

# Building Thousands of Links to Your Web Site

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By Ryan P. Allis

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**Companion Search Engine Guide:** If you do not presently have the companion guide to this report, "Guide to Obtaining a #1 Ranking in the Search Engines," you may purchase it from <http://www.zeromillion.com/searchengines/>

## 1. The Basics of Linking

This guide is intended as an all-inclusive text on effectively building thousands of relevant and quality links to your web site. Reading the article alone will not make a single person link to your site, however. You will need to act, using the information as you go. As you may be referring to this article many times in the coming weeks, you may wish to print it out.

First, let me start with the very basics. I recognize that the majority of readers will be fairly adept at Internet browsing and the basics of web site development. If you are, feel free to skip to section three.

When I refer to “links” in the guide I simply mean other web sites that have put code on their site to enable their visitors to come directly to your site by clicking, either on an image or text.

Links can be to pages within the same site or to other web sites. When I refer to “building links” in this guide I will mean building incoming links to your web site from other web sites.

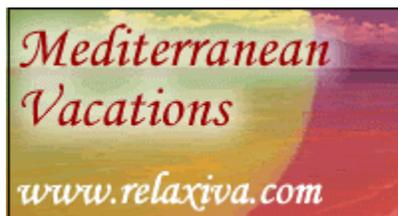
An example of a link could be.

Are you tired of all work and no play? It may be time for a vacation. Just imagine yourself in Greece, or Sicily, or Barcelona. Take a break from the grind and come [learn about your next Mediterranean Vacation](#).

The link would be the blue underlined words. In a browser, clicking on these words would take you to the web site where you could learn about the vacation.

The link to our Mediterranean travel company may also be an image such as the one below.

Figure 2.1



Clicking on the image in a browser would take you to their fictional web site, relaxiva.com.

Within Hyper-text Markup Language (HTML), the basic web site programming language of the Internet, the coding to create a link is as follows.

```
<a href="http://www.yourdomain.com/yourpage.html">Words that will be linked</a>
```

If there was an image link, the code would be as follows

```
<a href="http://www.yourdomain.com/yourpage.html"></a>
```

All right, now that we know the basics, let's move on to learning why having incoming links is so important in the first place.

## 2. The Importance of Having Links

Why should you take the time to proactively build links to your web site? Simply put, to receive additional traffic.

These additional visitors will come from two sources.

1. Direct traffic from persons clicking on the links.
2. Indirect traffic from higher rankings in the search engines.

Why will your rankings be higher in the search engines if you have more links? Well, a significant part of a search engine ranking is dependent on two factors called link popularity and link reputation. The higher each of these factors, the higher your site will be listed for each of the search terms for which your site appears.

Link popularity is dependent on the number of other web sites that link to you. The more web sites link to yours, the higher your link popularity. Link reputation is the quality of the incoming links to your site. It is dependent on how relevant the sites to link yours are and how well known those sites are. How well know a site is can be determined by looking at Google PageRank or Alexa rankings. The more closely related and greater trafficked sites you can obtain sites from, the better your link reputation and the higher your rankings.

Why is it important to have links from site that are on the same topic yours? Well, a search engine wants to give its users the most relevant results possible. If a user searches for "llama breeding" the most relevant site is likely to be the one with the most links from sites about breeding llamas. The logic is that llama breeding sites are most likely going to be linking to other llama breeding sites, or at least sites on llamas. If your site has two hundred links from other llama web sites and is optimized for the keyword "llama breeding," your site has a very good chance of showing up in the top position for this keyword.

For ultra-competitive keywords such as health, sex, or shopping, if you do not have at tens of thousands of links coming to your site you will have no chance at being in the top ten in the search engines no matter how much optimization you do.

With less competitive keywords in niche markets, generally, a few hundred to a few thousand links should be plenty to drive you to the top of search engines for your targeted keywords with the right optimization strategy.

*Additional search engine tips:* To learn exactly how to best optimize your web site for the search engines, I have written a thirty-five page guide to search engine positioning called the “Guide to Obtaining a #1 Ranking in the Search Engines.” In the guide I go into intricate detail on how to optimize your website and demonstrate, step-by-step, how I was able to get a number one ranking on nine of the major search engines for a client on a highly competitive keyword that now directly and solely contributes approximately \$40,000 *per month* in sales on one product. And I explain my seven step methodical process that nearly guarantees a number one ranking in the search engines on any keyword, no matter how competitive. More information on the guide can be found at <http://www.zeromillion.com/searchengines/>. The guide is not free, but the offer is better than risk-free and the information contained within has the potential, literally, to bring you hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional sales, as it has already for one of my clients.

If you want your company and product to be seen, you must make sure that your web site is strategically positioned at many different locations on the Internet. Positioning, one of the four Ps of marketing, is an absolutely critical component of the marketing mix. If you are not positioned to be where your customer is when your customer is ready to buy, you lose. Your competitor who is in that place at that time wins.

A visitor can only come to a site in two ways, either by clicking on a link or typing in the address. Without links your web site is an Island, relying solely on someone typing in your web site address. Most visitors will come to your site via links, not by directly typing in your web site address. With numerous links on related web sites there will be a much better chance someone who is looking for the information, service, or product you provide will be able to find you. The more people looking for exactly what you provide coming to your web site the higher your sales will be. Having numerous incoming links to your web site is crucial to solidifying and expanding your traffic base, improving your search engine rankings, and greatly increasing your sales.

So now that you know the importance of having links, how do you go about building them?

### 3. Developing Your Reason to Link

The first step in developing a linking strategy is to develop the reasons that another site would want you link to your site. Unless the benefits of linking to your site are clear, you will have a hard time convincing other site owners to take the time to put up a link to your site. Generally, other web site owners will link to you for three reasons...

1. If you provide great content (or a useful utility) and they want to provide a service to their visitors
2. If they link to you, you will link to them

3. If you are willing to pay them for traffic or sales they provide you

This third reason is what occurs when you run an affiliate program. We will talk more about these in a moment. For now, however, let's focus on how to build links to your site without monetary incentives.

Before you begin your process of building links, you need to determine whether or not you are willing to provide reciprocal links. As in all types of networking, reciprocity is essential. Why would you expect another site owner to link to your web site if you will not link to theirs? Of course, if your site has enough top quality content, some sites may link to you as a service to their visitors. However, you will receive many more links if you offer a link in return.

You may be thinking that by adding links to your site you will just be losing all that hard earned traffic you worked so hard to get to your site in the first place. While you will lose a few visitors, the aggregate effect will be beneficial. This is for two reasons.

First, by providing value to your visitors with a quality listing of relevant resources, you will make your site stickier. This simply means that the visitor will be much more likely to return to your site again in the future.

Secondly, most people that you lose are prospects that are not likely going to be buyers anyway. If they were, they'd be in your product information section and not on your links page. You may indeed lose these less than stellar prospects to web sites you have linked to. However you will gain a continual stream of new, very qualified prospects in return from your linking partners. These prospects will have purposely clicked on your link and pre-qualified themselves. Would you be willing to have a few unqualified prospects leave your site in return for qualified prospects very interested in what you are offering? If so, then the effects of a reciprocal linking strategy will be to your liking.

If you do decide to offer reciprocal links, you must now decide how to manage them. Let's look at some options for managing your links.

## 4. Managing Your Links

In managing your links section, you have two options. You can either add and edit your links by hand or install a link manager. I would very much recommend a link manager and directory builder such as Zeus from Cyber Robotics. Zeus will make your job of organizing your links much easier and will even search the Internet for you to find related sites that you can ask to exchange links with you.

Whatever you do, do not just create a long list of links on a page and upload them. This will not only not make your link partners unhappy, but will offer no service to your visitors. Compare the following.

This first links page is simply a long list of the link partners' web sites.

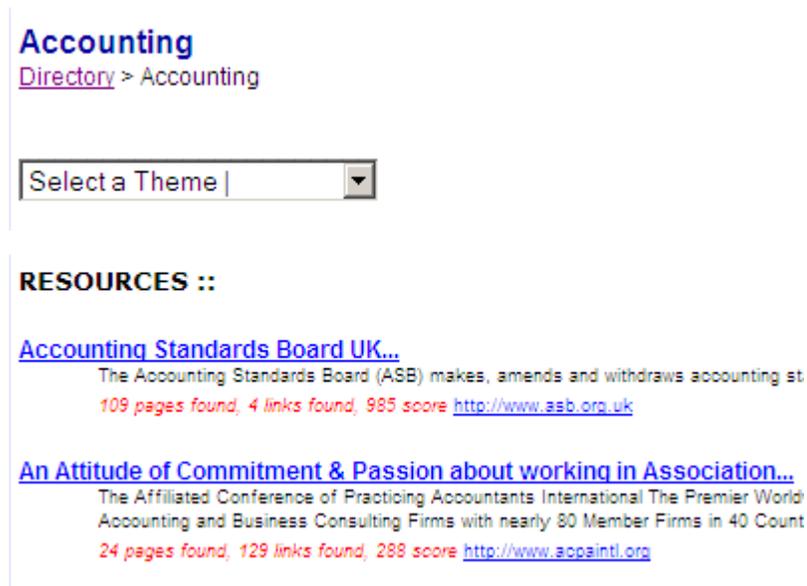
Figure 4.1



<http://www.coral-calcium-benefits.com>  
<http://www.nonijuce.us/health-sites/index.htm>  
<http://www.kevsupplements.com>  
<http://www.healthsuperstore.com/calorad-am-200/>  
<http://www.trivita-sublingual-b-12.com/important-h>  
<http://www.coral-calcium-benefits.com>  
<http://www.greenbarlevnz.com>  
<http://www.theallergyreliefcenter.com>  
<http://www.iwantvitamins.com>  
<http://www.obqvn.net>  
<http://www.befitoverfifty.com>  
<http://arthritis.about.com/>  
<http://www.noni-juice-plus.com>  
<http://www.GoldCoastCriticSitter.com>  
<http://www.charmhealth.com/>  
<http://www.CriticSitter.com>  
<http://www.NutritionReallyWorks.com>  
<http://www.help4-arthritis.com/>  
<http://healthydaysonline.com>  
<http://www.phillypharmacy.com>  
<http://www.magnettherapy.com>

Now, compare that with the below links directory.

Figure 4.2



**Accounting**  
[Directory](#) > Accounting

Select a Theme |

**RESOURCES ::**

**[Accounting Standards Board UK...](#)**  
The Accounting Standards Board (ASB) makes, amends and withdraws accounting st  
*109 pages found, 4 links found, 985 score* <http://www.asb.org.uk>

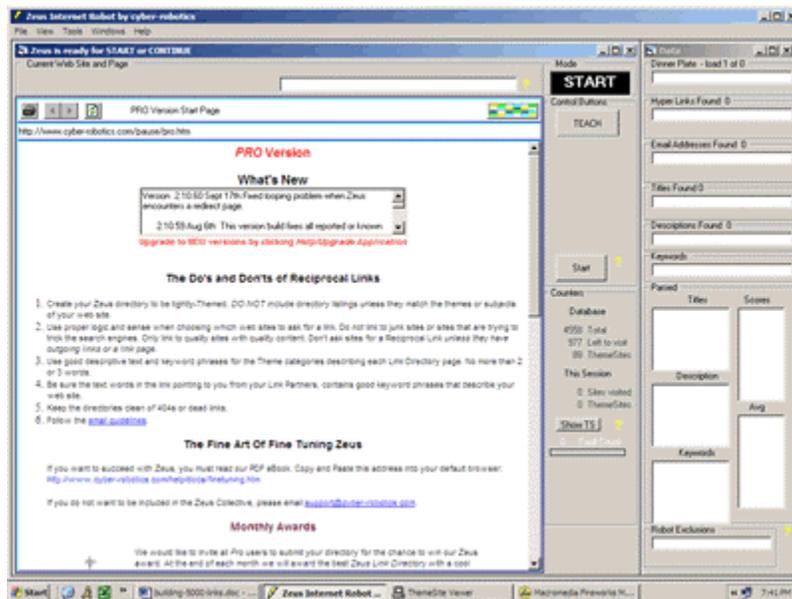
**[An Attitude of Commitment & Passion about working in Association...](#)**  
The Affiliated Conference of Practicing Accountants International The Premier World  
Accounting and Business Consulting Firms with nearly 80 Member Firms in 40 Count  
*24 pages found, 129 links found, 288 score* <http://www.acpaintl.org>

Clearly both your links partners and your visitors will benefit more from a directory such as the second one with clear categories and descriptions for each link. These can take quite a long time

to create in your web site editor and manage however. Zeus does this for you and is one of the reasons I would very much recommend it to anyone serious about building more than just a few links. If you are trying to build a few dozen or more links to your site, I would very much recommend investing in an organized link directory. More information on Zeus can be found at <http://www.edgepromote.com>.

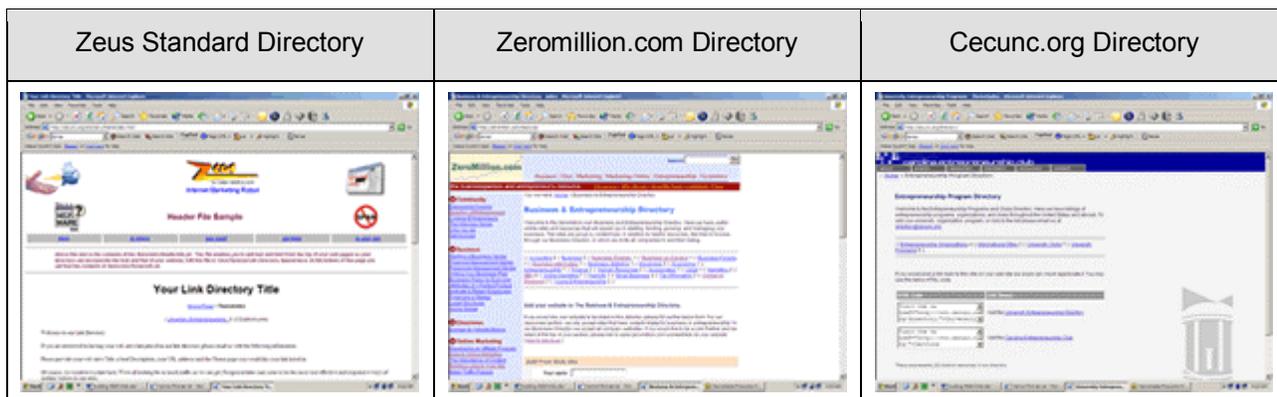
Here is a screen shot of Zeus.

Figure 4.3



Zeus costs \$199, but they do offer a free trial that you can try to start off with. Do note, however, that Zeus will take a few hours to learn how to use and you will have to make some formatting changes to make the directory look like you want it as the layout provided initially is not very professional. Here is a screen shot of the standard Zeus link directory compared with two formatted link directories I have created.

Figure 4.4



So some HTML editing and formatting will be needed to customize your links directory. Fortunately, this capability is provided. If you are not too adept at HTML or graphic design, let your web site designer handle this. You'll have a much better chance of someone being willing to exchange links with you if your links page and web site has a professional looking design.

*Important Tip:* The more professional looking your links section and web site is the more chance you'll have of someone being willing to exchange links with you.

If you do decide to add them manually in your HTML editor, be sure to create a separate page just for links. If you have a lot of links, say, more than 30, organize them into categories and create a page for each to create a true link directory. To get the best response from potential link partners, you'll want to link to your links page from every other page on your site including your home page. Do not make it the first thing people see or make a large links graphic, however. While offering this resource to your visitors will increase the chance they will come back to your site, the first time they are there you most likely will want them to spend some time at your site and evaluate your offerings.

Also, do not wait until you already have sent out your link exchange requests before you create the directory. You will get very little response unless you tell potential partners where their site will be listed. It is always a good idea to already have a few links in your directory, perhaps the most well known sites in your area, so potential partners can get a feel for how their listing will look and feel comfortable you really will add their link.

Finally, do not just call your links page a links page. If anything, call it a resources page. Even better, however, is to give your directory a specific name. You'll notice at the Zeromillion.com link directory (<http://www.zeromillion.com/resource/>) that I have not only avoided using the word links in the URL, but also have titled the directory "The Business & Entrepreneurship Directory." Would you rather be on the links page on some site or in an exclusive directory?

Give your directory a title and in your link requests make it clear you will be linking to them in your directory and that the directory is an integral part of your site. If your directory has been around long enough look at your site access statistics and determine the percentage of visitors who access your resource section in their user sessions. If this percentage is high, mention it in your requests. Also, if your traffic is high, be sure to mention this as well.

This will give your potential partners a sense that you are providing a service to them and also increase the desirability of having a reciprocal link, thus increasing the chance they will link to you.

*Quick tip:* When creating your links page, do not make it a page and do not call it a links page. Rather, call it resources page or brand your directory The Your Topic Directory and make it seem that only select sites may be in the directory. Create a sense of exclusivity and you'll find many more site owners will be willing to exchange links with you.

Here is a review of all the suggestions I have had so far for creating and managing your links page or directory.

#### Four steps for proper link management

1. You must decide how to manage your links. If you plan to have a small links page or directory, you should be able to add each link individually. If your directory begins to grow larger, however, it may become too time consuming to make all the changes by hand. In this case, or if you hope to obtain more than a thirty or so links in the first place, it may be a good investment to use link management software such as Zeus. More information on this software can be found at <http://www.edgepromote.com>.
2. If you decide to use Zeus, it will take a couple hours to learn how to use it and some time to format your directory to your liking. Updates and new site additions are much quicker however.
3. Create your link directory before you start asking others to exchange links with you and put a few links in there to start. Potential partners will feel more comfortable if they can see how their link will look and how well it is connected to the rest of your site.
4. Either call your links page a resources page or if it is more than one page, brand your directory with a specific title such as "Llama Breeders Directory" or "Chinese Art Resource Center." Always refer to it as a resource rather than a listing of links. This will create a sense of importance to be in your directory and increase the chances someone will link to your site in order to be listed.

Now, I have talked quite a bit about link exchange requests and potential link partners. But how exactly to you request others to link to your site and how do you find good link partners? Continue on to find out.

## 5. Contacting Potential Link Partners

The next step to building links is one of the most important. You need to contact owners of related web sites and ask for a link. You can do this via email, phone, fax, or in person if close to you. The most common way, at least initially, is via email.

### *A Warning about UCE*

You must be careful in sending out email to potential link partners. They have not requested to receive email from you, so in the broadest interpretation it is unsolicited email. Why is this not unsolicited commercial email (UCE), also known as spam? Well, it might be seen this way if you are not careful.

The best reason for why it is not UCE is because you are not sending a commercial advertisement to a consumer who has not requested it, which really is spam. Rather, you are sending a joint venture request to a related business. Joint ventures are a very important part of business and as long as you are serious, have a professional site with some quality content, personalize your link request letter, and make sure your email only goes out to businesses or webmasters, you should receive very few complaints.

Now, let me repeat this in list form. By sending out unsolicited link request emails, you are at risk of being accused of sending unsolicited commercial email unless you do the following.

#### **Four steps to avoid being accused of sending spam**

1. Be serious and use proper business etiquette and language in your dealings
2. Have a good looking site with some quality content and not only promotional information
3. Personalize your link request letter
4. And, most importantly, make sure your email only goes out to businesses or webmasters. Do not send email to usual consumer addresses such as @hotmail.com or @aol.com.

Now, even taking these precautions, you are still likely to receive a few UCE complaints. Simply send a quick and polite email apologizing and explaining you simply wished to do a joint venture with their web site and then leave it at that.

If you do this, you will most likely stop any complaints from reaching your ISP, who can terminate your Internet connection or blacklists, which can block your mail server. One or two complaints are most likely not going to get your Internet connection shutdown or you blacklisted. Ten or twenty complaints most likely will, however. I have once before received a warning from my cable modem provider on this issue. I thought it was all right to send a link exchange request to a web site owner as she had a related personal site and I honestly wanted to exchange links and benefit both of us. However, she did not see things this way and complained. From this experience, I would recommend that you only email sites with their own domain and not any sites listed with free space providers such as GeoCities or Angelfire.

We all receive UCE everyday and dislike it. It is a cause for much wasted time and wasted computing resources. Please do not send unsolicited commercial email. It is not good for your company or your reputation.

**Important tip:** Be sure to follow the above four guidelines to ensure you are not accused of sending spam.

This said, email is one of the two most effective ways to build lots of links quickly. Here is a sample contact email.

```
Greetings,  
  
I am the CEO and President of My Company, a company that provides ... I  
have developed a web site on ... that has lots of top quality content on  
topic x and topic y.  
  
I like your site on [topic] at [url] and I would like to exchange  
links with your site, http://www.yoursite.com. This will benefit us  
mutually by increasing both our indirect traffic from higher search  
engine and direct traffic from the links. If you'd like to swap links,  
please do email me back and I'll add your link to my resources page at  
http://www.mycompany.com/resources/ within 24 hours. If you could  
include the location of my link that would be appreciated.  
  
If you'd like to include a description, please use the following...  
(describe your site in 15 words or less)  
  
Feel free to include a description for your link as well. I very much  
look forward to hearing from you.  
  
Warm Regards,  
Your Name  
President  
Your Company  
http://www.yourcompany.com  
(234) 555-5555  
  
P.S.: If you'd like to use a graphic I can send one. I'd be glad to  
add one next to your link as well. Thanks again!
```

Please do modify and personalize this email as this is just a standard cookie cutter format. Be different and stand out, yet remain professional and succinct.

Also, do remember that a phone call is much more personal than an email. If there is a web site with quite a bit of traffic or traffic that is your exact target demographic, a phone call may be very worthwhile.

As an example of a modified and unique link letter than stands out from the masses of unsolicited emails web site owners receive each day, here is the link request letter I used for zeromillion.com with accompanying notes.

<p>Hi, my name is Ryan Allis. I am an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.</p> <p>This is in regards your web site at [site].</p> <p>This month I'm helping Zeromillion.com announce their new Web site about business, entrepreneurship, marketing, and ebusiness. The site is the companion site for an upcoming book called "Zero to One Million" which will be published next Fall.</p> <p>On the site, there are currently two hundred and twenty articles on these subjects contributed by over forty authors and web sites. There are also quite a few dozen interviews with small business owners and CEOs, a directory of entrepreneurs, and a discussion forum for entrepreneurs at all levels. Further details about the site are below.</p> <p>We would like to exchange links with your site. We will add your site to the Business &amp; Entrepreneurship Directory at <a href="http://www.zeromillion.com/resource/">http://www.zeromillion.com/resource/</a> in return for a link somewhere on your website. As a link partner, you will be listed at the top of your section in the directory with a full description of your site. We will also list you in our general link partners page at <a href="http://www.zeromillion.com/links/">http://www.zeromillion.com/links/</a>.</p> <p>If you'd like to swap links, please do email me back with the location of the link and I'll add your link to the Directory and links page within 24 hours. Feel free to include a 10-20 word description.</p> <p>Also, if you have any questions or need anything feel free to contact me at <a href="mailto:allis@zeromillion.com">allis@zeromillion.com</a>, at (XXX) XXX-XXXX, or on my cell phone at (XXX)</p>	<p>Say who you are.</p> <p>Show you visited their site.</p> <p>Tell about your site. Be modest and do not exaggerate.</p> <p>What value does your site offer visitors?</p> <p>Be direct about the link exchange request. Tell what you'll offer in return.</p> <p>Exact instructions to follow. Have them add their link before they email you back.</p> <p>Provide contact details and phone number</p>
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<p>XXX-XXXX. I thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>My very best regards,          Ryan Allis          on behalf of Zeromillion.com          The Business &amp; Entrepreneurship Resource  <a href="http://www.zeromillion.com">http://www.zeromillion.com</a>  <a href="mailto:allis@zeromillion.com">allis@zeromillion.com</a></p> <p>P.S.: As a thank you for linking to our site, I'd like to send you a fifty page ebook I have compiled entitled "Interviews with Entrepreneurs." Do let me know if you'd like a copy.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>To link to Zeromillion.com you may use the following description.</p> <p>Zeromillion.com - <a href="http://www.zeromillion.com">http://www.zeromillion.com</a></p> <p>Business, entrepreneurship, marketing, and ebusiness resource containing two hundred articles, interviews with small business owners and entrepreneurs, a directory of Entrepreneurs, and a discussion forum. Companion site to the book Zero to One Million.</p> <p>Here is the HTML code for this link</p> <pre>&lt;b&gt;Zeromillion.com&lt;/b&gt; - &lt;a href="http://www.zeromillion.com/"&gt;http://www.zeromillion.com&lt;/a&gt;&lt;br&gt;</pre> <p>Business, entrepreneurship, marketing, and ebusiness resource containing two hundred articles, interviews with small business owners and entrepreneurs, a directory of Entrepreneurs, and a discussion forum. Companion site to the book Zero to One Million.</p> <p>Additional HTML code and banners and graphics can be picked up at <a href="http://www.zeromillion.com/resource/linkpartner.html">http://www.zeromillion.com/resource/linkpartner.html</a>. If you require additional information or assistance please do let us know.</p>	<p>See if you can provide a related bonus for that extra reason to link to your site.</p> <p>Provide your description</p> <p>Provide HTML code</p> <p>Provide link to graphics page</p>
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So now that you are well-versed in the methods of contact, how exactly do you find potential link partners? Continue on to section seven to find out.

## 6. Finding Potential Link Partners

The most common method of finding potential link partners is to use the search engines. You would just type in a search term related to your site and then go to a listing. Then you would send your link request to the email address listed on their site. You would repeat this process for each site in the top one hundred or so listings for that keyword and then move on to the next keyword.

Here is the process outlined step-by-step:

### Five Steps for Finding Potential Linking Partners

1. Type in a related keyword into a search engine.
2. Go to the first site that is listed in the results.
3. Send your link request email to the email address on the web site
4. Go back to the search engine listings and repeat step three for the next site.
5. Once all relevant listings are done (generally the first 100 or so, depending on how specific your keyword is), move on to your next related keyword and repeat steps one through four.

Finding linking partners in this method can take a lot of time, however. In my experience, only between 2% and 10% of the people you email will actually link to your site. So if it took you a minute and a half to find and email one site owner, it would take you 1500 minutes (or 25 hours) to email one thousand site owners. With the 2-10% conversion rate, your 25 hours of work may net you 20 to 100 links.

This is a lot of work for little return so let's look at some ways to reduce the amount of time you spend emailing your link exchange request to web site owners.

## 7. Saving Hundreds of Hours by using Automation Software, Spreadsheets, and Mail Merge Mailers

### *Time Saver #1: Using Spreadsheets and Mail Merge Mailers*

Instead of finding the email address from each related site and then emailing them individually, here's a way you can send all the emails at once.

Before you go to a search engine to begin to collect related emails, open up a spreadsheet (either Excel or the one that comes with Works) or even Notepad or WordPad. Do not email each site

individually, as you come to them. Rather, collect the email addresses, web site addresses, and keyword you found the site under in your spreadsheet.

Now, we can use something called mail merge to send all the emails at once. Mail merge simply sends individual emails to each person on your list and inserts fields in each email such as the web site address or keyword you found them under into your standard link request email. Inserting the information yourself might take as long as thirty seconds per email. Using mail merge, hundreds of emails can be sent per minute and they are still personalized for each recipient.

If you look back at the sample email I provided, you'll see [topic] and [url]. These are mail merge fields. Depending on the program you use, mail merge fields can look like [field], {field}, %field, or any similar combination. Follow the instructions the specific software you are using and make sure you get it right as there is nothing more embarrassing than sending a few thousand emails that do not show the person's site or keyword but rather "[site]" and "[keyword]". Check for both case and spelling in your message.

You have a number of options for mail merge software. Generally, when using mail merge in things such as newsletters, you'd be able to use web-based email list management software such as IntelliContact Pro ([www.intellicontactpro.com](http://www.intellicontactpro.com)). However, since web-based programs will insert a manage subscription or unsubscribe link at the bottom of your message, you'll have to use desktop based mail-merge software.

In the past I have used a program called Mailloop as my mail-merge email client. Mailloop is a good program and has a number of features, but does cost quite a bit. It sells for \$379. I would really only suggest purchasing it if you plan to use it after you finish your linking campaigns. It has some pretty useful capabilities such as filtering of emails, autoresponders, database cleaning, database merging, list splitting, scheduling, and newsletter management. If you currently use or wish to use autoresponders or send out mail merged emails such as announcements, link partner requests, or newsletters, an investment in Mailloop may be justified. You can learn more about Mailloop at <http://www.edgepromote.com>.

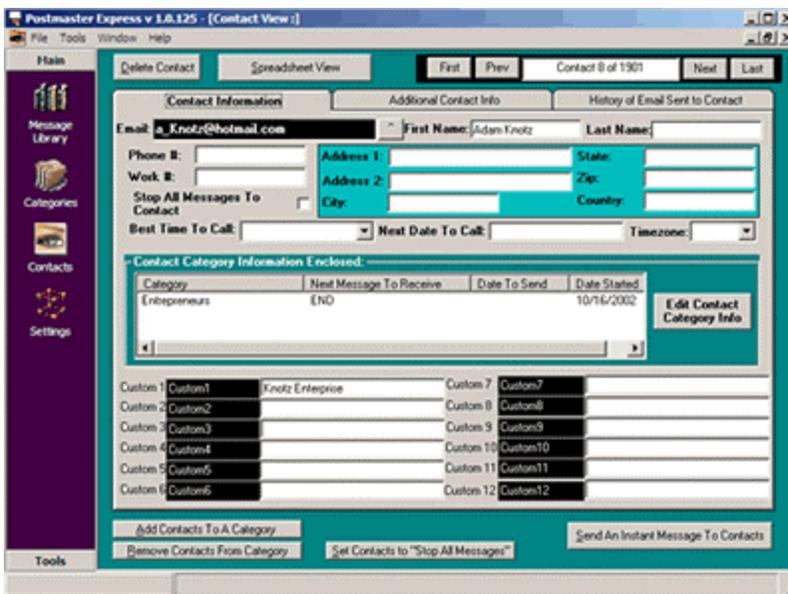
Here is a screen shot of the Mailloop sender.

Figure 7.1



However, if you already have other software for your autoresponders and newsletters or do not use any presently you can save this money. The free trial of Postmaster Express ([www.onlineautomation.com](http://www.onlineautomation.com)) will give you the ability to send out ten mailings with mail merge. So if you collect all your potential link partners email addresses at once and then import them into Postmaster Express, you can send out all your messages in your first mailing. This is a good free solution. Below is a screen shot of Postmaster Express.

Figure 7.2



If Postmaster Express, for some reason, is not to your liking, or if you want the ability to send out mail merge emails for other reasons such as announcements or newsletters, then you may want to check out a program called WorldMerge. It is available for \$49 from [www.worldmerge.com](http://www.worldmerge.com). There is a free trial, but do not use it for your linking campaign as it will insert an advertisement at the bottom of every email, something Postmaster Express does not do.

*Time saving tip one:* To send out your emails for your link campaign all at once using mail merge instead of individually, try the free trial version of Postmaster Express ([www.onlineautomation.com](http://www.onlineautomation.com)). You can mail to an unlimited number of users up to ten times and there are no advertisements or unsubscribe links in the emails. You'll save quite a few hours of your time and still be sending personalized emails. If you find the mail merge ability useful and wish to use it for other areas of your business or run newsletters or autoresponders, you may wish to try Mailloop ([www.edgepromote.com](http://www.edgepromote.com)) or a web-based solution called IntelliContact Pro ([www.intellicontact.com](http://www.intellicontact.com)).

Now that you have your mail merge mailer and you can save time when sending your link request, let's look at a way you can save time in finding potential link partners.

### ***Time Saver #2: Using Automation Software***

Instead of manually going through the search engines to manually find potential linking partners, you can save time by using software that will do this for you. I personally use a program called LinkPartner Pro (formerly known as Supersonic) to do just this.

LinkPartner Pro gives you the ability to search via keyword using the search engines. You set the keyword you want it to search for and then it queries search engines and then visits the web sites of the top results (you can set the depth of results, but unless the keyword you are searching for is widely used, keep it to the top 100 results). Once this is done, it enables you to create a comma separated value (CSV) file of all the related web sites it and the email addresses of the web site owner. Then you can use a mail merge mailer such as Mailloop, Postmaster Express, or WorldMerge to send out these emails very quickly.

Essentially, the software does everything for you and can return one hundred potential link partners in about a minute, instead of the hour and a half it would take you manually.

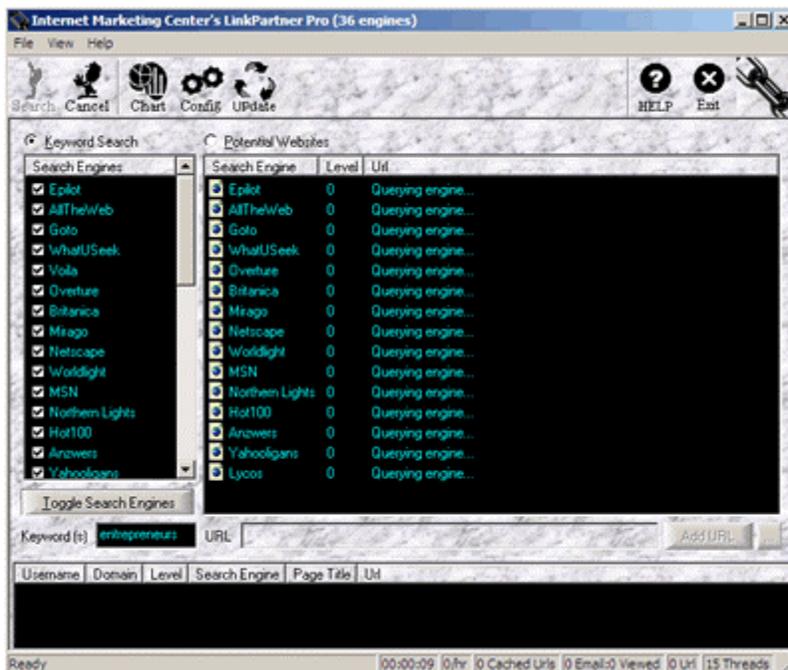
Once the software finds the related sites, you simply double click on the listing to visit each and make sure they are related to yours and a good quality site that you would want to be your link partner. If you find any sites that are not relevant or do not have their own domain name (ie - they are on free servers such as Geocities) delete them from the list. Ensuring relevancy is extremely important. You do not want to be emailing any sites that that are not relevant to yours or else you may be accused of sending spam.

For example, if you sold a back massager, you would be all right emailing chiropractor web sites. However, you would not want to email a web site on knitting. The standard of relevancy is of course subjective, but the closer you keep to your subject the less chance you have of being accused of sending out UCE.

Secondly, you do not want to send email to more than one address at each web site. Often companies will have an email address for every employee, one for sales, one for customer service, and one for general info. You do not want to send the same email to thirty different email addresses at the same company. Therefore, make sure you delete all but one email for each web site.

Here is a screen shot of LinkPartner Pro.

Figure 7.3



LinkPartner Pro can be purchased for \$97 from <http://www.marketingtips.com/linkpartner/>. I receive nothing if you do purchase the software as they have no affiliate program for the software. I simply recommend it as it saves so much time. If you really want to build more than just a few links the software will be a good investment.

*Time saving tip two:* Do not manually go through the search engines to find potential links partners. To save time use software that will do this for you such as LinkPartner Pro (<http://www.marketingtips.com/linkpartner/>). Be sure to view every listing for relevancy, however, and do not email more than one

web site owners. Search for related partners for all of your related keywords. If your keywords are broad, you may be able to find quite a few thousand potential partners. Once you have your list from LinkPartner Pro, use your mail merge software to send personalized link requests to each potential partner.

Let's quickly compare the time you would need to spend to compile and send 1,000 related potential link partners manually and the time needed using automation software and mail merge software.

Figure 7.4

Manually		Using Software	
Action	Time	Action	Time
Searching in search engine for keyword and finding email address of one listing	45 seconds	Typing in keyword and hitting Search and waiting for 1000 related site to be listed	10 minutes
Using standard link request email and inserting web site and keyword for one email	45 seconds	Quickly viewing each of the 1000 sites for relevance by double clicking	90 minutes
Total	1.5 minutes		
x 1,000	<b>1500 minutes</b>	Total	<b>130 minutes</b>

## 8. The Campaign: Sending Your Link Request and Managing Replies

Now that you have found your potential link partners, open up your mail merge software. Send a test message to yourself to make sure you have used the automatic merging features properly. Before you hit SEND, review the following tips.

*Make sure you have enough time*

Before you send out your link requests to your potential partners, be sure you have quite a bit of time blocked off in the upcoming days to add your link partners links to your own site and deal with all the email you will receive in return. If you do not have this time, or, if you are not a very fast typer, then you may wish to hire someone to respond to these messages for you. In my experience, for every 1000 link requests you send out, you will have to spend five hours adding links and responding to emails.

A corresponding benefit of link campaigns is that they get your name and business out there in the minds of persons with related businesses. A correlating effect of sending out your link request is building some great relationships and contacts, most likely finding some new customers, and finding potential joint venture partners.

*Make sure you use a valid return address*

In the reply-to section of your mailer, be sure to include your correct email address. It would be a very bad thing to send out a few thousand link requests only to realize you put your email address in wrong and you have no way of hearing back from your potential partners. Also, be sure to use an address @yourdomain.com for added credibility.

*Set up an extra account or separate filter for easier management*

Whenever I am sending email to a lot of potential partners, I like to separate my linking campaign emails from my regular emails. I would not want a very important email from a business partner, friend, or family member to be mixed in with a few thousand replied to my link request. Therefore I always create a separate email account and use a separate folder or different software for my linking campaign.

I usually use Outlook, Microsoft's email client, for all my normal email. Most often when doing linking campaigns, I will use the Eudora email client. I find it gives me added ability to move my emails between folders and runs a bit faster. You can obtain a free copy of Eudora from <http://www.eudora.com>.

If you do use Outlook, you can simply create a separate folder and then set up a filter that moves all email to the email account you are using for your linking campaign (such as resource@yourdomain.com) to that folder. For other email clients, check the help file and do something similar that will put all the replies to your link request in a separate area.

On a final note, if you currently are using a web-based email account you will not be able to use this for your linking campaign. You will save a lot of time by using a POP3 account and desktop-based email client.

*Delete sites from your list as you hear back from them*

When someone replies to your message, whether with a yes, no, or maybe, add their email address (or site if your original message is still there) to a remove list. Then, at the end of each day, remove their listing from your original spreadsheet or comma separated value file that LinkPartner Pro generated.

This way, you can follow-up in a few days with everyone that has yet to respond. Later on I'll have more details on following-up.

*Once you find a site that links to you, add them to your directory*

If you get an email back saying, "Yes, I have linked to you at <http://www.mydomain.com/links/>," then check the referenced page to make sure your link is there, and then add their site to your link directory using Zeus or your website editor. Do not reply to the person until their link is up. It is very important to reply to these link partners promptly and assure them you have added their link to your site so they will not delete you from theirs.

Here is a sample reply email to a link partner.

```
Greetings,  
  
Thank you for your link. I have added your link to my site at  
http://www.yourcompany.com/resource/.  
  
Do let me know if you are ever in the market for widgets or if you  
ever see any opportunity for joint ventures.  
  
Once again, thank you!  
  
Warm Regards,  
Your Name  
President  
Your Company  
http://www.yourcompany.com  
(234) 555-5555
```

## 9. Cutting a Few Weeks off the Process by Submitting Your Links to the Search Engines

As I've said before, there are two main reasons to build incoming links. First, to receive the direct traffic coming from the sites that link to you. And second, to increase your rankings in the search engines.

Building quality links to your site can take a lot of time. If you have your eye on top positions in the search engines for very specific keywords (e.g. Durango Hot-Air Ballooning) then you will not need very many links (20-30 would be fine) to obtain a top position (with proper site optimization). However, if you want to have a chance at being in the top positions for more competitive keywords you better aim to have a lot more incoming links.

Just having these links will do nothing to increase your ranking, however. The search engines must know that other sites are linking to you. Eventually, the web site your site is on will be found by the search engine spiders. However, this can take months. It is a good thing to speed up this process by submitting the URL where your link is on to the search engines. You can do this for free at <http://www.submitexpress.com/>. It will take about 20 seconds for each link.

With five hundred links, this process may take a couple extra hours, but will shorten the time until you are at the top of the search engines by about three weeks. How do you know where your links are? Well, if you take another look at the above sample email you will notice that the web site owner must let you know where your link is for you to link to them. Once they get back to you, simply submit their URL to the search engines via [submitexpress.com](http://submitexpress.com), add their link and description to your resources page, and delete them from your database.

## 10. Doubling Your Response by Following Up

Often, it will take more than one contact to spur a web site owner to swap links with your site. It is therefore important to send a follow-up email about a week later to everyone that has not either said yes or no already.

To do this, you will need to delete entries in your spreadsheet of people who have responded (use the find utility to quickly go to a specific listing). Be sure to be methodical and organized in this process so you do not anger people you've heard from with a second email.

Then, about seven days later, resend the original email with a "Just wanted to resend this to make sure you got it. I'd really like to swap links with you. Please would you let me know either way?" attached to the top of it. Assuming you start with a list of ten thousand, maintaining your spreadsheet may take a couple extra hours, but you will likely double your response on the second mailout.

You can follow-up again a week later with those you haven't heard from, but generally by now the risk of annoying someone to the point they'll report you as a spammer outweighs the benefits of any additional links. If there are any big sites you really want a link on but have not heard back from or received a negative response from, it is time to go back to the old way of doing business and pick up the phone, use the fax, or write a letter.

In summary, any site owner that has invested some time in developing a professional design and quality content on their web site should be able to build a few hundred links to their site with about twenty hours of work. Properly leveraging the use of software such as a mail merge mailer and LinkPartner Pro to automate the repetitive tasks will save many hours in this process. These links will pay off very well as you begin to receive traffic from each link and in a 4-8 weeks when you see your site in the top positions for your targeted keywords.

Here is a complete review of the process I have suggested so far.

### Six Steps to Building Hundreds of Related Links to Your Site

1. Use LinkPartner Pro (<http://www.marketingtips.com/linkpartner/>) to easily find potential link partners
2. Use Mailloop (<http://www.edgepromote.com>), Postmaster Express ([www.onlineautomation.com](http://www.onlineautomation.com)), or a similar mail merge program to send out your personalized link requests quickly.
3. When you send out your message, be sure to have enough time set aside in the coming days to handle all the replies, separate your replies from your other emails.
4. When you hear back from people delete them from your list and be sure to respond promptly with the location of their link on your site.
5. In order to speed up the spidering and link recognition process, keep a list of the all the exact web pages where your links are and submit these to the search engines via the free utility at <http://www.submitexpress.com>.
6. About seven days after your original email, send a follow-up to those you have not heard from. This may double the number of links you receive.

## 11. But I Said Thousands of Links, Not Hundreds: The Real Insider Tricks

This article is entitled “Build Thousands of Links to Your Web Site,” not “Build Hundreds of Links to Your Web Site.” So how does one really build thousands and thousands of links? Well that is where the real tricks of the trade come in.

You might ask why I did not start with these “insider tips.” Well, I started with the above process simply because it is the most effective at building high quality links quickly and is very helpful in getting your name and site positioned in the minds of fellow businesses and persons who can recommend your business. This will likely drum up some initial sales for you and enable you to network with some people that can really make things happen.

In short, I have showed you a fairly simple and quick way to build an initial critical mass of links, position your site on the sites where people looking for your product and service are most likely to be on, and get your business name and site out there in the minds of those who know your market and industry best.

Remember, it is not only quantity of links that matter. Quality of links matter and by spending the needed time to get your site on a few hundred related sites in your niche, market, or industry you will do yourself a great favor by way of search engine rankings and direct traffic from the links.

Below are a few tips to building thousands and thousands of links to a web site. First, I will start with a few tips that are design to be add-ons to the above process that may only bring a few hundred more links to your site. Then I will move on to discuss some really powerful and potentially lucrative link building strategies.

## 12. Using the Zeus Collective

Earlier, I mentioned Zeus as a good link directory manager. Zeus can be used to manage links to and from your web site. However, even if you do not use Zeus on your web site, you can still use their database of web sites at <http://www.zeuscollective.com/>.

Simply go to the web site and do a search for a keyword related to your industry, topic, product, or web site. For example, a search for "health" brought up sixty-seven web sites. These web sites use the Zeus software to manage their links. All you have to do is go to each site, post a link to their site on your web site, and email the site owner to ask for a reciprocal link. Of course, you can do this with many more than one keyword, as long as all are related to your site. With about three hours of work you can build another 100 links to your site.

## 13. Getting Sites Who Link to Your Competitor to Link to You

First you need to find out who links to your competitors. To do this, simply go to <http://www.altavista.com> and type in "link to:yourcompetitor.com" in the search bar. This will bring up all the sites that link to your competitor's web site. Go to each one, and add their email address and web site to a database. You can use the same mail merge database and time-saving tips as before or if there are not too many you may wish to email each site separately.

This can take some time, but from a marketing standpoint it is a good thing to make sure those that are currently linking to your competitors know that your company and product/service exists. The same goes for the visitors on these web sites. You will not be able to obtain a link on every site, however, if you follow-up and provide a reciprocal link you should be able to get a link on at least half these web sites. This process may be more time consuming and not give you as many links, however it is key to gain this mindshare and marketshare by positioning yourself wherever your competitors are.

## 14. Building Links by Posting to Discussion Groups

Another way to build up links to your web site is to be a regular contributor to the message boards related to your industry/topic/product/company. You will not build hundreds of links overnight like you can with a well-executed related site mailing. However, if you only make five posts a day with a link to your web site in your signature file (sig file) after your name you will build another 150 links to your site each month.

The key, however, is to follow the threads (messages) closely and answer questions. Become a contributing member that adds value to the community. Do not just post an advertisement for your product then never return. These posts will likely be deleted and you will not have developed any rapport, greatly decreasing the chances any member will purchase anything from you.

You can post replies to questions, ask questions of your own, and post quality (on-topic) articles that you have written. As you become a contributing member of the community you will have built trust and will be able to mention your product or service (as a solution to a posted problem) without being flamed (yelled at). This will bring you both new sales and new links.

To find communities, use search engines to search for "your topic message boards." Also, check out the communities at <http://groups.google.com/> and <http://www.groups.yahoo.com>.

Once you've posted your messages, you can reduce the time it takes for the search engines to index the page (and increase your link count) by copying the exact page your post is on and submitting it (for free) to the search engines at <http://www.submitexpress.com>. This will not work for all your posts as some will be dynamically generated through databases, however, this will work for some.

## 15. Using Press Releases to Build Links

A well-planned and well-executed publicity campaign is an integral part of a successful marketing plan. Unless your company is a public company (your shares are traded in the stock exchanges) or a very large private company, you will need to be creative in creating newsworthy events and work hard to develop relationships to get coverage in the news.

Sending out press releases can be a great way to build hundreds of links to your web site, but only if this is part of a well-executed publicity campaign built upon a newsworthy story.

If you do not have something especially newsworthy, you can pick up a few links on news archiving web sites by sending out a release. However, this is an expensive way to pick up a few links. With just a bit more creativity, work, and time (and money if you chose to hire a publicist), you can not only build many links to your site but more importantly receive coverage on these sites and in magazines and newspapers.

The top two services for disseminating press releases are PR Newswire (<http://www.prnewswire.com>) and Businesswire (<http://www.businesswire.com>). If you plan to manage your campaign yourself or in house, you'll want to visit Bacon's (<http://www.baconsinfo.com>) and MediaMap (<http://www.mediamap.com>), both directories of press contacts.

For more on executing a successful publicity campaign read my article "Publicity Success" in the Marketing Resource Center at <http://www.zeromillion.com>.

## 16. The #1 Best Way to Build Thousands of Links to Your Site: Affiliate Programs

At last check, amazon.com had close to 9,000,000 incoming links to its web site. How did they obtain so many links? Well, quite a few are from contacting link partners (in the very early going),

sending out press releases, and getting coverage in the media. However, the large majority of their links come from their affiliates. Who are their affiliates? Well, web site owners who have signed up to place a link to amazon.com on their web site in exchange for a percentage (5-15% in this case) of sales that originate from their web site.

The great thing about affiliate programs is that (in a Cost Per Acquisition, or CPA, model at least) you do not pay a thing until after you've made a sale. So as long as your customers pre-pay, you already receive the revenue to pay the affiliate in your bank account before their commission is due. In other words, as long as your supply chain and customer service can handle it, you will be able to afford an unlimited amount of advertising and can potentially have a sales team of thousands marketing and selling your product. Sure beats the in house sales representatives of old (though they still may have a place).

*Marketing tip:* With affiliate programs, as long as your supply chain and customer service can handle it, you will be able to afford an unlimited amount of advertising and can potentially have a sales team of thousands marketing and selling your product. This can be very powerful.

If you are not selling a product or service, then you will not be able to build links in this manner, however, for anyone selling anything online, having an affiliate program is a must. An affiliate program can not only do wonders for sales, but it can also give you thousands of incoming links.

Building a successful affiliate program can take time, effort, promotion, and some money. However, once you have your program running with a few hundred affiliates you can put it on autodrive and guarantee yourself many thousands of dollars in sales each month. Out of the 9,118 links that I have built to a former client's site, approximately 6,500 are affiliate links. Affiliate programs are great for both building links and building sales.

For more information on developing your own affiliate program read my article, "Developing Your Affiliate Program" in the Marketing Online Resource Center at <http://www.zeromillion.com/marketing/>.

Personally, for affiliate programs, I have used both AssocTrac and My Own Affiliate Program and would recommend both. Information on these programs can be found at <http://www.edgepromote.com>.

No matter which affiliate software you use, do be make sure that the affiliate links are to *your* domain and not the affiliate software company's domain. If the affiliate links are not to your domain, your affiliate program will not help you build links.

## 17. Other Ideas for Building Links

Here are some ideas that can bring a few dozen or a few hundred links to your web site.

1. **Syndication of articles** – Write some articles on a topic you are knowledgeable and make them available on your website. Before and after each article, be sure to specify that anyone may syndicate the article on their web site as long as they include a link to your site (and your bio, if you wish). Email all your colleagues and associates to see if they would like to put your article on their site.
2. **Start a Sweepstakes** - Start your own sweepstakes on your site offering your product or services as the prize and submit your link to all the sweepstakes websites. This can bring you about fifty to one hundred links and be a great tool for collecting prospect information.
3. **Offer an award** – Create a small .gif award graphic and create certain criteria to be met to win your award. It could be for “Best Designed Rutabaga Site,” “Most Informative Llama Breeding Site,” or for anything you choose. Create an aura of exclusivity and make people want your reward and see it as something prestigious. Publicize the award through your homepage and as your traffic goes you should have quite a few applicants. Be selective who your winners are, but do give away your award often and whenever you find a qualified site. Be sure that winners link back to the award information page on your site or your home page. Have the HTML code available so the webmaster simply has to copy and paste the award onto their page.
4. **Brand yourself as an expert and do interviews** – Encourage someone you know to interview you and then put the interview up on your site. Soon other sites will be asking you to do interviews. In return for doing the interviews for other sites, ask them to link to you in your bio.
5. **Link to yourself on your other sites** – If you have more than one web site and are not yet doing this, make sure you link to every one of your sites on every one of your site. If they are not related simply make invisible links using a 1x1 pixel transparent graphic or a links page disconnected from the rest of the site. If you make a disconnected links page just make sure to submit this links page to the search engines so they'll find it.

## 18. Submitting Your Site to the Search Engines

It is generally going to take at least two weeks (working 3-5 hours each day) to build your initial base of 500-1000 links. It will take 4-8 weeks more for the search engines to index these sites that have linked to you. After you have a few hundred incoming links (and you have submitted the sites that have linked to you using SubmitExpress and optimized your web pages for the search engines) you can go ahead and use a program such as WebPosition Gold (<http://www.edgepromote.com>) to submit your web site (submit five pages a day each day until all your pages have been submitted) to the search engines.

For more information on optimizing a site for the search engines and obtaining top rankings in the search engines, read my “Guide to Obtaining a #1 Search Engine Ranking.” You can learn more at <http://www.zeromillion.com/searchengines/>. I very much recommend this guide to anyone wanting to get top positions in the search engines for their targeted keywords.

## 19. Tracking Your Progress & Seeing who is Linking To You

As I said earlier, just because you have incoming links does not mean the search engines will know about each one right away. Even if you submit each page with a link to you to the search engines, it will still take between 4-10 weeks to "show up" in the search engines' databases.

So how do you links to your site have been indexed by the search engines?

You can use a utility at <http://www.linkpopularity.com> to determine the number of links to you from Altavista, Google, and Hotbot (however, due to recent changes in the search engines the Hotbot and Google results will not be accurate or present at all unless you click through to the actual sites).

You can also do this directly by typing in "link:http://www.yoursite.com" at altavista.com, "linkto:http://www.yoursite.com" at google.com or "http://www.yoursite.com" at hotbot.com.

You can also use a handy utility called Alexa to tell you not only how many incoming links you have to your site, but also the "ranking" of your site by traffic levels. This is also a good tool to tell you very quickly how popular the sites are of potential affiliates, strategic alliances, and competitors. You can download the Alexa toolbar at <http://www.alexa.com>. A similar toolbar by Google (<http://toolbar.google.com/>) will tell you the PageRank of each site, their measure of quality.

## 20. Complete Summary

Executing a well-planned linking strategy will benefit you with increased visitors coming to your web site, increased exposure within your target market(s), and better search engine rankings. However, to build lots of links to your web site you must be willing to invest the time (or money if you chose to hire someone) needed to do it right. There are no "get lots of links quick without any work schemes," however there are many "build hundreds and maybe thousands of links to your site in a few weeks" techniques.

With your own domain name, a professional design, and lots of quality content on your site and by following the steps outlined in this article you should be able to build 500 links by spending about 25 hours over a two week time period. Using more advanced strategies such as press releases and affiliate programs, and leveraging the power of time you will be able to build many thousand links to your site.

This link building process should commence only AFTER the design has been completed, lots of quality content added, and a working site running (no broken links, easy-to-use navigation, etc.) and BEFORE you submit your web site to the search engines (for top positions, submit your web

site to the search engines two weeks after you have submitted the first few hundred links to your sites).

In review, to build links your site, do the following...

1. Register your own domain name. Without one you have no credibility and will not be successful. You can do this through a hosting company such as [www.hostway.com](http://www.hostway.com), [www.verio.com](http://www.verio.com), or [www.olm.net](http://www.olm.net) or through a registrar such as [www.register.com](http://www.register.com) or [www.godaddy.com](http://www.godaddy.com)
2. Hire a professional to design and develop your site, or learn how to do it yourself by reading my article Domain and Web site Basics at <http://www.zeromillion.com/ebiz/domain-website-basics.html>. Make sure the design is professional, the site loads under 15 seconds on a 56k modem, and the navigation is constant and easy to use.
3. Develop lots (at least 20 articles/pages but preferably much more) of quality (and related) content for your web site. By obtaining permission to syndicate content from other sites you can build an extensive resource quickly.
4. Develop your reason(s) to link. Why would a site want to link yours? What is in it for them? Will you be offering reciprocal links, paying those who link to you, hoping for links from those who see your site as a top quality resource, or all of the above?
5. Find potential link partners by either using the search engines to search for related sites or by using an automation program such as LinkPartner Pro (big time saver but you must be careful and follow instructions given in this guide closely)
6. Either email these potential partners one-by-one (very time consuming) or develop a spreadsheet (in Excel or the Works spreadsheet) or simply a comma separated value text file with the following fields: [email] [web site]. LinkPartner Pro will develop this database automatically once you confirm each entry's relevance by double-clicking on each entry and viewing each web site. Information on how to do this can be found in section seven above.
7. Once you have developed your database, use a mail merge emailer such as Mailloop or Postmaster Express to send out your email (email template found above) to all your potential link partners in a matter of minutes.
8. In your email to potential link partners, be sure to ask them to tell you on what web page they have placed the link to you. Go to these pages to check your link is there, then add their link to your web site. Never "forget" (either by mistake or purposely) to reciprocate the link or else your link will not last long and all this effort will have been for nothing.
9. Once you see your link on another page, take note (read: create database) of all the pages (use the exact web address, not just the domain) that have a link to you. Then, using SubmitExpress ([www.submitexpress.com](http://www.submitexpress.com)) submit these pages to the major search

- engines (it's free). This will take about 20 seconds for each page but will reduce the time it takes for the search engines to recognize that these pages are linking to you (usually by a number of weeks).
10. When you receive responses to your email, if someone requests to not be emailed again, take them off your database immediately. In keeping your database updated you must be organized and methodical. If not, you may be accused of sending UCE (spam).
  11. If someone has added a link to your site, add a link on your site to their site, then email them to thank them and tell them exactly where they can find their link. This is essential to make sure your link stays up. Install software such as Zeus (<http://www.edgepromote.com>) to make the process of adding links less task-intensive. You can always do it all by hand but this takes more time and makes it hard to update links.
  12. By now, you should have spent perhaps forty hours obtaining between 400 and 1400 links. This has been time very well spent. You will now (with the right optimization and submission practices) have a much greater chance at being in the top positions on your targeted keywords in the search engines. You can now submit your site to the search engines using software such as WebPosition Gold. For more information on obtaining top search engine positions read my "Guide to Obtaining a #1 Search Engine Ranking" via <http://www.zeromillion.com/searchengines/>.
  13. You will also have built a critical mass of an initial stream of traffic that will enable you to make your first sales, develop a mailing list, and give you feedback on your site. This has taken you about two weeks to do and will take another 4-8 weeks to be recognized in the search engines. Now let's focus on how we can build thousands more links over the course of the next few months.
  14. Use the Zeus Collective database ([www.zeuscollective.com](http://www.zeuscollective.com)) to find related sites. All the sites in this database own the Zeus software and are willing to link to related sites. This should enable you to pick up a hundred or so more links.
  15. Go to [altavista.com](http://altavista.com) and type in "link:yourcompetitor.com." This will bring up a list of all the web sites that link to your competitors' web sites. Develop a database of these sites and follow the same process as before to build links on these sites. It is important to position yourself wherever your competitors are, if possible, to build both mindshare and marketshare.
  16. Find related message boards, forums, and online discussions and become a member. Post answers to questions and quality related articles you've written. Just five posts each day will build an additional 150 links to your site each month. Over time this can really add up. Don't blatantly advertise. Rather, become a contributor to the communities, visit often, post often, and offer your expertise. This will build not only links, but also rapport and sales.

17. Having a well-executed publicity campaign can also add many hundreds of top quality links. However, don't just send out press releases just to get links. Either hire a publicist or spend some time on your own building relationships, offering yourself as a resource, making contacts, and doing something that is really newsworthy BEFORE you send out your press release. Read my article "Publicity Success" before you begin your publicity campaign. Executed properly, publicity will not only bring you thousands of links, but also many many sales.
18. If you are selling a product or offering a service on your web site, you must to have an affiliate program. Done right, an affiliate program can provide you with a sales force thousands strong whom you only pay after they make the sale (using only part of the profits from the sale) and provide you with thousands of incoming links. Read my article, "Developing Your Affiliate Program" at <http://www.zeromillion.com/webmarketing/affiliate-program.html> for more information.
19. You can build additional links by promoting a sweepstakes, offering an award, making your articles available for syndication on other sites, doing interviews, and cross-linking all your web sites.
20. You can use tools such as [www.linkpopularity.com](http://www.linkpopularity.com), the Alexa Toolbar (<http://download.alexa.com>) and the Google Toolbar (<http://toolbar.google.com>) to determine the number of links to your web site.
21. Print out a copy of this guide, and most importantly, take action now!

If you have made it to this point and have yet to take action, I encourage you to put this aside and get working. Use this as a reference and companion as your progress through each step. If you are trying to build just a few dozen links to your site it may only take a few hours of your time. However, if you want to build a few thousand, you will have to make a concerted effort of hundreds of hours and be continuously working at it.

Thank you very much for reading this guide. I wish you the best in all your ventures.

Warm regards,  
Ryan P. Allis, Founder  
<http://www.zeromillion.com>

P.S.: I invite to our Web Marketing Discussion Forum in the Entrepreneurship Community at <http://www.zeromillion.com/community/>. You can post your questions on building links, search engine optimization, or just web marketing in general and I'll answer them myself.

## Appendix A: Linking Glossary

**Affiliate Program** – Software that enables a business to pay affiliates a percentage or specific amount per sale. This is an effective way of obtaining incoming links.

**Cost Per Click (CPC)** – Search engines which display results not by relevancy but by the amount advertisers are willing to pay to be listed on each search term. The number or quality of links is not taken into account in these listings.

**Content Syndication** – Either offering your own content for use on other sites in exchange for a plug or link or using content from other sites with permission. This is a good strategy and effective quid pro quo for both parties. One receives free publicity and the other receives unique and quality articles for keyword optimization without having to write each proprietarily. Offering your articles on other web sites is a great way to build incoming links.

**Crawler** – *see Spider*

**Database** – A collection of data in tables stored on a server. Generally content within a database is not able to be indexed by the search engines.

**Domain Name** – The top level web address or uniform resource locator (URL) that corresponds in the DNS records to the IP address where the site is hosted. Yahoo.com is a domain name, www.yahoo.com is a web address.

**File Transfer Protocol (FTP)** – The means through which web pages are uploaded to a server.

**Image Maps** – A single image broken up into parts, or slices. These are often used for navigation. Different areas of a single image can be linked to different pages.

**Incoming link** – A link on another web site that is to your web site.

**Indexing** – The act of a search engine spider listing your site in its database so it will show up in search results

**Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML)** – A basic programming language used to create web pages. Optimizing the HTML code on a page is essential for obtaining top search engine rankings.

**Hyperlinks** – Text or images that, when clicked on, take the visitor to another web site or page within your site. These are most commonly known as simply links. The more web sites that link to your web site, the higher your search engine rankings.

**JavaScript** – A coding language used within browsers for various effects.

Keyword – A term for which you want your site to show up in the search engines results when searched.

Links – *see Hyperlinks*

Link Partners – Other web sites with whom you have exchanged links with.

Link Popularity – The number of other web pages that link to your web site. Search engines view links as votes of confidence so the more links you can obtain, the better. You should avoid low quality links from places such as Free For All (FFA) pages and link farms.

Link Reputation – The quality of the incoming links to your site. The more closely related and greater trafficked sites you can obtain sites from, the better your link reputation and the higher your rankings.

Off-site optimization – Optimizing factors such as domain name, link popularity, and link reputation that cannot be changed through modifications in the HTML code.

On-site optimization – Optimizing by modifying page source code factors such as keyword frequency, keyword prominence, title, meta tags, body copy, alt-tags, navigation, etc.

Pay Per Click (PPC) – *see Cost Per Click*

Ranking – The number that your web site is listed for a specific search term in a specific search engine.

Ranking Algorithm – The proprietary mathematical formulas, variables, and set of weights that a search engines uses to determine a site's ranking for a keyword search. Search engines guard these carefully. The number and quality of incoming links to a page are a significant part of a ranking.

Registrar – Company through which you can register domain names

Search Engine – a utility that enables a user to quickly search the Internet to find web sites on searched for topics.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) – The act of optimizing a webpage and/or web site to perform well in the search engines. There is a growing niche of consultants and firms who specialize in this. Building links is part of off-site optimization.

Search Term – *See Keyword*

Site Map – A page on a web site that lists and links to every other page on that web site.

Source Code – The code of a web page.

Spider – A software robot that continuously crawls pages on the Internet and collects data that will be analyzed using a ranking algorithm.

## Appendix B: Resources and Mentioned Links

**Alexa Toolbar** - <http://download.alexa.com>

Toolbar for Internet Explorer which will tell you the Alexa ranking of the site you are on. This is useful for determining the quality and number of visits the site receives.

**Altavista** – <http://www.altavista.com>

A search engine known for its extensive number of pages indexed and collection of images, audio, and video.

**AssocTrac Affiliate Program** – <http://www.edgepromote.com>

Two tier affiliate program in which all affiliate links are to the owner's site

**Bacon's Info** – <http://www.baconsinfo.com>

Resource for in-house management of press contacts.

**BusinessWire** – <http://www.businesswire.com>

A news-release service.

**Eudora** – <http://www.eudora.com>

A popular email client good for managing link campaign replies.

**GoDaddy** – <http://www.godaddy.com>

An inexpensive registrant of domain names.

**Google Groups** – <http://groups.google.com>

A collection of Usenet newsgroups formerly at deja.com.

**Google Toolbar** - <http://toolbar.google.com>

Toolbar for Internet Explorer which will tell you the Alexa ranking of the site you are on. This is useful for determining the quality and number of visits the site receives.

**Hostway** – <http://www.hostway.com>

A mid-priced hosting company.

**Hotbot** – <http://www.hotbot.com>

Search engine with default results from Teoma.

**IntelliContact Pro** – <http://www.intellicontactpro.com>

Web-based email list management software that enables you to send out personalized updates, announcements, and newsletters to your subscribers from any computer, use mail merge, track campaigns, manage subscribers, and send both text and HTML emails.

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**Link Building Discussion** – <http://www.zeromillion.com/community/>

Discussion within the Web Marketing Forum in the Zeromillion.com Entrepreneurship Community.

**LinkPartner Pro** – <http://www.marketingtips.com/linkpartner/>

Software that automates the task of going through the search engines to find potential link partners.

**Linkpopularity.com** – <http://www.linkpopularity.com>

Web site that tells you the number of web sites who link to you.

**Mailloop** – <http://www.edgepromote.com>

Emailing software that enables you to run newsletters, autoresponders, and email filters from your desktop. Can be used for sending mail merge linking requests.

**MediaMap** – <http://www.mediamap.com>

Searchable database of press contacts.

**My Own Affiliate Program** – <http://www.edgepromote.com>

Affiliate software for which the affiliate link is to the web site owner's domain and not their domain, improving link popularity.

**Postmaster Express** – <http://www.onlineautomation.com>

Mail merge emailing software that can be used for sending linking requests. Free trial gives ten mailings.

**PR Newswire** – <http://www.prnewswire.com>

News release distribution service

**Register.com** – <http://www.register.com>

A mid-priced registrant of domain-names

**Search Engine Guide** – <http://www.zeromillion.com/searchengines/>

Guide on obtaining a number one ranking in the search engines. Companion guide to this report.

**Search Engine Watch** – <http://www.searchenginewatch.com>

One of the oldest and most resourceful sites for information on search engines and search engine optimization.

**Search Engine Suggestion Tool**

Utility from Overture that provides related keywords and search data.

**SubmitExpress.com** – <http://www.submitexpress.com>

A site which provides free search engine submission to six of the top ten major search engines. Follow the provided links in this guide for the other four. Using this site is an easy way to submit

sites that link to you so they are indexed by the search engine spiders and your links are recognized sooner.

**Verio** – <http://www.verio.com>

A high-end hosting provider.

**Web Marketing Resource Center** – <http://www.zeromillion.com/webmarketing/>

Here you can read all the web marketing articles by author Ryan P. Allis and sign up for their newsletter, Web Marketing Monthly.

**WebPosition Gold** – <http://www.edgepromote.com>

The de facto standard for web site submission, optimization critiquing and rank monitoring software. A highly recommended tool for submitting your own site to the search engines.

**WorldMerge** – <http://www.worldmerge.com>

Mail merge emailing software that can be used for sending linking requests.

**Yahoo Groups** – <http://groups.yahoo.com>

Usenet style community that originated from Egroups.

**Zeus Collective** – <http://www.zeuscollective.com>

Database of all Zeus-created link directories.

**Zeus Link Manager** – <http://www.edgepromote.com>

Software which automates the process of developing and maintaining a link directory

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*About the author:* Ryan P. Allis, 18, is a first year student at the

President of Virante, Inc. (<http://www.virante.com>) an ebusiness marketing consulting firm, founder of <http://www.zeromillion.com>, and founder of The Entrepreneurs Coalition (<http://www.entrecoalition.org>), a nonprofit organization dedicated to building an international network of entrepreneurs. Ryan is in the process of writing his first book, *Zero to One Million*, an extended case study on how he brought a one product and one person company to sales of one million dollars in one year. Ryan can be reached at [ryan@ryanallis.com](mailto:ryan@ryanallis.com).

**Link Building Discussion** - Have questions on building links to your site or web marketing in general? Come talk with other entrepreneurs, small business owners, and marketers in the Web Marketing Forum in the Entrepreneurship Community at <http://www.zeromillion.com/community/>.

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