

Link Building — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a working link-building operation you can run on a real site. Each section maps to a course module: you qualify link prospects, plan five white-hat tactics, draft outreach, and track what you earn. Fill the worksheets with your own domains and numbers, use the checklists to stay safe and organized, and run the editable planners as your live prospect sheet, outreach tracker, and anchor-text audit. Leave every calculated cell blank for you to fill, so your rates and totals are always your own real figures.

Why Links Matter and How to Judge Their Quality

Turn authority metrics and the quality checklist into a fast keep-or-cut decision on any link.

Worksheet: Link Quality Scorecard

Run one candidate link through the four-part test (authority, relevance, traffic, attributes) so you only pursue links that can actually move rankings.

Linking domain and the exact target page URL

Domain Rating / Authority Score (and which tool)

Page-level URL Rating or Page Authority

Page organic traffic (Ahrefs/Semrush estimate)

Topical relevance to your site (high / adjacent / none)

Likely link attribute (followed / nofollow / sponsored / ugc)

Number of external links already on that page (dilution check)

Keep or cut decision and one-line reason

Exercise: Relevance vs Authority Drill

Practice the judgment that separates beginners from pros: weighing a relevant smaller site against a bigger irrelevant one.

- Given a DR 35 niche-relevant blog and a DR 80 unrelated site, which would you pursue first and why?

- Which page-level signals would make you reject a high-DR domain anyway?

- How does a logarithmic scale change how you read the gap between DR 70 and DR 72?

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- When would a nofollow link from a strong, relevant source still be worth pursuing?
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Checklist: Backlink Quality Checklist

- Domain authority (DR / AS / DA) clears a sensible floor for your niche
- Page-level strength (UR / PA) checked, not just the domain number
- The page and site receive real organic traffic, not a ghost town
- The linking site is topically relevant or closely adjacent
- Link is likely to be followed, or nofollow is acceptable for this source
- Page does not link out to dozens of sites that dilute the equity
- No spam signals: link spikes, thin AI-spun content, or pay-for-links offers

Prospecting: Finding and Qualifying Link Targets

Build a qualified, person-level prospect sheet from competitor backlinks and search operators.

Worksheet: Competitor Link Gap Worksheet

Reverse-engineer rivals' backlinks to surface warm, pre-qualified prospects before writing a single email. Three to five close competitors ranking for your target keywords

Tool and report used (Ahrefs Link Intersect / Semrush Backlink Gap)

Domains linking to 2+ competitors but not to you (priority list)

Search operators used to find resource pages and roundups

Tactic that fits each prospect (broken-link / resource / guest / PR)

Where the prospect was found (source column for your sheet)

Exercise: Prospect Qualification Drill

Filter a raw export down to only sites worth your outreach time, and spot the link networks to avoid.

- What DR/AS floor will you set for this niche, and why that level?
 - Which warning signs would make you flag a prospect as a possible PBN?
 - How will you confirm a site is alive and maintained, not abandoned?
 - For each cut prospect, what is the one-line reason you are discarding it?
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Worksheet: Contact-Finder Worksheet

Turn a qualified domain into an outreach-ready row by finding the right person and a verified email. Right role to contact (post author / editor / site owner)

Contact name and where you found it (byline / About / LinkedIn)

Email-finding tool used (Hunter.io / Voila Norbert / Findymail)

Predicted email and confidence score

Verification result (verifier used + valid / risky / invalid)

Personalization hook (recent post, broken link, shared interest)

Checklist: Prospecting Workflow Checklist

- Pulled referring domains for 3-5 close competitors
- Ran a Link Intersect / Backlink Gap to find multi-competitor linkers
- Added operator-based prospects (resource pages, guest, roundups)
- Every prospect captured in one structured sheet with a source column
- Each prospect qualified on authority, relevance, traffic, and health
- PBNs and link-selling sites removed from the list
- Right person identified with a verified, deliverable email
- Personalization hook recorded for each remaining prospect

White-Hat Acquisition Tactics That Earn Links

Plan and run five proven tactics, from digital PR to guest posting, each with its own angle.

Worksheet: Linkable Asset Planner

Design a piece built to be cited, the fuel for digital PR and the skyscraper technique.
Asset type (original study / statistics page / free tool / definitive guide)

Data angle or source (survey, internal dataset, public dataset)

Headline statistic or hook a journalist could run with

For skyscraper: the existing top content you are beating (URL + referring domains)

How yours is substantially better (depth / data / design / freshness)

Outlets and bloggers to pitch or seed it to

Exercise: Broken-Link Opportunity Drill

Practice the help-first tactic: find a dead link and position your page as the fix.

- Which relevant resource pages in your niche are most likely to link out?
 - What tool will you use to find dead links (Check My Links, Ahrefs Broken Link/Backlinks)?
 - Do you already have a suitable replacement page, or must you create one?
 - How will you phrase the heads-up so it reads as a favor, not a demand?
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Worksheet: HARO / Qwoted Response Builder

Pre-build a tight, quotable answer so you can reply to journalist queries within the deadline window.
Source service and the query topic you are answering

Your one-sentence credential (why you are qualified)

The most quotable single sentence (lead with this)

Tight supporting answer (no padding, no sales pitch)

Time elapsed since the query went out (aim within 1-2 hours)

Link / page you would want cited if used

Checklist: Guest-Post Quality Checklist

- Target site has genuine readership, not a pay-to-publish link mill
- Pitched a specific, valuable topic tailored to their audience gap
- Article is genuinely strong, not a thin vehicle for a link
- Links are natural with sensible anchor text, not hard money-keyword anchors
- You would write this even if the link were nofollow (real-audience test)
- Treated the editor as a long-term contact for repeat placements

Outreach, Tracking, and Staying White-Hat

Convert prospects into links with personalized outreach, track results, and keep the profile penalty-safe.

Worksheet: Outreach Email Builder

Draft one personalized, value-first email and its follow-up plan so it earns a reply instead of a delete.
Recipient name, role, and verified email

Subject line (short, honest, specific)

Personalized opening line referencing their actual content

The value you offer them (the benefit, stated first)

The single, simple ask and the target link

Follow-up 1 timing and angle (3-5 business days later)

Follow-up 2 timing and stop point (cap at two)

Exercise: Personalization Audit Drill

Stress-test a drafted email so it could never read as a mass blast.

- Which line proves you actually looked at their site?
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- Does the email lead with their benefit or with your need? Fix it if it is yours.
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- Is the ask a single, effortless next step, and is the whole email phone-length?
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- What extra value will each follow-up add instead of just nagging?
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Checklist: Link Tracking & Anchor-Health Checklist

- Every earned link logged: linking URL, target page, anchor, attribute, date
- Tactic and prospect source recorded for each link
- Referring-domain growth tracked (not just total backlink count)
- Promised links checked live, and re-checked periodically for removal
- Anchor profile is brand/URL/natural-heavy, exact-match used sparingly
- Search Console Links report cross-checked against your tool and log

Checklist: White-Hat Safety Checklist

- No buying or selling of followed links (paid links use sponsored/nofollow)
- No large-scale reciprocal exchanges or automated link generation
- No PBNs or mass low-quality guest/directory spam with keyword anchors
- Manual actions report in Search Console is clean
- Disavow treated as a last resort, not routine maintenance
- Every link is one you could defend out loud to a Google engineer

Your Action Plan

1. Set a link-quality bar (authority, relevance, traffic, attributes) and a DR/AS floor for your niche
2. Pull 3-5 competitors' backlinks and run a Link Intersect / Backlink Gap to find warm prospects
3. Add operator-based prospects (resource pages, roundups, guest-post targets) to one prospect sheet
4. Qualify every prospect and cut PBNs, dead blogs, and irrelevant or traffic-less sites
5. Find the right person per prospect and verify their email before any send
6. Build at least one linkable asset (original data, tool, or definitive guide) for digital PR and skyscraper
7. Run a broken-link or resource-page campaign as your first help-first outreach
8. Subscribe to HARO/Connectively and Qwoted and answer relevant queries fast with quotable replies
9. Send personalized, value-first outreach and follow up once or twice, then stop
10. Log every earned link, monitor referring-domain growth, keep anchors natural, and stay inside Google's guidelines

