

# Linkless Mentions Contribute to Your Dermatology Website Search Rankings

Linkless mentions are set to assume greater significance in SEO with the growing preference for voice search.

**BY NAREN ARULRAJAH**

Linkless mentions are the newest buzzword in the world of search engine optimization (SEO) and online marketing. As the name suggests, if your brand or business is mentioned on a third-party website without any hyperlink, then it is known as a linkless mention (or linkless backlink). Linkless mentions are set to assume greater significance in SEO with the growing preference for voice search, wherein convenient links are not always available for users to click on.

However, links continue to matter in organic rankings. There are plenty of studies to indicate that there is a powerful connection between search engine rankings and link signals. Links represent user trust and this makes them truly significant.

With search engines improving in comprehending user sentiment (such as deciphering content that is valued by users, trusted sources, and opinions that matter to them), there is a likelihood that linkless mentions will matter just as much as actual links sooner than later.

## HOW DOES SENTIMENT ANALYSIS FACTOR IN?

It is a known fact that sentiment analysis has a significant role to play in certain search engine ranking algorithms. This is supported by Bing's Webmaster Guidelines, which assert that social media assumes significance when it comes to good rankings in search results. It adds that influence is what counts when it comes to social media.

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When you are influential socially, your followers will be more likely to share your information extensively, and this leads to Bing spotting such positive signals. The guidelines state that such positive signals can have an effect on your organic ranking in the long-term.

The Search Quality Evaluators' Guidelines of Google, which are used by the company's human raters to evaluate page quality, specify that page quality rating is also determined by any independent reputation information that exists about the website. These guidelines specify that when the website's opinion about itself is contradicted by reputable external sources, it is best to go with the external sources.

According to the guidelines, the term reputable source refers to information that is written by a person and not statistics of any kind or information gathered by a machine. Blog posts, forum discussions, magazine articles, Wikipedia articles, and ratings from independent agencies are all considered reputable sources.

The part played by sentiment analysis in Google's ranking algorithms is not mentioned here in particular. But it seems to hint that Google is intent on delivering the best possible user experience, and reputation management is of relevance here. This is where linkless mentions are bound to get counted as a valuable signal in online reputation and popularity of a website.

## HANDLING LINKLESS MENTIONS

It might seem that optimizing for linkless mentions is not an easy task. However, the following five steps make it pretty simple.

### 1 Track all mentions of your brand and keyword.

A reliable social listening tool that will notify you every time someone alludes to your target keywords or your brand is one thing you need. Irrespective of which tracking tool you choose, it is best to pick an app that can sort linkless mentions in descending order so you are aware of the influencers that are most relevant.

When pursuing this type of tracking, pay heed to the words people use to discuss your dermatology brand and the words used to describe it. From this, you can identify any existing descriptions or keywords that you missed out on and start monitoring those as well.

In an ideal situation, your business will have a healthy social perception in keeping with your branding. Damage control might be essential if this is not the case.

### 2 Optimize off-page SEO.

Off-page SEO is essential to keep clients engaged and when sharing your expertise with a larger audience.

Begin with a little practical research. With the help of your social listening tools, pinpoint the social media channels preferred by your audience. Build a presence for your brand on these networks and stay operative there with frequent posts and interesting updates as well as by researching hashtags frequently utilized by other influencers.

Next, see if you can extend your reach to a wider audience who may be curious about your brand. Get in touch with influencers within your niche who might relish a guest post. You can also post a friendly response on another's blog.

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Lastly, check if you can think of some more ways of sharing your expertise. You could respond to queries on Quora or other similar relevant message boards, come up with a series of how-to videos on YouTube, or look for other ways of making riveting off-site assets.

### 3 Do not ignore reviews.

Keep track of all reviews related to your business. The positive reviews can help you learn what you are doing right and stick to those practices, while bad reviews can help you think of ways to improve.

Ensure that your outreach strategies include a request for reviews. Every time a customer speaks to you about a positive experience or how customer service helped them, prompt them to share their experience online. Positive reviews are always welcome!

### 4 Address client concerns.

A survey for Sprout Social indicates that brands respond only to 11 percent of customer complaints or queries on social media platforms. Also, despite claims by most companies that they offer excellent customer service, only eight percent of their clients agree with this.

It is a fact that most businesses and professional practitioners do not really listen to what clients are saying. If negative reviews are not what you want, it is essential to read these and solve issues before they snowball.

If you still get occasional negative reviews, respond to them and indicate to your audience that you are listening to what they are saying. Explain how you intend to remedy their less-than-satisfactory experience.

### 5 Watch over competitors.

After optimizing your social mention strategy, analyze your competitors. Look closely at their engagement to pinpoint content or sharing strategies that can prove helpful.

It will definitely give you insight into your rival's content strategy, and you can congratulate yourself if you are ahead

in the race. It is also possible that you will come across platforms that you were not aware of and find a new audience with potential.

## LOOKING AT THE FUTURE OF LINK-BUILDING

When done right, link-building continues to be the foremost means of communicating with your audience, sharing content, and capturing top rankings.

But remember that links and linkless mentions alone are of zero value to search engines. They are just a means to help search engines learn more about their users. It is likely that link-building will become redundant should search engines come up with an improved and more accurate method of gauging user trust.

Nothing can replace great content as the key to long-term, sustainable high search engine rankings. With excellent content, users are sure to be hooked and drive your links and linkless mentions. ■

*Naren Arulrajah is President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education, and the online reputations of dermatologists. With a team of 180+ full time marketers, [www.ekwa.com](http://www.ekwa.com) helps dermatologists who know where they want to go, get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call 855-598-3320 to speak one-on-one with Naren.*



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