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Article

Successful Companies Find the Missing Link

Quality back links, link farms, bulk links – what does it all mean in a world where search engine optimization is the key to web prosperity?

While the issues that surround back links can be confusing, the idea itself is fairly simple. A back link is a hyperlink from someone else's webpage *back* to your webpage. A kind of a virtual nod of the head to you from another website who uses your content as reference, inspiration or just plain likes your site. Sounds like a great idea, a community building network of shared intellectual property all giving credit where credit is due? As with all great ideas, someone decided a shortcut was needed and the era of the 'link farm' emerged.

A link farm is a group of websites that all link to each other or, in its most basic form, a webpage that is nothing but links to other pages. Early on, as developers were testing the boundaries of search engine optimization the goal was quantity over quality when it came to back links. However, as the ranking process used by search engines evolved, the quality of back links became increasingly important. Link farms are now collectively frowned upon, and the big players, like Google, consider them akin to spam and linking to them may negatively affect your site's ranking.

Now for the good news: creating quality back links isn't as hard as it sounds, and once you know the right way to do it you will be well on your way to search engine optimization. The golden rule is to first write good quality information that people want to read: be thoughtful, original and informative. Remember that search engines look at both the quantity and quality of your back links, so don't try to forgo putting the time and effort into creating meaningful links. Some good ways to get quality back links: submit press releases and articles to multiple sources, post appropriate and relevant content on others' blogs and in forums, share your rich media with links as well.

Another good tip: when leaving back links in content be sure to vary your links to get the most exposure to your site as possible. Do not just link to your homepage; be sure to link to the internal pages of your site as well. This will insure visitors find content that is relevant to the site that provided the back link as well as keeping your site in good standing with search engine rankings.

