropping
- ✗ Hidden links in widgets or footers
- ✗ Paid links without nofollow/sponsored tags

Google Penalty Warning

Google actively penalises manipulative link building. Penalties range from individual page demotions to site-wide manual actions. Always focus on **earning** links through quality content and genuine outreach, not buying or manipulating them.

1 Understanding Link Quality

Not all backlinks are equal. A single link from a high-authority, relevant website is worth more than hundreds of low-quality links.

Link Quality Factors

- **Domain Authority (DA/DR):** Higher authority domains pass more "link juice". Aim for DA 30+ minimum.
- **Relevance:** Links from topically related sites carry more weight than unrelated ones.
- **Anchor text diversity:** Natural backlink profiles have varied anchor text (branded, naked URL, keyword, generic).
- **Dofollow vs Nofollow:** Dofollow links pass ranking authority. Nofollow/sponsored links still provide traffic and brand awareness.
- **Link placement:** Editorial links within body content are more valuable than footer, sidebar, or author bio links.
- **Referring domain diversity:** Links from many different domains are better than many links from one domain.

Toxic Link Identification

- Links from **spammy or irrelevant** websites (gambling, pharma, adult content if unrelated)
- Links from sites with **very low DA (under 10)** and no real traffic
- Links with **exact-match anchor text** in suspiciously high volume
- Links from **foreign-language sites** with no connection to your business
- Links from **known PBNs** (Private Blog Networks) or link directories

Backlink Audit Checklist

- Export your full **backlink profile** from Ahrefs, SEMrush, or Google Search Console
- Identify and list **toxic or suspicious links** for removal or disavow
- Contact webmasters to **request removal** of harmful links where possible
- Submit a **disavow file** to Google Search Console for links that cannot be removed
- Analyse **competitor backlink profiles** for link building opportunities

2 Link Building Tactics (Part 1)

Guest Posting

- **Find opportunities:** Search “[your industry] + write for us”, “[topic] + guest post”, or check where competitors guest post
- **Quality over quantity:** Target sites with DA 30+, real traffic, and an engaged audience
- **Pitch unique value:** Offer original research, unique perspectives, or expert insights
- **Include 1–2 contextual links** back to your site within the body content (not just author bio)

Digital PR

- **Create newsworthy content:** Original research, surveys, data studies, industry reports
- **Journalist outreach:** Use HARO (Help A Reporter Out) and ResponseSource to respond to media queries
- **Press releases:** For genuine news (product launches, partnerships, awards, milestones)
- **Newsjacking:** Offer expert commentary on trending industry topics to journalists

Resource Link Building

- **Create linkable assets:** Comprehensive guides, free tools, calculators, templates, infographics
- **Outreach to resource pages:** Find “[topic] + resources” or “[topic] + useful links” pages and pitch your asset
- Focus on **evergreen content** that remains relevant and valuable over time

Local Link Building

- **Chambers of Commerce:** Join local business organisations for directory listings
- **Business directories:** Yell, Thomson Local, Bing Places, Apple Maps, industry-specific directories
- **Local press:** Pitch stories to regional newspapers, business journals, and online publications
- **Sponsorships:** Sponsor local events, charities, sports teams, or community initiatives for backlinks
- **Community involvement:** Host workshops, webinars, or events that generate press coverage and links

3 Link Building Tactics (Part 2)

Content-Led Link Building

- **Original research:** Conduct surveys, analyse data, publish findings – journalists and bloggers cite research
- **Infographics:** Visual content is 3x more likely to be shared and linked to
- **Free tools & calculators:** Interactive tools earn natural links over time (ROI calculators, audit tools)
- **Data-driven studies:** Industry benchmarks, trend reports, and annual surveys attract citations

Broken Link Building

- **Find broken links** on relevant websites using Ahrefs Broken Link Checker or Check My Links extension
- **Create replacement content** that matches what the broken link originally pointed to
- **Contact the webmaster** offering your content as a replacement – you are helping them fix a problem

Unlinked Brand Mentions

- **Monitor mentions** of your brand name using Google Alerts, Ahrefs, or Mention.com
- **Contact publishers** who mention your brand without linking and politely request a link be added
- This has the **highest success rate** of any outreach tactic (the author already knows your brand)

Outreach Email Templates

Template 1: Guest Post Pitch

Subject: Content idea for [Site Name]

Hi [Name], I am [Your Name] from [Company]. I have been reading [Site Name] and noticed your audience would benefit from a piece on [Topic]. I would love to contribute an original article covering [brief outline]. I have previously written for [relevant sites]. Would this be of interest? Happy to share a full outline. Best regards, [Name]

Template 2: Broken Link Replacement

Subject: Broken link on [Page Title]

Hi [Name], I was reading your article on [Topic] and noticed the link to [broken URL] is no longer working. I recently published a comprehensive guide on the same subject: [Your URL]. It might be a good replacement for your readers. Either way, wanted to flag the broken link. Cheers, [Name]

Template 3: Unlinked Mention

Subject: Thanks for mentioning [Brand]

Hi [Name], Thank you for mentioning [Brand Name] in your article on [Topic]. I noticed the mention is not currently linked – would you be able to add a link to [URL] for your readers? It would help them find us directly. Thank you for the coverage! Best, [Name]

4 Link Building Plan & Tracking

Set monthly targets, track your outreach, and measure results systematically.

Monthly Target Setting

Your link building targets should be based on **competitor analysis**. If your top 3 competitors average 10 new referring domains per month, aim for 10–15 to close the gap. Quality always trumps quantity.

Monthly link target:

Current referring domains:.....

Competitor average:

Outreach Tracking Template

PROSPECT WEBSITE	DA	CONTACT	STATUS
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Prospecting Workflow
1. Identify target websites (competitor backlinks, resource pages, industry publications). 2. Find contact details (author email, contact form, LinkedIn). 3. Personalise outreach email. 4. Send initial email. 5. Follow up after 5–7 days if no response. 6. Track outcome. Expect a 5–15% success rate for cold outreach.

5 Measurement & Reporting

Track these key metrics monthly to measure the effectiveness of your link building efforts.

Key Metrics Dashboard

METRIC	CURRENT	TARGET
Domain Authority / Domain Rating		
Total Referring Domains		
New Referring Domains (This Month)		
Total Backlinks		
Dofollow : Nofollow Ratio		
Anchor Text Distribution (Branded %)		
Organic Traffic (Correlation)		

Link Velocity

Link velocity is the rate at which you acquire new backlinks. A natural link profile shows steady, consistent growth – not sudden spikes. Monitor your link velocity to ensure it looks organic. A sudden spike of hundreds of links can trigger a Google review.

Warnings & Red Flags

Watch For These Warning Signs

Sudden drop in referring domains – could indicate link removals or penalties.

Spike in toxic backlinks – you may be the target of negative SEO.

Over-optimised anchor text – if more than 10% of anchors are exact-match keywords, diversify.

Links from unrelated countries – links from .cn, .ru or other foreign TLDs (if not relevant) should be monitored.

Strategic Notes

Need Expert SEO Support?

Our SEO team builds ethical link campaigns, conducts backlink audits, and grows your domain authority.

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Completed by:

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