

How to Create a Link-Worthy Site

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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**.*

The development of all forms and fashion of linking types has never improved on the original, and no amount of cleverness will ever change one universal truth: The less useful your content, the less likely you are to ever receive a link to it.

If we think of the word “useful” as a continuum, then the most useful sites are those that provide rich quality content on a specific subject on which the editor or provider is an authority. Think of the U.S. Government's National Cancer Institute (what was once known as CancerNet). Located at www.cancer.gov, the site is the ultimate example of content on the right side of the continuum – tens of thousands of pages on every facet of cancer, all free, all generated by experts in the field.

In fact, with no online marketing department, the National Cancer Institute's website has tens of thousands of links pointing to it from other sites around the world. It fits one of my standard sermons: Useful content gets linked. When CancerNet hired me for some link analysis and strategy, there

wasn't a whole lot for me to do. It took me less than a month to augment and improve what was already in place – a great collection of inbound links. My impact was minimal if any.

But the reality is, we can't all have sites like the National Cancer Institute. Most sites simply don't have the kind of content that engenders tens of thousands of links. So, what do you do? What if you're simply trying to sell a few widgets and don't have any reference to quality content?

If your site lands on the left side of the useful continuum, you accept that you're not going to get many links. And those links you do get, you'll probably have to pay for. And those links you pay for aren't likely to help your rankings and might even hurt them.

If you don't want to accept this reality and truly want to earn links to your site, you have one (and only one) other option: Make it link-worthy.

What is a link-worthy site?

Let's imagine you have an online magic store that caters to professional and amateur magicians. On your site, you sell tricks, supplies, hats, capes, and wands – even the saw-the-person-in-half gag.

If your content were nothing more than an online store, why would anyone link to it? You might get a few links on any magic site web guides and link lists. But then what? If you own an online store with nothing but products as your content, then you *must* look to associate/affiliate programs as a means of generating links. Basically, you're paying for them. But maybe there's something more you can do, if you're willing to roll up your sleeves.

What if, along with your products, you create a searchable database of information on magic? What if you had complete biographies of more than 700 magicians? What if you had a

section devoted to magical world records, or a glossary of magical terms, or a directory of magicians on the internet?

This would then be an excellent example of how a store site can add rich, relevant content, value, interest, and community to its website, as well as sell merchandise. Just about any writer who writes about magic and/or reviews websites would write about this site, and any magic fan with a website and a curated list of handpicked links would be likely to link to it.

The above is not just a wide-eyed, hypothetical example: It exists at <http://www.MagicTricks.com>.

I know from experience that it's difficult to find high-trust online venues and curator/site reviewers willing to link to sales sites. The more a site offers deep information on a certain subject in the form of databases, community, guides, forums, reviews, etc., the more likely editors or curators will feature it in their own content. Whether it's a business or consumer site, the more content-rich the site is, the better, especially if the site's mission is sales. A site designed to sell a product is far different from a true reference site with hundreds and hundreds of pages of free information on a particular subject.

The National Cancer Institute and MagicTricks.com could not be more different from each other, yet they do have one incredibly important thing in common: Both have topic-specific content written by passionate experts.

The best analogy I can think of to explain a sales-focused website is a public library. A library is, first and foremost, about content, although it does sell things. You can buy copies of books, order maps, buy online database search time, or rent study offices or PCs. Some libraries even have video-rental services and snack shops or restaurants. Money definitely changes hands at a library. But nobody would

confuse this commerce with a library's true mission: being content curators and helping patrons find that content. In a like manner, a website also needs to be a library of information on whatever its focus might be. So, add great content to your product site if you want it linked to.

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