4 Link Building Tips for International SEO by @motokohunt

Link building is one of the key activities for a successful SEO strategy. It is perhaps one of the most overlooked SEO activities with regard to the local market SEO work for global websites.

There are several reasons why this is happening, and here are some of the common challenges:

- Not much is done with the local websites once those are localized and go live.
- Website owners focus on content optimization for the local websites.
- Website owners are aware of the importance of link building for local websites, but don’t have the local resources and/or don’t know who to ask about link building in each market.

Read on to discover are four link building tips that can be easily implemented even by companies with limited resources.

1. Benefit from Websites That Link to Corporate Websites

Because most websites usually start out with one or two languages trying to target many countries, those original websites usually have a lot more links coming from external websites than newly launched local websites.

When I work on link audits for Japanese and other Asian websites, I always check the links going to the original websites and not just the websites clients requested to be

included in the project.

For example, if I work on the Japanese website link building for a U.S. company, I check for any Japanese links going to their U.S. website in addition to the Japanese website.

By going through those links pointing to the U.S. website, I always find several good links, if not more, from Japanese websites.

I usually find even more quality links when the original websites and the target websites use the same languages such as English websites for U.S. and Australia.

This is because most websites owners link to the original websites when those launched as they didn’t have a website for the local market.

Not many website owners update their links when you launch a website for their local market. It seems that more website owners update the links if they are in a country with uniquely spoken language such as Japanese and Korean.

However, not many website owners update the links when your original website uses the same language as their countries such as English and Spanish as they don’t feel the inconveniences as much as Japanese trying to read the content in English.

Once you identify the links that should be updated by pointing to the local website instead of the original website, contact the website owner with the information of the URL where you wish them to point the link.

In my experience, you might have a higher success rate for getting the links updated when the website owner contacts them directly rather than an email from an SEO professional.

Also, check for links pointed to the other languages or local websites within your organization. There is a good chance that

you'll find several links going to the wrong language or country websites.

Especially if you have a localized country/language list of sites, it is not uncommon for people to link to the wrong language version. If you find them, contact the site owners to update the URLs in the hyperlinks as I explained above.

Updating the links to the best-matched website is not just good for your link building profile, but also good for the website user experience as they can reach the right website for their location.

2. Benefit from Corporate and Other Local Offices' Marketing Activities

This is another easy way to add links to your local websites. There are many informational websites that are providing their content globally in different languages. However, when that content is localized, the links are often left unchanged.

Let's say your CEO was interviewed or a product was featured by one of the popular industry websites in the U.S. That website is operating in five different languages in 12 countries, and that content which your product was featured would be later published in 12 country websites all of which you happen to have websites, too.

If you don't request, in most cases, they'd leave original the link using your U.S. website URL on all 12 websites. However, just by requesting them to use local website URL in each country version, you will gain 12 relevant links to each of your local website.

In order to increase the chance of them updating the links to where you would like them to link, provide them with a list of URLs to be used.

Linking to the local market website also helps improve the user experience for their audiences, most websites are willing to update the links.

3. Check Local Competitors' Links

Checking the links that competitor websites have might seem to be too simple and an obvious tip, but for some reason, many companies overlook this.

Digging into an unknown market and different languages can be intimidating and might throw an SEO professional off the normal link building track.

The reality is that the link research and analysis tools should do most of the work for you. Using these research tools enable you to do a lot of the analysis even without any local resources.

The idea is to check the links your competitors have, compare them against the list of links your local website has, and find the websites that are not linking to your website, but should.

Hopefully, you already have a list of top competitors in each country. If not, find out who are constantly ranking well for your non-branded target keywords in the country, and start the research from there.

4. Add Link Building Related Requirements to Marketing, Interviews & Events Best Practice Guides

Gaining good quality links is a challenging task, regardless of the size of the website or the company. Let's make sure

that we benefit from every opportunity we have to gain links.

Most businesses conduct or participate in some types of marketing activities and events. It is a great way to gain quality links naturally.

If the activity is related to a specific product or a line of business, it would be an opportunity to gain links to the specific product page or business category.

The challenge is that people who are involved in the marketing activities have little idea about the SEO and the value of links.

Perhaps the bigger challenge is for them to remember to include link building while working on their marketing project.

You cannot blame them for it as they are not SEO experts.

The best way to guarantee to link building is included in the marketing project is to put it in the corporate marketing best practice or the guidelines. This way, the links are handled with each marketing project and are not handled as the afterthought.

Below are some of the link building items to be included in the best practice and the guidelines for the marketing projects:

- Always use the URL(s) for most relevant pages within your website, and not just the home page URL.
- If the marketing project or the event is held to multiple countries and languages, use the local website and language URL in materials and require it in event contracts.
- If the project or the event is featured on other websites, request them to put a link to the most relevant page on your website in the local country.

Conclusion

While a link building project may seem to be a huge task to undertake, especially for local markets, you can still build links effectively even if hiring outside resources is not an option.

It takes a bit of preparation and looking at the project globally, not just locally.

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