2013 Link Diversity Guide
The Backlinking Cheatsheet

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Google's latest "zoo" updates have changed a lot of things that used to work in the SEO world, but few things have changed as much as the standard practices of building backlinks.

Gone are the days when you could fire up a spam-bot and send it off to spam comment forms, forums, article directories, and a billion tiny social bookmarking sites with your keywords and still get results.

The problem with these types of backlinks is that Google is on to them. Recent updates to their search algorithms have targeted what they call "over optimization" of backlink anchor texts. Or to put it another way, they don't want to see all your incoming links with your money keyword as the anchor texts.

So what should you be doing now if you aren't going to use your keywords everywhere?

The following are some good practices that will keep you out of Google's crosshairs.

Push the Brand Envelope

- ✓ Google loves branding, so if you haven't made yourself into a Brand yet, that is something you need to do ASAP.

- ✓ Use about 50% of your backlink anchors as some variant of your brand name.

- ✓ If you type your name/brand name in Google Search and you DON'T get a type ahead for your name, Google doesn't know who you are!

- ✓ Use Google+ and Authorship snippets to turn yourself into an "official person of authority" in Google's eyes in your niche.

Watch Money Keyword Percentages

- ✓ Most of the websites that got hit with the link diversity penalty had more than 50% of their backlink anchor texts using some form of "commercial" keyword.
- ✓ Keep your target keyword based backlink texts below 30% total for all keywords.
- ✓ Use several different variations or long-tail versions of your keywords instead of all identical anchor texts.

Include Natural Non-Targeted Anchors

- ✓ Use links like "Click Here" or your URL instead of your money keywords about 25% of the time.
- ✓ Use several different variations of your URL as link anchor texts. For example, leave off the "www" or experiment with removing the trailing slashes from URLs.

Cross Link Internally

- ✓ Where pages on your site have similar content or logically are related to each other, cross-link those pages.
- ✓ Make sure the links make sense in the context that they appear in.
- ✓ Link from inside the text where possible instead of using isolated links in sidebars, headers or footers.

Improve Your Relevance Factor

- ✓ Make sure your backlinks come from sites with similar content, or at least similar content in the post containing the link.
- ✓ Don't link from a post about bananas to a post about cars. If they aren't related, Google will consider it a bad and possibly spammy link.

Be Consistent

- ✓ Keep your link-building activities consistent.
- ✓ Don't create 5 million links all at once and then just stop for a while.