



Delante

Report

THE MOST COMMON LINK BUILDING MISTAKES IN 2021

October 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

03	INTRODUCTION
04	ANALYZED WEBSITES
08	MOST COMMON LINK BUILDING MISTAKES
40	OTHER LINK BUILDING MISTAKES
45	EXPERT COMMENTARY
52	TAKEAWAYS
53	A FEW TIPS
55	AUTHORS OF THE REPORT



**A report with the most
common link building
mistakes based on an
analysis of 50 websites**



INTRODUCTION

When analyzing the selected websites for SEO improvements, we noticed a pattern of mistakes and how those mistakes hindered the process of reaching top Google ranking. This time, we decided to dig deeper, and looked "outside" the website architecture, and analyzed their link building.

Link building is about obtaining backlinks to the site. It's an integral part of the SEO process that complements on-site activities. Although it's been known for a few years that it's about the quality, not the quantity, when analyzing websites, we still encounter recurring mistakes related to link profiles.

For this reason, we have created the following report that will show you the most common link-building mistakes and effective ways to eliminate them. Additionally, we have collected expert comments for an added bonus.

ANALYZED WEBSITES

In preparation of this report, Delante analyzed 50 company websites of clients that reached out to us for SEO assistance during the 3rd quarter of 2021. In this analysis, we concentrated on pages that required link building improvement. We did not include websites without or with limited backlinks.



50

Analyzed websites

Selected inbound marketing leads from the past 3 months.



8202

The average number of indexed subpages

The smallest website had 1 subpage, the greatest one 43600.



74%

Of websites have had links from min. 3 years

The remaining websites or backlinks were developed later. We didn't analyze websites without links.

ANALYZED WEBSITES



36

Average UR

URL Rating – Ahrefs' metric



32

Average DR

Domain Rating – Ahrefs' metric



28

Average DA

Domain Authority – MOZ's metric



33

Average PA

Page Authority – MOZ's metric

ANALYZED WEBSITES



93016

The average number of
backlinks

According to Ahrefs



1015

The average number of
referring domains

According to Ahrefs



4966

The average number of
organic keywords

According to Ahrefs



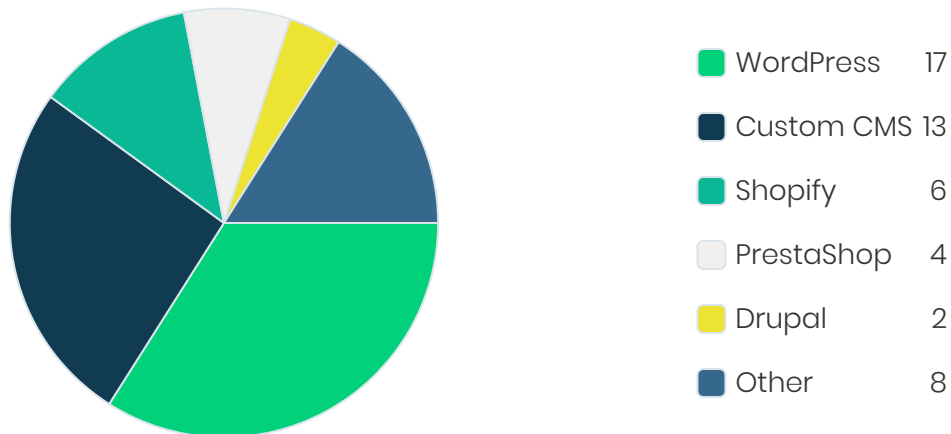
8601

The average organic
traffic

According to Ahrefs

ANALYZED WEBSITES

Analyzed websites CMSES



Industries

IT/Software - 6 sites
Finances - 4 sites
Industrial - 3 sites
Tobacco - 3 sites
Online Reviews - 2 sites
Medical - 2 sites

Rental - 2 sites
HR - 2 sites
Home & Decor - 2 sites
Marketing - 2 sites
Electronics - 2 sites
Lightning - 2 sites
Others - 1 site each

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#1 Linking mainly to the main page



Why this mistake should be avoided

At the beginning of the SEO process, linking to the landing page is crucial. The landing page has the greatest link juice and it can transfer traffic to other subpages within your website. However, in the long run, you shouldn't focus solely on backlinks to the landing page in your overall SEO strategy.

There are a few reasons why this should be avoided. First of all, when linking only to the landing page, you link on the same phrases. As a result, you may improve the positions of keywords matching your landing page. However, you may not be improving the position of your individual product or category subpages keywords. By the use of long-tail keyword phrases that are less competitive in search engine rankings, it's easier to improve their positions and be ranked in the TOP10 search results.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#1 Linking mainly to the main page

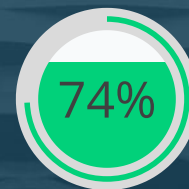


How to fix the mistake

When building valuable backlinks to your site, remember the importance of long tail SEO. At the very beginning of your activities, it's worth improving your landing page parameters. However, your next focus should be on subpages that generate the greatest traffic to your website. With this strategy, your linking will be much more effective than linking solely to the landing page.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#2 Linking from pages weaker than your website



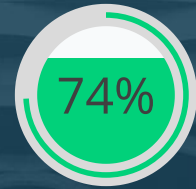
Why this mistake should be avoided

Apart from the number of backlinks and linking domains, it's important to consider their quality. Links are evaluated based on various criteria such as organic traffic, website visibility in the search results, or other parameters measured by external tools: DA & PA (MOZ), TF (Majestic), DR & UR (Ahrefs). Backlinks coming from better-ranked websites than yours will always be the most valuable and will help you improve selected parameters. Using common-sense you can estimate that a backlink from e.g. CNN will bring you more profits than a link from a spammy forum or a newly launched blog on an unknown domain.

If some of the websites linking to you don't have impressive parameters, it may not negatively affect your website rankings. It's normal to have some of these backlinks. However, if these backlinks constitute the vast majority or come from pages with incredibly low parameters, they can have a negative impact on your page visibility and traffic. It's recommended that you concentrate on removing sites full of spam from your link profile.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#2 Linking from pages weaker than your website



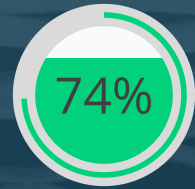
How to fix the mistake

First of all, when obtaining backlinks to your website, try to select pages with satisfactory parameters. Analyze your links with the use of e.g. Ahrefs, see how much poor quality backlinks you have, and consider removing the worst or spammy ones.

If you have created the backlinks yourself, it'll be best to remove them manually. Sometimes you may try to contact the page owner and ask for removing the backlink. If it's not possible, check out Webmaster Disavow Tool that can be used to disavow backlinks taken into account when ranking the site in Google.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#3 Linking from one source



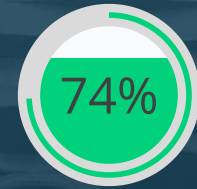
Why this mistake should be avoided

The linking process is supposed to reflect your website's popularity. Simply, it can be said that the more high-quality backlinks you have, the more valuable your website is considered which causes more people to talk about it and link to your content (articles, products, photos, or landing page).

At this stage, it's crucial to differentiate between a website and a domain. When linking from one place, you'll have a lot of backlinks, but all of them will be from the same domain. It's not particularly important whether you obtain 5 or 100 backlinks from this domain. Each subsequent backlink has less link juice. Therefore, it also has less impact on your website and its parameters.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#3 Linking from one source

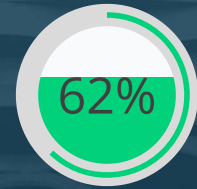


How to fix the mistake

Diversify backlink sources typical of your brand and obtain backlinks from a variety of domains. For example, when talking about 5 backlinks, it's best to acquire them from 5 different domains related thematically (of course, it's helpful to assess their quality beforehand). For this purpose, you can analyze their visibility in SEMSTORM or Senuto). If you have already obtained numerous backlinks from one domain, it's usually not required to delete them. However, beware that each subsequent backlink brings you less value. Focus on expanding your link profile.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#4 Rapid increase or decrease in the number of links



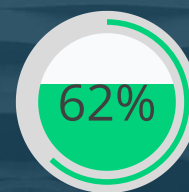
Why this mistake should be avoided

The proper dynamics of backlinks is an important ranking factor. A natural increase in backlinks to a given website is directly proportional to time. The chart with domains and backlinks should be proportional. Backlinks should be built gradually, according to a strategic plan. It's ideal if your backlink database develops together with the website (SEO, content, etc.) over time.

A rapid increase in backlinks is defined as a trend that doesn't correspond to website positions in the search results and isn't similar to website traffic. An improvement in your positions in the SERPs should translate into an improvement in the number of backlinks. A rapid increase in the backlinks to the site is dangerous as Google may categorize it as unnatural. If you have a new website without any history or strong parameters and the number of its backlinks is relatively high from the very outset, it can do more harm than good.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#4 Rapid increase or decrease in the number of links



How to fix the mistake

To fix the mistake, you need to thoroughly analyze domain history and link profile. Pay particular attention to suspicious peaks that significantly stand out in comparison to previous months. It's frequently caused by situations when your website has a lot of backlinks from a sidebar or footer of another page. In this case, your website acquires a lot of backlinks over a short time. However, they come from one domain.

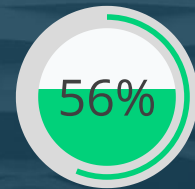
When developing a natural link building strategy, it's necessary to determine individual link velocity, meaning the rate of link growth for the domain. The number of backlinks and their link profile is unique aspect of each domain. When working on a long-term process, it's worth considering:

- Historical growth rate of referring pages
- Historical growth rate of referring domains
- Link parameters
- Link profile and its characteristics
- Website visibility and popularity
- Dynamics of the link growth rate in the industry (based on competitive analysis).

It's also necessary to conduct page audits approximately every 6 months to analyze trends and devise appropriate solutions. In case of domains with poor quality links (that appeared historically or were artificially created by dishonest market rivals), you should consider which activities could be helpful in the process of removing such backlinks.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#5 The inappropriate ratio of dofollow to nofollow



Why this mistake should be avoided

To add a backlink in HTML, you need to use the `<a>` tag that makes it possible to create a hyperlink to another website or subpage within a specific site. The tag can be enriched with a few additional attributes that aim to e.g. modify the design, determine the search engine behavior once users click on the link and send signals to search engine robots.

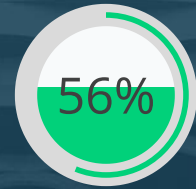
`Rel="nofollow"` is one of such parameters.

The nofollow attribute should be applied each time when you create internal links, on subpages that aren't important SEO-wise (e.g. the privacy policy or various terms and conditions). On the other hand, dofollow links should be created each time you want to transfer the power of your website to another website or subpage within your site.

Nevertheless, it's crucial to stay moderate when creating backlinks. Google has numerously emphasized that its algorithms appreciate domains that stand out thanks to a diversified external link profile. That's why it's not advisable to apply links solely with the nofollow attribute. According to Google, such action is unnatural and can have a negative impact on page visibility.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#5 The inappropriate ratio of dofollow to nofollow

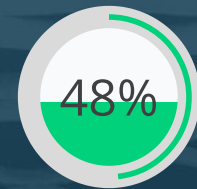


How to fix the mistake

Start with an analysis of dofollow and nofollow backlinks to your website – for this purpose, you can benefit from external tools such as Ahrefs. With this data in mind, remember to obtain backlinks with both nofollow (e.g. social media links) and dofollow (e.g. paid articles) attributes.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#6 Incorrect anchor cloud



Why this mistake should be avoided

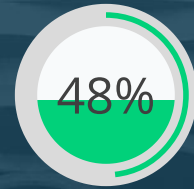
The anchor cloud of your website can be checked with the help of Ahrefs. Incorrect diversification of anchor links can be observed when you have a lot of backlinks on keywords, and you don't have many brand links or simple URLs. The order also matters. When talking about an ideal proportion, the landing page address should be first, then its name, and only then individual keywords important for your page.

The anchor cloud should be as natural as possible, and it should reflect a natural linking process. Users frequently link to a plain URL as they simply paste the link to a selected location. Therefore, the landing page address should be first in the anchor cloud. A correct anchor cloud also includes keywords, but it's important to keep them diversified. Combine a keyword + brand or keywords + price.

This mistake is relevant because an incorrect and not diversified anchor cloud can be perceived by Google as manipulation and it can impose a penalty on your website.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#6 Incorrect anchor cloud



How to fix the mistake

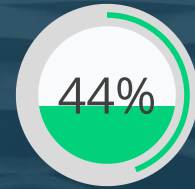
First of all, when creating links and anchors, make sure they are natural. It's important to keep an appropriate balance between anchors for individual keywords and URLs of the domain. The anchor cloud should be properly developed. Take care of the right link profile - apply anchors and plain URLs in relevant proportions, generate both dofollow and nofollow links.

When creating anchor links, it's worth putting yourself in the recipient's shoes and thinking if the link can be valuable for users. Keep appropriate proportions between individual types of links such as:

- EMA (exact match - with an exact keyword),
- Brand (the name of your company/website),
- Mixed (a mix of brand and EMA links),
- Plain URLs.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#7 Decreased DR



Why this mistake should be avoided

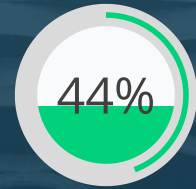
A decreased Domain Rating means that your link profile has been negatively evaluated by Ahrefs. In actuality, it can indicate a few things. The three most important factors affecting the DR of your website and provided by the tool include:

- The number of unique domains linking to your website (referring domains) – it's important to mention that Ahrefs analyzes only follow links. It doesn't count the ones marked as rel="nofollow," "UGC" or "sponsored."
- DR of the linking domains. Remember that this indicator can increase over time, therefore, the power of backlinks to your website can also improve.
- The number of pages the domain links to with the follow link. The more pages, the smaller the link power.

As we know from the description of the first mistake, there is a visible relation between your website rankings in the search results and DR. However, Ahrefs warns that it's better not to focus only on DR. It's crucial to check if your organic traffic and website visibility also decrease. If so, you may look for reasons and try to fix the mistake.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#7 Decreased DR



How to fix the mistake

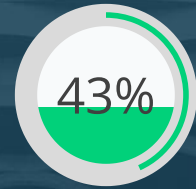
It's crucial to quickly determine the reasons for the decrease. Check if some of the backlinks weren't deleted or if you didn't accidentally remove subpages the backlinks led to and if there are no broken links. Maybe new backlinks come from poor-quality websites? They don't necessarily have to be created by you - backlinks can also be natural (e.g. when someone mentions your product on a forum that isn't particularly valuable or your website has been hacked and so on).

Sometimes the update of Ahrefs may also contribute to a decrease in DR. Check their website to see if they haven't modified their parameters and juxtaposed your Domain Rating with the results of your market rivals.

Once you find the reason, try to counteract. Build links to specific subpages you want to focus on and obtain backlinks from authoritative, top-quality pages.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#8 Redirect chains



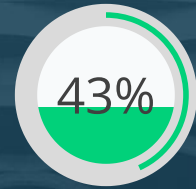
Why this mistake should be avoided

301 redirects only transfer about 90% of link juice. When dealing with multiple redirects – because this is what redirect chains are in reality – the link juice that reaches a particular website may be significantly lower. Let's assume that an exemplary backlink juice is 100. With one redirect, the juice will decrease to 90, with two to 81, and with three to 73.

Additionally, Google bots may not be able to reach the destination page if the redirect chain is too long.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#8 Redirect chains



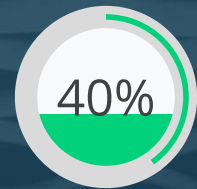
How to fix the mistake

Such a situation may take place as a result of URL reorganization or website migration. In this case, it's crucial to set redirects. However, if you have a possibility to update links so that they lead directly to the current URL, it's worth doing it. You can always modify internal linking within your site accordingly.

External links that lead to your website via redirects can be identified with the help of Ahrefs, whereas internal links may be checked with crawling tools like Screaming Frog.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#9 Significant disproportion between linking domains and backlinks



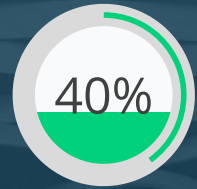
Why this mistake should be avoided

In most cases, this disproportion means that there are far more backlinks than linking domains. In this situation, it's worth noting that Google focuses mainly on the number of linking domains and not links. Therefore, it pays greater attention to the linking platforms and their parameters. This is more important than having one domain with 1,000 backlinks.

For example, if you obtain a backlink from a given domain e.g. a forum, the backlink may appear not only in a single post but also in recent ones. This means that there is one domain that links to you, but there are a few backlinks. In this case, Google will focus on the quality of this domain, not on the number of links. That's why high-quality domains can boost your website parameters, and you should focus on them.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#9 Significant disproportion between linking domains and backlinks

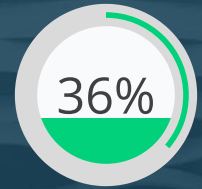


How to fix the mistake

Don't link from the same websites, diversify your sources and change channels. Focus on acquiring quality linking domains with a similar subject matter. Make sure that they have better parameters than your website. It's more relevant than the number of backlinks. Pay attention to the content that links to your page. Is it unique and substantial? Last but not least, increase the number of backlinks and linking domains gradually and proportionally.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#10 Too rapid increase or decrease in the number of the domains



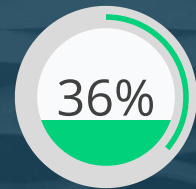
Why this mistake should be avoided

Today, linking should be mainly natural – a too rapid increase or decrease in the number of linking domains is a warning sign informing Google that something may be wrong, and the search engine may decide to impose a filter on your page. The number of domains should increase gradually, especially when talking about new websites that aren't fully trustworthy for Google.

If you noticed a rapid increase in the number of linking domains, but you aren't sure what's the reason for that, it's worth examining it. In many cases, such a situation may be caused by a hacker attack. Tools will help you detect it.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#10 Too rapid increase or decrease in the number of the domains



How to fix the mistake

First of all, don't act blindly. Think through, plan, and carefully implement your link building strategy. Control your link profile with the help of tools and make sure that the number of domains doesn't increase or decrease too rapidly over a short period of time.

An ideal linking domain chart grows regularly and gradually. Then, both you and Google know that domains improve proportionally and naturally for the search engine. Link building isn't automatic. It shows the website is more and more popular and Google should display it higher and higher.

If you notice any irregularities that don't result from your linking strategy, devote some time to analysis. The problem may be caused by a hacker attack or incorrect redirects (e.g. HTTP -> https).

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#11 Backlinks from spammy websites



Why this mistake should be avoided

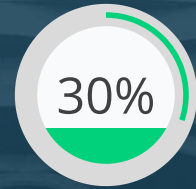
Backlinks from spammy websites can be very dangerous for your site. In most cases, they come from poor-quality pages that have a negative impact on your reliability and link building process.

The Penguin algorithm introduced in 2012 is supposed to limit the amount of spam. Instead of imposing penalties, it devalues spammy links. However, if too many poor quality backlinks lead to your website, the search engine may devalue all the links. Such a scenario will have a negative impact on both internal and external linking and will decrease your website position in the search results.

If Google decides that you generate backlinks from spammy websites or are otherwise involved in activities that create spam, it may remove your website or its part (a filter imposed on a specific, spammed subpage).

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#11 Backlinks from spammy websites



How to fix the mistake

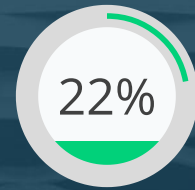
First of all, make sure that you regularly check with the help of tools such as Ahrefs if you have any backlinks from spammy websites. If you find any suspicious links, delete them. If your website has been hacked, you may also notice such links. If you don't check Ahrefs, you may notice spammy backlinks in Search Console, when Google imposes a manual penalty on your page.

To get rid of spammy links, contact the page admin where the backlinks are and ask him/her to delete them. In this case, it's important to thoroughly describe your request and explain which backlink is supposed to be removed.

Using the Disavow tool is another way to get rid of spammy backlinks. For this purpose, prepare a text file with all the backlinks you want to remove and then send it to the tool and wait till Google processes information. However, when going for this solution, you need to be careful as Google may delete the wrong backlinks.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#12 Linking via 302 redirects



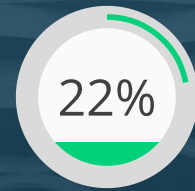
Why this mistake should be avoided

There are a few types of redirects between pages. 301 and 302 are considered to be the most important ones. 301 is the so-called permanent redirect, whereas 302 is temporary.

This means that Google robots don't perceive it as a permanent redirect. Therefore, both the old and new addresses are available in the index, which may increase external duplication. Moreover, 302 redirects don't transfer link juice. When creating backlinks to your site with the use of these redirects, you don't improve your link juice. So, linking doesn't bring the intended results. Therefore, linking via 302 redirects is a serious mistake.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#12 Linking via 302 redirects

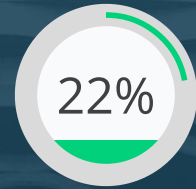


How to fix the mistake

In order to avoid this mistake, remember that if you created a link to a website that is deleted or you want to redirect users to another page, you should benefit from 301 redirects, not 302. It's important because this type of redirect transfers link juice. Types of redirects between individual pages can be checked with external tools like <https://status.io>

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#13 Linking from wrong countries



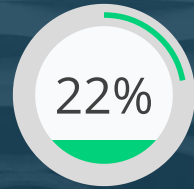
Why this mistake should be avoided

Undertaken linking activities should be directly linked to the geolocation of the domain you link to and the language matching the website content. Simply, backlinks should come from domains directly connected to the geolocation of users who usually visit your page.

If you have a ccTLD (country) domain, you should link to it in a similar way users would normally share content. Search engine crawlers collect information on user location. Therefore, if you make sure that your backlink profile corresponds to the country domain, the robots will display it higher in the search engine.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#13 Linking from wrong countries



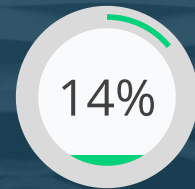
How to fix the mistake

If your ccTLD domain (e.g., .com) has a few backlinks from domains from different countries (.de, .fr), it's not a problem that could affect your position in the search results. After all, it's natural that international pages can also link to your website.

Here, it's worth mentioning gTLD links from generic domains are usually global. Social media such as facebook.com or twitter.com are good examples. In this case, the language of the message and domain is the key. If you use these platforms to publish content in the same language as the language of your domain and you communicate with users who also visit your website, these links are beneficial and you shouldn't be afraid of them.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#14 Low parameters (e.g. UR, DR)



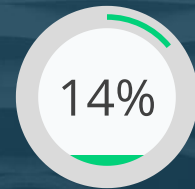
Why this mistake should be avoided

Domain Rating and URL Rating are two Ahrefs' metrics. DR evaluates your website link profile (the number and quality of links), whereas UR focuses on individual subpages. They analyze both internal and external links. Next, they compare your website with other pages in the Ahrefs' database and assess it with the use of a logarithmic scale from 1 to 100. The higher the parameters (especially DR), the more link juice is transferred to the site you link to.

Unfortunately, people still forget to check domain parameters and do link building without it. However, we live in times where a large amount of backlinks is not enough anymore. Instead, it's crucial to focus on their quality. Why? Because it may affect your website position in Google. Ahrefs shows a common relation between DR and UR parameters and the number of key phrases the website is ranked for.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#14 Low parameters (e.g. UR, DR)



How to fix the mistake

You create backlinks because you want to improve your domain authority and visibility. Therefore, when considering linking domains, it's worth choosing places with the highest possible parameters that are obviously better than your metrics. This way, you boost your UR and DR. If websites linking to your page have low parameters, they can have a negative impact on your metrics which will consequently translate into decreased page visibility and positions in the search results.

Apart from that, focus on the number of backlinks generated by a website you chose. The more backlinks, the lower the link juice (e.g. if DR of a website linking to your page equals 30 and there are only a few backlinks, it can bring greater results than choosing a page whose DR amounts to 60 but there are a thousand of backlinks). The number of unique domains that link to your website is also more relevant. It's better to obtain 10 links from various valuable domains than to have 100 links from one site.

In our report, we focused on metrics prepared by Ahrefs. However, to analyze the quality of backlinks or linking domains, it's crucial to take into account various parameters such as Domain Authority and Page Authority devised by Moz as well as Trust Flow and Citation Flow by Majestic. Apart from that, it's advisable to check the visibility and traffic of the linking domains.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#15 Spam score higher than 10%



14%

Why this mistake should be avoided

The spam score is a metric developed by Moz with the use of Machine Learning. It calculates the risk of being penalized by Google based on features of similar pages that were penalized. To estimate the spam score, the tool analyzes 27 factors such as:

- A small number of subpages
- Presence of e-mail addresses on the page
- Length of meta descriptions and titles
- Number of domains with backlinks to the site
- A high number of backlinks in relation to website content

Moz states that a spam score of up to 30% is acceptable. Delante's limit is only 10%.

A high spam score doesn't necessarily mean that your website will be penalized, but it suggests that it's worth checking it.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#15 Spam score higher than 10%



How to fix the mistake

Analyze your website based on parameters provided by Google and get rid of mistakes. Saturate your page with high-quality content. Don't obtain backlinks from sites with high spam scores, naturally acquire them. Implement the SSL certificate, optimize metadata and add contact information that will make your company more reliable. Check your domain history as it may also increase your spam score.

All metrics taken into account when evaluating your spam score can be found on Moz's website.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#16 Many broken links



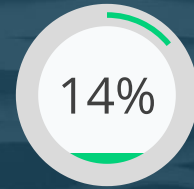
Why this mistake should be avoided

External links are categorized as a broken redirect to an address that generates 404 errors. Consequently, they don't bring any benefits to the website. What's more, they may inform Google that the website isn't updated regularly.

The same applies to internal links that lead to inactive URLs both within and outside your website. Additionally, they have a negative impact on UX and may translate into a higher bounce rate.

LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

#16 Many broken links



How to fix the mistake

It's best to edit broken links and add URLs that are up to date. This can be done if you created them yourself on your website, forums, or advertising platforms. If they were implemented by someone else on an external website and you aren't able to edit them, contact the administrator and ask to update the links. However, it's always necessary to add 301 redirects to URLs generating 404 errors. You can never be sure if you detected all broken links.

It's worth mentioning that the process of detecting external broken links can be a very effective way of acquiring new backlinks. If you find a blog entry with inactive links in the sources and your website is filled with sources that could replace this inactive content, it's worth reaching out to the author and offering him/her the update.

OTHER LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

Although we haven't mentioned them in the main part of the report, we would like to highlight mistakes that also appear on our customers' websites. Below, you can read a few words about other link building mistakes.

Too many anchors on the same keyword

Frequently, when trying to reach high positions for a selected phrase, customers forget that linking the same phrase all the time isn't enough to rank high. When creating backlinks to a given subpage, you should use a variety of keywords to make the link building process as natural as possible. For this purpose, you can benefit from specific words, synonyms, URLs, keywords + brands. If too many backlinks with the same anchor lead to a given subpage, Google will consider it manipulation and decrease the position of the keyword in the ranking. Additionally, Google may penalize your website for unnatural links.

The same anchor on various subpages

The appropriate selection of phrases is crucial in the link building process. A keyword tailored to a specific subpage should reflect its content. Therefore, it's not advisable to use the same anchor for different website subpages – anchors should always match specific subpages.

OTHER LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

Applying the same anchors on different subpages may cause cannibalization – a situation when two subpages are displayed for a specific phrase. However, both of them are ranked lower than one subpage.

Incorrect use of anchors

If anchors are applied incorrectly, you deprive the search engine of the possibility to evaluate the content of the subpage you link to. A well-thought-out linking strategy is a key to success. As a part of it, you should ensure that your link profile is diversified. Google may categorize a large number of backlinks with an anchor tailored to the key phrase as ranking manipulation. Therefore, it's worth taking your time to increase the number of plain URL links.

Linking from pages thematically unrelated

When planning your linking strategy, remember that Google pays particular attention to the topicality of domains linking to your website. Links work best if they are placed on platforms thematically related to your site (if you run a clothing store, backlinks from an industry Facebook group or a fashion blog may reap great benefit). Consequently, you should also work on your website content consistency. According to Topical Authority, Google ranks high websites with quality content devoted to the subject matter of the platform.

OTHER LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

Copying link content from other website or other links

Google appreciates quality, unique content that brings value to users. Therefore, it puts special emphasis on copyrights. As a result, texts copied from other websites simply don't work – also as a linking environment. Such activities may be perceived by Google as ranking manipulation. Each link needs unique content. Otherwise, Google will categorize all your links as duplicate content and if you apply the same content in 10 links, it'll take into account only one of them.

Using link exchange systems as the main linking tool

Google may consider the use of link-exchange systems as a black hat SEO technique that doesn't comply with the rules. As a result, it may impose a filter on the linking website.

Linguistic errors in links, using Google Translate

Content that surrounds a link has an impact on link juice. Make sure that your texts are quality and don't have any linguistic errors. Keywords should always be correct. If you link in a foreign language, don't use machine translators – they usually aren't 100% correct. Therefore, Google may categorize such links as unnatural.

OTHER LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

If you link in a foreign language, don't use machine translators - they usually aren't 100% correct. Therefore, Google may categorize such links as unnatural.

Your linking domain generates lots of backlinks to other websites

Platforms that generate a lot of backlinks to various domains frequently can't boast top quality. Such websites won't bring you any benefits. Sooner or later, Google will notice that these sites focus solely on creating backlinks, and it'll have a negative impact on your domain authority. What's more, it's worth keeping in mind that the more backlinks a given site generates, the smaller their link juice.

Not linking to tier links

If you create backlinks to your website, make sure you also create additional links to the originating backlink. This creates what is called a "backlink tier" making the originating backlink stronger. This way, you'll increase the chances that Google will index them. When you create your own content and articles, remember that they don't bring any value if they aren't indexed or if they have low parameters. Therefore, support them with additional links.

OTHER LINK BUILDING MISTAKES

Redirecting domains with no value and low parameters

In the past, people would buy domains (e.g. the ones that were inactive) from a similar industry and redirect them to their website or online store hoping that it would improve their parameters.

Unfortunately, these bought domains frequently didn't bring any value to the site because their history and parameters weren't satisfactory. Keep this in mind if you plan similar activities.

Links that aren't indexed don't work

The process of indexing backlinks to your website is actually the most important aspect of link building. Why? Even if you meet all the requirements, create good links, invest in content, find reliable platforms, it won't bring you any SEO benefits unless Google indexes the backlinks. It's worth keeping this in mind and doing your best to ensure that Google indexes your links. We know that it's not easy.

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

In your opinion, what is the importance of link building these days?

Link building is constantly evolving. However, it's still a crucial part of the SEO process. Only the rules change. In the past, a significant amount of links and linking domains was enough to reach high positions in the search results. Currently, just like any other SEO element, link building is more about relationships. This trend is particularly visible in the USA.

It's the end of the era of buying sponsored articles or links from places researched because of their parameters. It's more about outreach, stable relationships and backlinks from partners (not the ones that everyone can have).

Do you think it's still worth investing in link building, given the algorithm updates and the direction of Google's development?

Undoubtedly. I would even state that it's necessary to invest more. For some time now, we have observed a growing trend showing that Google appreciates mostly the quality, not the quantity of backlinks. It's obvious. Moreover, we also see that it's more than the quality. It's the user's interaction with the link.

What link building mistakes do you usually encounter?

Creating links on non-topically related websites, stemming from the desire to quickly achieve results. Looking at website parameters without analyzing its content is a big no, no. We came across backlinks to a law office placed on a sports platform. Sad, but true.



Milena Fietko

delante.pl

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

Obtaining links from domains that are open to anyone. In this respect, the resources of SEO agencies are quite limited because we usually don't deal with PR and outreach links. It's hard to explain to customers that the process of obtaining backlinks can take a lot of time and may result in only one link. Let's hope that people's approaches will change over time.

I also frequently encounter other standard mistakes that slowly become a relic of the past. For example, a few links on the same anchor which make the link profile unnatural (generally speaking, anchors usually aren't perceived as a natural part of link building). Omitted brand links (more and more SEO specialists realize that brand links, not keywords, are more natural. However, we can still encounter cases where (performance-based) specialists link mainly on anchors.

If you were to give one link building advice for 2021, what would it be?

Educate your customers and inform them about outreach and link building based on partnership and mutual recommendations. It's time to forget about traditional methods of acquiring large amounts of backlinks from domains that used to be popular. Now, such sites can only waste the time of SEO specialists and won't bring such spectacular results.



Milena Fietko

delante.pl

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

In your opinion, what is the importance of link building these days?

Without a shadow of a doubt, link building is an important part of the SEO strategy, however, its impact can be seen not only in Google Analytics, SEO metrics, or traffic statistics. More and more frequently, link building supports content and PR activities and it's considered to be an important part of marketing strategies. Apart from improving page visibility in Google, link building is supposed to increase your brand recognition, traffic, and conversion rate.

Do you think it's still worth investing in link building, given the algorithm updates and the direction of Google's development?

Of course! We could observe and we'll observe Google algorithm updates, everyone knows about it. Link building is doing very well, but it's evolving like every other aspect of marketing. It's not enough to obtain lots of links or exchange them. Such activities don't bring the intended results anymore if you don't analyze Google updates or prepare appropriate strategies.

What link building mistakes do you usually encounter?

On a daily basis, I'm closely involved in link building and I have noticed a few basic mistakes:

- **readiness for short-term cooperation** – of course, we don't always care about relationships or have enough time to build them, but quick actions frequently decrease the chances of link building cooperation in the future.



Kinga Edwards
linkhouse.co

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

- **no verification of websites for publication** – each website has statistics, however, they frequently aren't verified properly. It also works the other way round – link builders analyze e.g. only DR without taking into account website content or niche.
- **no strategy** – link building without an appropriate strategy, defined business objectives, organization, or priorities.

If you were to give one link building advice for 2021, what would it be?

Focus on relationships. Although it's time and money-consuming, it can pay off quicker than you expect.



Kinga Edwards
linkhouse.co

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

In your opinion, what is the importance of link building these days?

Extremely high (as it's always been).

Do you think it's still worth investing in link building, given the algorithm updates and the direction of Google's development?

Absolutely. But, link building should be considered outside of the typical realms. People see links as a means to an end. Think of links as a way to continue to build relevance, authority, and, with the right links, traffic into your site. People should invest in the RIGHT type of link building and stay clear of link farms and those guys who end up in your LinkedIn inbox with a spammy list of sites.

What link building mistakes do you usually encounter?

Lack of focus on the anchor text and control over the link that's built. People focus too heavily on DR which is a) a useless metric in isolation and b) easily inflated.

If you were to give one link building advice for 2021, what would it be?

Focus on relevance, traffic and, quality control. If you can diversify your link profile to look natural and mix between paid/natural/PR links; you're doing it right. Quality should always win. Pay attention to where your backlinks link to and think about if you'd like to be included in that neighborhood.



Ryan Darani
[Ryan Darani SEO](#)

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

In your opinion, what is the importance of link building these days?

Building trust with Google. Linkbuilding has always been important for establishing trust with Google. Newer parts of their algorithm have supplemented links, but none have been able to fully replace links.

Do you think it's still worth investing in link building, given the algorithm updates and the direction of Google's development?

Yes.

What link building mistakes do you usually encounter?

People engaging with **guest post farms**.

If you were to give one link building advice for 2021, what would it be?

Get more funky with data! SEOs generally have amazing heads for data. There are 1000s of publicly available datasets. Turn these data sets into something fun and interesting that journalists you're pitching to actually care about because let's face it; Phillip at The Guardian doesn't care about your new product launch or new offices open. He does however LOVE good data sets that will allow him to tell an awesome story.



Graham Grieve
[A1 SEO Glasgow](#)

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

In your opinion, what is the importance of link building these days?

Semantics, topical relevance, and E-A-T. PageRank will always be important to some extent, but not like it was in the past.

Do you think it's still worth investing in link building, given the algorithm updates and the direction of Google's development?

I think you should invest in creating content and experiences that will "build" links for you. Use Digital PR to speed things up if you like. Create fans and I promise they'll link.

What link building mistakes do you usually encounter?

Poor outreach methods and in-genuine messaging that clearly looks mass produced.

If you were to give one link building advice for 2021, what would it be?

You're not building links, you're building relationships with human beings. Stop emailing your outreach and pick up the phone or hop on Zoom!



Mike Ciffone
[Ciffone Digital](#)

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

In your opinion, what is the importance of link building these days?

This answer depends a lot in various industries and according to the website that you want to rank. I think it is still an important ranking factor that should be taken into consideration but not as the number 1 like 10 years ago. You need to take a more holistic approach.

Do you think it's still worth investing in link building, given the algorithm updates and the direction of Google's development?

You should try to make your website popular. You should try to make p.r. campaigns, have people talk about you on social media. Share your content and post (hopefully good reviews) about you. Now whether you want to call that link building or just marketing is up to you. Those are campaigns you should invest in. What you shouldn't do is invest in 60\$-100\$ guest post articles on 10 websites and expect to rank number 1.

What link building mistakes do you usually encounter?

One of the main errors that I see a lot happening to this day is trying to force links to landing pages that don't make sense with the post. Linking to one page needs to make sense and not be forced. Also many times companies pay for guest posts on websites that don't get any internal linking value at all.



**Antonis
Konstantinidis**
[Charlotte Tilbury](#)

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

If you were to give one link building advice for 2021, what would it be?

In link building, the SEO that wins is the one that thinks out of the box. If everyone right now is trying to get 10 posts with links to their website then try to get 10 posts on websites WITHOUT (yeah, I said it) any links. DO NOT follow the crowd. Lastly, use link building as a PART of your overall Search strategy, and don't forget all the other areas (Content, UX, Technical) as only then you might see results.



**Antonis
Konstantinidis**
[Charlotte Tilbury](#)

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

In your opinion, what is the importance of link building these days?

Link building is a bit of hit and miss and has seen a considerable amount of damage and success from it.

Do you think it's still worth investing in link building, given the algorithm updates and the direction of Google's development?

Yes. Link building is and will always be an important ranking factor.

What link building mistakes do you usually encounter?

Buying cheap links off Fiverr and then having 2124876 links from non relevant sites pointing towards you and destroying your online reputation.

If you were to give one link building advice for 2021, what would it be?

Quality over quantity. Think about link building like thinking about your reputation. Show me your 5 best friends and I will tell you who you are. A similar story should be true for link building.



Duray Pretorius
[Viaduct Generation](#)

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

In your opinion, what is the importance of link building these days?

Nothing has changed. Just like before, link building is an important ranking factor. Website optimization became even more crucial, however, links are still fuel without which even the finest vehicle won't go far.

On the other hand, the effectiveness of links decreased drastically. Now, it's hard to find a link that would directly translate into positions in the SERPs. The introduction of AI to recognize link types (sponsored, nofollow) made link building more difficult. Even a sizable budget can't solve this problem; some niches simply lack places where they could effectively obtain links.

During our tests, we've established that links can also bring counterproductive effects and cause decreases in the ranking. This concept is called toxicity, and while we are able to test our own sites, checking public pages that sell links is more complicated.

Do you think it's still worth investing in link building, given the algorithm updates and the direction of Google's development?

Yes, however, I would recommend focusing on creating your own base and benefiting from offers of websites that have high parameters but don't include too many backlinks.



**Maciej
Chmurkowski**
adinspire.com

EXPERTS' COMMENTARY

It's also known that link building looks differently for different countries and industries. Therefore, it's worth preparing SEO strategy for long tail or simple phrases and then scale it for target phrases.

What link building mistakes do you usually encounter?

Although we don't have too many customers, I have numerously prepared an offer or an introductory link audit.

The quantity and not the quality of backlinks is the first problem. Many SEO processes are still done without paying attention to the parameters of linking domains or their toxicity.

The so-called link pillowing is the second mistake - a natural link profile still works the best. This means that money keywords shouldn't dominate, your links and anchors should be diversified and long.

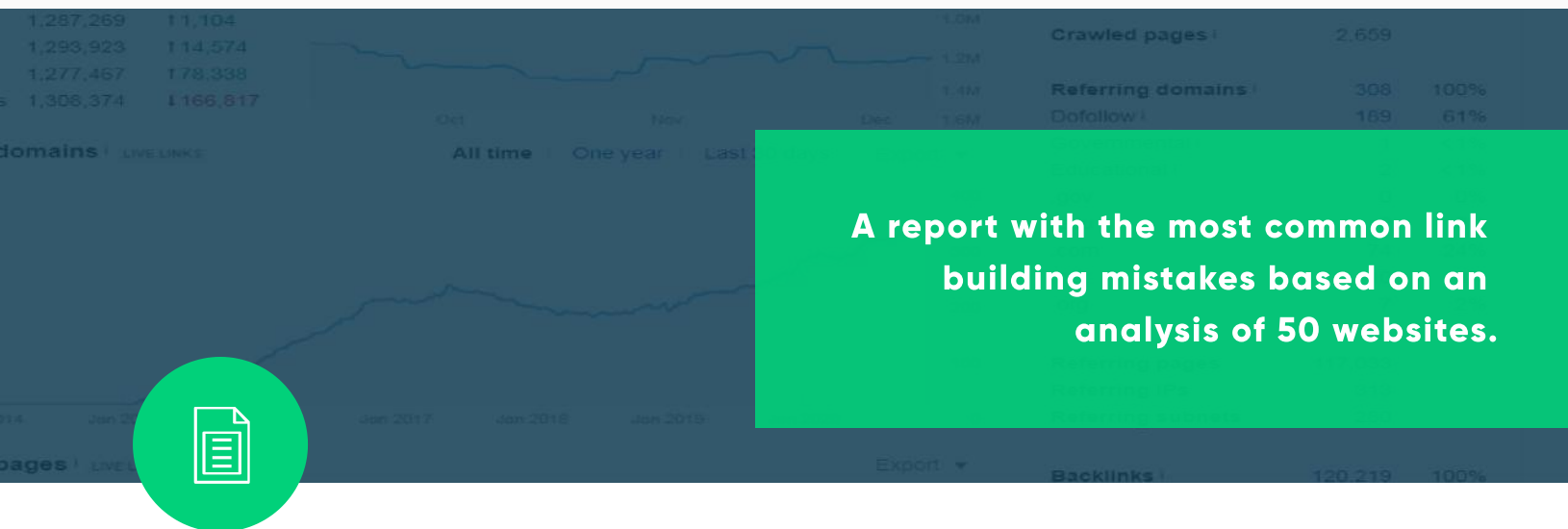
Finally, I would mention drip-feeding - a process whose name was taken from black hat SEO. Systematic, regular linking combined with an increased amount of users and content is the recipe for success.

If you were to give one link building advice for 2021, what would it be?

Test, diversify and build your own PBN - you'll thank us in a year :).



**Maciej
Chmurkowski**
adinspire.com



TAKEAWAYS

As mentioned in our report, the most common link building mistakes include:

- Linking from poor quality domains
- The incorrect proportion of dofollow to nofollow links
- Decreased DR
- Too rapid decrease or increase of backlinks

There is a visible relationship between the above-mentioned mistakes.

Linking from poor quality domains affects DR. Too rapid of an increase or decrease in the number of backlinks to a site won't bring any benefit. Instead, they inform Google that your activities are far from being natural.

These three mistakes prove that customers still believe that quantity is more important than quality and should be avoided.

- Obtaining as many backlinks as possible, as quickly as possible, without analyzing domain authority
- Not taking into account the fact that backlinks should appear gradually
- Frequently aiming at obtaining dofollow links which translate into large disproportions between dofollow and nofollow

Such an approach is harmful to a website. It has a negative impact on its recognition, DR, and Google's trust.

A FEW TIPS

You already know the most common link building mistakes and methods to fix them. To make the process of comprehending the knowledge easier, we collected a few important pieces of information that are worth remembering if you want to make your link building as effective as possible.

- Before you start the link building process, plan your strategy. Don't act blindly. Try to monitor Google algorithm updates and tailor your activities to current requirements. Invest in relationships.
- Think about which phrases/subpages are the most important for you. Analyze selected keywords and subpages the backlinks are supposed to lead to.
- It's about the quality, not the quantity. Focus on the quality of the domains and the backlinks.
- Linking domains should have high parameters – preferably higher than yours. If you obtain links from poor quality and thematically unrelated pages, it can have a negative impact on your website. Remember that it's better to have a few links from various valuable domains than a hundred backlinks from one page.
- Try to avoid websites with too many backlinks. The more backlinks on a given site, the smaller the link juice.
- Try to create and develop your base.

A FEW TIPS

- Linking should be natural. Therefore:
- Diversify your sources (don't link from one type of platform).
- Don't focus on one type of backlinks. Try to keep balance.
- The number of links and domains should increase gradually.
- Make sure that Google indexes your backlinks.
- Constantly analyze your link profile – check, control, draw conclusions.

AUTHORS OF THE REPORT



Katarzyna Zielosko
Marketing Coordinator



Aleksandra Gajoch
Marketing Specialist



Urszula Nowak
Marketing Specialist

Content support



Mateusz Calik
Head of SEO



Gosia Tarnawska
SEO Team Leader



Joanna Nicpoń
SEO Specialist



Klaudia Feliksik
SEO Specialist



Wojciech Urban
SEO Specialist



Mariola Sosnowska
SEO Specialist



Karolina Koziół
SEO Specialist



Justyna Podsiadło
Junior SEO Specialist



Rafał Gajda
Junior SEO Specialist



Delante is a performance marketing agency that specializes in SEO. Our team is comprised of aficionados focusing on effective online marketing. In 2020, we were nominated in 3 categories for the European Search Awards and the Global Search Awards where we were ranked among the top 10 large SEO agencies in Europe, and the top 8 large SEO agencies in the world. We are also the only SEO company in the Deloitte Fast 50 Central Europe ranking. We perform SEO activities in over 20 countries around the world.

Each cooperation with our company starts with a comprehensive website audit to determine the strategic direction of the SEO process.

We have **a gift** for you!

Do you want to check if the most common link building mistakes occur on your website? Contact us!

Use the code "REPORT" to receive a 20% discount on the Linking Audit.