



# Expert Summit

MASTERCLASS TRANSCRIPT



# Namecheap Expert Summit

## Link building, the right way | Rodney Brazil

- Hello, Rodney. It's great to be chatting with you today. I'm..., to introduce ourselves to, to our audience to those watching, I'm Emily Jacob and I work here at Namecheap in our CRM team customer relationship marketing. And I'm responsible actually for bringing the Expert Summit to you.

And I'm here with Rodney Brazil. Who's one of our SEO specialists here at Namecheap. He's got a strong background in content marketing too and he's going to talk to us today about link-building the right way.

And Rodney I'd like to jump in and ask you first of all, what is link building?

- Well, link building is making a proactive effort to get other websites to talk about your website, whether that's the homepage or other content pages on your website. It's the act of actually being proactive and reaching out and trying to get other websites to link to you.

- Okay so why is that important?

- Well, it's important because, well, there's several reasons it's important. It's, it's similar to maybe a more traditional public relations campaign. You know, a century ago you might have a public relations firm who would reach out to newspapers and other people in the community to talk about what you're doing. And link building is in a way the same thing, but it's for the online community. So you with link building, you're reaching out to other websites that talk about your product, or talk about similar topics of what you include on your website and kind of build a network of people that are all talking about your website and your pages and content, and yeah.

- Okay and how does that then build?

- Say that again?

- How does that, how does that kind of get that buzz? How do you get that buzz from that?

- Gotcha well, so you get the buzz by having other smart voices we'll say in your industry or in.., we'll just say in your industry, talking about you. So for example, you know, if, if you if your friends are all talking about a new podcast and you know, the more people that talk about your podcast or talk about their new favorite podcast the more likely it is, you know, in your own mind that you might like that as well and give it a try. Well, it's the same thing with these links. So if other websites that people trust are talking about a new website you've never heard of and you see that once, twice, three times then there's a pretty good idea that you might want to click on that link and visit that website. And so that's true of people, but it's also true of Google because when Google sees and other search engines see that there's a variety of authoritative websites talking about yours, that's a really strong clue to Google that your website is, you know, worth the adding to the results page and worth giving more visibility on Google search engine or on search engine results pages.

- So if I get other organizations, other people to talk about my business in their blog posts or on their website pages, then Google's going to rate me higher than if I'm not mentioned on, on their pages.

- It will. Yes, that's exactly right.

- Wow.

- So the, the algorithm includes among to be clear, you know at least 100 other factors.

- Yes.

- It includes how other websites and other platforms are talking about your particular website or app or content. It does include that in the, its decision to rank you higher on search engine results pages, and that's true of Google and other search engines as well.

- So there's kind of like a double benefit of this link building. Not only are you getting that buzz with other people talking about you and so people thinking yes I'll go check you out but Google's also going to appreciate it as well and rank you higher. So there's, there's that double benefit.

- It is. And that's really true of all SEO. You know, the, the point of SEO is to sort of communicate with search engines but the search engines are trying to communicate with real people. You know, they want to, they want to serve up valuable results to actual end users who are going to click on that result and continue to trust their particular search engine. And so with all SEO link building included, it's really crucial to not only think about communicating with computers and algorithms, but, but real people which is the end goal.

- Yeah, yeah, yeah, of course. And what, what kind of links are you talking about when we're looking at link building? Are there different kinds of links that, that, that we ought to be looking at to, to insert onto our sites?

- Yeah, there, there are different kinds of links and some are valuable and some are not. So one of the most important things that that makes a link valuable is the authority of the website that the link appears on. So for example, and and authority can mean different things. It can mean, it can refer to the length of time that the website's been active, the longer a website has been active in publishing content, you know, another website other than yours. It increases that what we call domain authority. And you can find scores using SEO tools that will tell you you know, this is a high domain authority site,

or it's not and that is important. But almost as important as that domain authority is just the authority in your particular industry. So if a website is a known important source for people that are interested in your product or the people that are interested in your subject matter then it's authoritative for you. And so a good example would be if you're a local business and I live in Oklahoma City and in the US and so for my business here in Oklahoma City websites that are very important to locals here in Oklahoma City are going to be crucial for me. And they're going to have authority for my site since I'm really focused on serving customers, you know, here in Oklahoma City. So that's another place that you can find authority with a website. And authority is really tied in with relevance as well. The things that that website publishes about, you know are they relevant to your customers, to the people that you want to have using your website? If there's really not a lot of crossover in your, you know just based on your own knowledge of your topic and your industry, there's not a lot of crossover that's really not going to be a relevant link for you. And it's really not going to give you any value. You know, an example would be if you sell pizza and, and you get a link on a website that's dedicated to car repair that's not going to give you a lot of relevance, not from the people that might click on that link and not in the eyes of Google.

- So if you're a solo business owner and you're looking to get linked, other sites link building to you, you don't want to just go out to anybody and your best mate you want to actually make sure that you're targeting who it is you're asking to link into your site and make it, and make it relevant for them to do so.

- Yes, that's absolutely right. And it's crucial to remember that and I'm glad that you phrased it that way because that makes a lot of sense. Because a lot of people, if you're looking around the internet will offer services that will just get you links anywhere and you can pay a little bit of money and they'll put a link on, you know who knows what site and tell you that it's valuable. And it's really not. It really is crucial to make sure that that site that you have the link on has a relationship with your, your product or, or topic of choice.

- Okay, okay. Got it, got it. And what is the sort of, what would you say is the best link building strategy that somebody should be following?

- Right so a good link building strategy, there's lots of ways to go about it I will say. And you can find like, as I mentioned, services that will help you, there are PR agencies that can help you. But really it's very easy to do on your own but it's important to be consistent. Because just like, you know, just like a sale a door to door salesman, who's going and knocking on people's doors to asking them if they want to buy a vacuum cleaner, link building can feel the same in a certain way because you're finding websites that maybe have never heard of you, have never heard of your product, had never read any of your articles and you're contacting them and trying to start a relationship with them. So consistency's important and honesty's important. You, you want to be really upfront that, you know you're trying to get the word out about your product. You are trying to amplify this article that you spent a month working on, that adds a lot of value and you want to be clear about why you reached out to them, you know and why you see that there's a mutual benefit. The benefit to that person that's linking to you is that the readers of their pages or their articles might find additional, helpful information on your website as well. And so, you know, again your websites need to have a relationship but you're really building a personal relationship with those people that, that you reach out to. And I would also add in a couple of technical points to the best link building strategies. You want to make sure that you are using texts and being very, very specific with how you want that link to be formatted on the site that you're reaching out to. So, so as part of, as part of your communications with these websites, whether you're reaching out via email or social media, or maybe, you know, maybe it's another local business that also publishes content that has a tangential relationship and you're knocking on their door, you want to be specific about how you want that link to appear and, and what words you want to be attached to that, that particular link. So you've got to be strategic again, the, the, the blanket mass emails to any and every website you can find on the internet, that's not going to be valuable to you, and it's not going to be worth the time. You want to be really specific.

- When you're being specific, does it, could you say where you want it to appear in a particular article on a particular page? Is that something that you should be talking to the website owner about?

- Absolutely you can, and I recommend being specific about where you want it to go. When I am working on link outreach for Namecheap, a lot of times I'll find a website, for example that's talking about WordPress and I'll find an article that I really like, and I see, I read the article you've got to make sure that you understand what's on that page and I'll read it. And then I think of content that we have on our website from our library that really supports that, that might actually be valuable to the reader of that article and answer questions that that original piece doesn't. And then I'll reach out and I'll say, hey, I found this great article. I think that, I think that what we've got would be, you know, a great addition, would provide additional valuable information to the readers of your article. Would you have time to talk about, you know adding a link within that article? Or but then I also keep it open as well, because you know, ultimately, you know, like I said this is you're building a relationship so I keep it open and say, you know, like if that isn't quite the right fit, I think we have a lot of the same goals with our website versus yours. I'd be happy to talk about other ways that we can collaborate and help one another.

- So there's more of a mutual link-building relationship going on there too sometimes.

- Right, right. And so, you know, you want to avoid just saying I'll give you a link if you give one to me. Yeah.

- Because that's the, you know, that's really not the point. The point is here's an asset that we have that can help your readers and your site users. And then I think yours can help, you know, our, our users as well. And let's find a way to, you know to use that mutual strength to help one another.

- So how, how do beginners get backlinks? I mean, Namecheap is quite a very big established company we've been around for 20 years now, but if you're just starting out, how do you, how do you do this?

- Yeah, yeah. Well, you know, there's, there's really a lot of ways to get started. And I think that in my experience the best place to start is just going to Google and you know, searching for your own business, you know stepping into the shoes of a customer and searching for the you know, whatever you're providing on your website. And then you'll, you'll start getting a sense and, you know this takes time and you'll start getting a sense of, you know here's how other people are talking about my product. You'll likely find other websites that give, you know top 10 lists of examples of the same type of thing that you have on your website whether that's that's articles or products. But you'll likely find that. And that's a great place to start is just who's already talking about the stuff that that I want to be a part of the conversation? And then reaching out to them using the contact forms on their websites, using the email address that they provide. A lot of places or excuse me, a lot of websites will make it very, very clear if, you know if you're interested in working with us on content or sharing your product information with us or if you want us to review your product, you know here's the contact information you should use. And that's absolutely a great place to start, is just going right into Google and finding good websites in your universe. I'll mention one that's specific for local businesses as well, are local business listings. There's Google My Business there, Facebook, LinkedIn there's, Bing, all kinds of websites around the world and it varies from country to country. But they have these local business listing directories. And some of them are more valuable than others. Obviously the ones that people use most often in your area are going to be the most valuable. But there is some value to having them on the smaller sites as well because there are people that come across those listings. There are people that might research your brand or your website in the future and having links on those business directories, you know gives them a sense of, a sense that you're a real business, that you have a local presence.

- One thing that's just popped into my head is if as a local, you know, as a, as a small business just starting out and reaching out to other people who are doing similar things to me to ask them to put me into their link, it's almost like I'm



reaching out to competitors. So how, how does, how do you get your head around that as a new startup, small business owner that you've, you've really kind of got to establish relationships with people who might otherwise think are coming onto your terrain?

- Right, right. So the way to think about that is you start by reaching out to people that are talking about your competitors but aren't your actual competitors.

- Okay, cool.

- Yeah so for example, one that we see a lot, you know here at Namecheap are, you know websites that talk about the best hosting products, the best VPN service, the best email services for your business. We look for websites like that, that are, that are actually talking about our competitors. And maybe they're already talking about us as well. And we reach out to them and just say, you know, hey we've got something new. Hey, here's something that we think would be a great addition to your roundup or your best WordPress hosting providers for 2021. You know, we, we've got one of the best we believe and you know, let's, let's talk about that and see if our products are a good fit for your article, you know in addition to these other competitors. So that's, that's the kind of site that you want to start with. But there's there's other kinds of relationships too. So for example, with a local business you might have, you know, a local blogger or a local radio station that produces a series about businesses in your specific neighborhood. Well that neighborhood relationships are valuable as well, even though it's not dedicated to your sector of product, you know, there is a relationship and there, you know, there's a geographic relationship too.

- So you don't have to actually reach out to your competitors yet? You're reaching out to people who are talking about what you're doing in your business or talking about the area in your neighborhood that you live and your business is. That feels safer. Yeah. That's exactly right. And you know, that, that makes me think of another that I've used in the past is if you are selling

physical products and maybe you have a vendor or a supplier that supplies materials but doesn't sell the exact same end product as you, that could create a relationship as well. You know, there's, there's likely crossover in the topics that you cover in your blog or in your press releases. Those are great places to find people that you have a real business relationship with, just being proactive about saying, you know how can we talk about our relationship online, on our websites?

- That's really, really fascinating. That's really, I like that very much. And how do, how do you get really good quality backlinks?

- Well, you can get really good quality backlinks, well, honestly, the best way and I know we've been talking about link building this entire time, but really the most valuable links often come when you don't ask. And that may be a little counterintuitive but I do need to start with that because if you produce a really great article or if you've got a product and you've created a landing page for that product, that really resonates with people, they're going to start linking to you without asking. And those are very, very valuable, they're definitely the most valuable. So to get high quality links you want to have a high quality website. And that is definitely the first step. And you want to write articles that answer questions that people are asking that there's not a great answer to on the internet or the answers that are out there are hard to find, and you want to make that easier. So that's really the best way to find high quality backlinks because yeah, I mean, people, people will find you and if they, if they automatically love what you're serving on your website, you know they're going to talk about it and you haven't, you haven't spent any additional time asking for that. So, so that's number one. But number two, you know is asking like we've been talking about. So identifying what those opportunities are and then just reaching out and actually doing the legwork and, and, you know, asking that simple question, you know, would you be interested in having a conversation with me via email or social media or whatever seems right about collaborating on some content or talking about each other's products in a, in a positive way and showing how our websites you know work together? And just, you know just simply asking. And then, you know, kind of a third way, and this is more of a long-term approach to getting really good links is to include links to other very valuable websites within your space, just on

your own. And so, you know, publishing that article and making sure that the facts that you list or the advice that you give is corroborated by authoritative sources in other places. And if you do that, you know, there's, there's a, there's a, a tactical approach where you can actually reach out to those websites and say, hey just wanted to make you aware we really loved your article and we, we linked to it in ours and wanted to let you know. Sometimes they will, you know share that on their Twitter feed or, or what have you that can help, you know get traffic to your article. But then, and this is why I say it's a longterm approach. People that, you know real people will just come to your website. They'll find your article on a search engine and they'll see, oh, you know they've really done their research. And they've included these very, very smart websites and people to back up the points that they're making on their page. And that, that gives me some trust. And so I know that I can trust this page as a person. So I'm going to pass this information along to other people that trust me. And that's another great way to get high quality links.

- One of the things that I'm wondering this all feels fantastic, also feels like it takes a lot of time. It's a lot of leg work. It's a lot of, it's a lot of research and choosing who to talk to and how to talk to them and to ask for the link. What kind of time should a small business owner be devoting to link building?

- Well, you know that's a really good question and you are right it does take a very long time. It can take a very long time, depending on how dedicated you are to this type of a marketing practice. So how I would answer that is it's one of many factors that can help your website and your business become, you know, become successful online. It's by no means something that you have to do because there's other factors that people and Google look at. And so really what you have to think about is what you know, what do your team resources look like? Do you have the, the, the money, you know to spend on, you know the hours that it will take identifying these opportunities and reaching out to them. Now, that being said, there are very, very legitimate PR companies out there that can help you with this. And so you can absolutely contract out a reputable, worthwhile local team. Talk about your business goals who can help you with digital marketing and link building will probably be a component of that. But if you're really, you know, if you're a solopreneur or you're trying to spend these hours, you know on your own, I would, I would definitely

recommend planning on each time you sit down, spending two to three hours on your outreach. And then you have to think about, you know when these people respond, a lot of them want to know more about you and want to have a conversation. It's a relationship building practice. So, you know, if you feel like this is right, if this is one of the methods that you really want to focus on, it's, I would definitely recommend planning out several hours a week.

- I'm just thinking I have I have businesses outside of Namecheap as well. And I'm just thinking that when we're allowed to go back outside networking or virtual networking, there's always people in similar adjacent businesses who are also there. And I'm thinking actually maybe this is something that should be top of mind of the agenda to talk to people about how you can support and help each other in when you're creating content to create backlinks and asking would you, would you use me in your next piece? And to start to create that collaboration in those networks that people are in. I think that's more

- Yeah.

- To become more top of mind and less of an afterthought definitely, I think.

- Yeah, I, I agree. And, and again, you, you mentioned like going back out and networking in person again, the, in the fall before, the fall of 2019, I attended WordCamp US on behalf of Namecheap. And that's one of the things that I absolutely did. Is as I was going by finding people that might have a complimentary service to what Namecheap offers just talking to them about what they need for their website and, and multiple ways that we can work together to bring you know, potential customers, to, to services that are going to be valuable for them and how, how that's going to work together. Specifically, I talked to WordPress plugin developers and WordPress theme developers that were in attendance there. And, you know, some of those relationships did turn into something where we worked together on, you know either content or even just conversations about, you know our, our, our products and some of them didn't. But, but it was, it was absolutely, absolutely

useful. And you learn about your own product as well when you have those conversations.

- It's all about building relationships, isn't it, really?

- Yeah.

- Yeah. Well, this has been absolutely fascinating, Rodney. Thank you so much for doing this for us.

- Yeah, thank you.

- And I do not know how to finish. Maybe we should stop it before I .

- Gotcha, that sounds good.

- Awesome. Thanks, Rodney.

- Thanks, Emily.