19 Sure-Fire Subject Line Formulas for Link-Building Emails



When you need to write an outreach email, give these subject lines a try to increase the number of conversations with potential link targets.

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The following excerpt is from the Garrett French and Eric Ward's book Ultimate Guide to Link Building, 2nd Edition. *Buy it now from* Amazon | Barnes & Noble | iTunes*or click here to buy it directly from us and* ***SAVE 60%*** *on this book when you use code* ***MARKET2021*** *through* ***4/3/21****.*

Next time you sit down to write an outreach email, give these subject lines a try, and you'll increase the number of conversations with potential link targets.

Guest posting

Sites that accept guest writers will usually specify how they prefer new guest posts to be pitched. If the site you want to contribute to has a dedicated page (or section) about guest-posting opportunities, follow their guidelines. However, in those cases where there's no clear guidelines for wannabe contributors to pitch their guest posts, use the following subject lines:

- ***I'd like to write for [site name]. Here are X article ideas.*** This is perfect for those cases where you've written a series of articles and you're searching for the right home for them.
- ***Interested in article contributions about [topic]? I'd love to collaborate.*** This a great subject line for when you prefer to discuss content ideas on a specific topic with the editor before submitting written articles.
- ***Contributing to [site name]: sharing my clip portfolio.*** If you've developed a strong portfolio of articles, you can let your previous work do the talking.

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Link reclamation (brand mention)

The formulas below will come in handy next time you need to reach out to a site that mentioned your company without linking to your website:

- ***Thanks for mentioning [brand] on your [topic] page (quick request).*** Always start link reclamation emails by showing your gratitude. After all, the person you're reaching out to didn't have to mention your company, yet

they've done just that, so a thank you is in order. This particular subject line could be used when contacting a webmaster or site owner who's dropped a brand mention within the core pages of their website (e.g., their About page).

- ***Thank you for mentioning us! ([title of their article]).*** This is a formula for those cases when you're contacting a journalist who's mentioned your brand within an article. In those cases, you want the recipient to spot the title of the article they've written to quickly engage them into opening your email.
- ***Quick question about your latest post (on behalf of [brand]).*** This is the formula I use when reaching out to a blogger who's mentioned my company in a blog post. You can use tools, such as Ahrefs, BuzzSumo or Google Alerts to set up daily alerts for your brand name so you can reach out to bloggers as soon as the mention occurs.

Much has been written about link reclamation as a link-building strategy. There's less advice about the technique in combination with other off-page SEO efforts (a term that includes every SEO-related task or activity that happens off the site), such as content marketing for links. For marketers who build links with content, I always recommend adding a layer of link reclamation to their campaigns to maximize the number of links.

Here are three tried-and-tested formulas to help you turn unlinked brand mentions into links back to your content:

- ***Attribution request: [title of their article].*** This is my go-to formula for contacting journalists who've featured the content I produce for my clients and have mentioned the brand but have failed to credit the content with a link back to the original source (aka, my client's website). It's simple and to the point, including the title of the article in question to quickly get the writer's attention.

- ***Credit to original source: [title of their article].*** This is the subject-line formula my team uses when a journalist has picked up a piece of content after seeing it published by a media outlet and has credited them as the original source instead of linking back to our client. Start off by thanking the writer for sharing your content and include a link to the article they've written. Instead of simply asking for a link, ask for the credit to be fixed so it points to the original source of the content, and include the URL they should link out to.
- ***License infringement and attribution request: [title of their article].*** If your content campaign includes images, make sure to license them under Creative Commons License 4.0 International, which states that publishers can share and/or adapt the material as long as they credit the creator with a link back to the material. Use this subject-line formula when doing link reclamation for images that are licensed under Creative Commons and have been used by other sites without linking back to your website as the source.

Resource link building

The subject lines for this type of link building will highly depend on the type of resource you've built. That said, here are three subject line formulas that are suitable when reaching out to webmasters or editors who curate resources around a specific topic:

- ***Suggestion for [name of resource page]: [name of your resource].*** Straightforward and to the point, the recipient of this email will quickly know what page on their site you're referring to and what type of resource you're pitching. If your email gets opened, then it's very likely you'll get a link – as long as your resource is of good quality, of course!

- ***Are you accepting new resources for [name of resource page]?*** This is a good choice when reaching out to a site editor or webmaster about a page that doesn't seem to be updated on a regular basis.
- ***New resource for [name of resource page]: [name of your resource].*** This is an alternative to the first formula on this list that incorporates one of the most powerful words in advertising. Everyone wants to have something new, because it's an improved and nicer version of the old. In addition, research has found that our brains react to novelty by releasing dopamine, which makes us want to go exploring in search of a reward – a great start for a link outreach email!

Round-up inclusion

Many bloggers and journalists publish weekly and monthly round-up articles where they handpick resources and content connected to a specific topic. The subject lines below will come in handy next time you're pitching content you think should be included as part of one of these round-up posts:

- ***Tip for [name of round-up]: [title of your article].*** If the round-up has a name, you should use it to show that you've done your research. In many cases, the article will include a short blurb at the beginning or end of the post where the writer specifies an email address to pitch new stories for inclusion. Use this subject line when contacting the specified email address.
- ***Do you take suggestions for [name of round-up]?*** Unlike the previous case, this is a subject line for contacting a blogger or journalist who publishes a round-up but doesn't make it explicit whether they're open for suggestions. In case the answer is a yes, it's better to approach the person with a question and mention the piece of content you'd like to suggest inside the email.

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Content marketing for links

One of the go-to link-building techniques today involves creating content that can be pitched to other sites in the hopes that they will reuse it and link back to your website. I call this "content marketing for links" because it's not quite the same as resource link building. However, there are many people who refer to this technique as "digital PR," because, more often than not, the main goal is to build hard-to-get media links.

The content is usually a visual piece that can be easily shared: a simple static image (infographics, maps, charts, illustrations, photographs, etc.), an animated asset (videos or GIFs) or an interactive feature that uses an iframe or embed code (interactive data visualizations, quizzes, calculators, etc.).

Next time you're pitching this type of content with the goal of building links, try opening your emails with the following subject line formulas:

- ***Tip: [title of your content] ([format]).*** I always advise including the word "tip" to help journalists immediately identify your email as a pitch. This can be crucial if the topic of your content could be mistaken for a different type of message, such as a sales pitch or junk mail: "How to lose weight this summer" vs. "Tip: How to lose weight this summer (infographic)"
- ***Tip for [site name]: [title of your content].*** When contacting someone who writes for multiple publications, include the name of the site you're targeting into your subject-line formula. Keep this formula in mind when your target site is a company blog and you're unsure of who manages it, so you're pitching the most suitable

contact based on their position within the organization (e.g., content manager or digital marketing executive).

- ***Story idea: [title of your content].*** When pitching content to an editor who assigns stories to journalists, you can use this as an alternative to the first subject-line formula on this list.
- ***Tip: This [format] will show you [brief description about the topic of your content].*** Note that the subject line has been written in a click-bait tone. See the difference:
    - Tip: The college degree of the top earning CEO in every US state (interactive)
    - Tip: This interactive will show you what the top CEOs in America studied in college
- ***Exclusive for [site name]: [title of your content] ([format]).*** Make sure to mention the word "exclusive" when you're ready to offer exclusivity over your content to a specific publication. This will give your email priority as media outlets love to break the news about a story before anyone else.

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