

# Latest Link Building Trends for Dermatology Online Marketing

Those who comprehend and follow the new trends in link building can build powerful links for truly remarkable content.

**BY NAREN ARULRAJAH WITH VIKAS VIJ**

When the history of Internet search is written, the year 2012 may well be counted as the watershed year that changed link building forever. For several years, Google and other search engines had been hinting at countering questionable link building practices, but the real dramatic action came only in 2012. Websites that engaged in such practices and had ruled search engine rankings for years dropped out of Google's favor practically overnight. Dubious link networks were identified and devalued, causing a hit to the rankings of websites across the spectrum. Smart Internet marketers and SEO experts have learned their lesson quickly and adapted themselves to the new link building environment that encourages organic or natural link building activity.

If your dermatology website has suffered in terms of search rankings over the last one year or so, it could be because of the dubious link building practices that your SEO team may have followed unwittingly. It is very much possible to clean up the link building act, develop new and organic link networks, and follow the latest trends in SEO and link building to crawl back to the top of search engine rankings. It is important for your SEO and link building team to know what they are doing. If they are able to comprehend and follow the new trends in link building, it is actually much easier today than before to build powerful links for truly remarkable content.

## LINK NETWORKS ARE OUT

A surprisingly large number of dermatology website marketers still go "link shopping" in the hope that it will catapult their website to the top of page rankings. However, this

---

The new Internet search paradigm is less about links and SEO and more about creating value for the readers.

---

is a risky practice now, considering how hard Google and other search engines have been coming down on those who engage in bulk link purchases, link exchanges, or other such schemes. For a dermatology online marketer, it is important to understand what a link network is, and whether the easy links it offers are too good to be true. Link network is essentially a group of websites that are connected to each other. These sites could be owned by a single person or different people and carefully camouflaged to escape being identified by a search engine.

With Google's Panda and Penguin algorithmic updates, websites involved with dubious link networks wittingly or unwittingly can expect to be punished severely in terms of their search rankings. Search engines are likely to de-index dubious networks, and the cascade effect can spoil the rankings of the websites that have based their link building off those networks. Link networks indulge in a lot of duplication in terms of content and social signals and make rampant use of cross-linking between sites. Google's Webmaster Guidelines clearly warn against the use of automated programs or services to generate links to a website.



## IDEAL LINKS FOR A DERMATOLOGY WEBSITE

In the new SEO environment, the most important goal for a dermatology website is to create “linkable assets” that are outstanding and compelling. Unless the website offers real value in terms of content and presentation, it will be difficult to win useful links organically. It is also important to reach out to key influencers and eventually convince them to link with the website. The following are some of the ideal links that a dermatology website should aim for.

**Links for authoritative sources.** Authoritative sources from a search engine’s perspective are such websites that rank very high in terms of site rank and page rank and enjoy a very strong traffic and are linked widely. When a dermatologist’s website is linked with a high ranking web page, it adds excellent SEO value to the site. Trustworthiness and credibility of a website go up simply because a bit of the top reputation of the linking site rubs off on the linked site.

**Links that generate targeted traffic.** Relevant and logical links that can help a dermatology website achieve higher local traffic of potential patients continue to remain most important. It is immaterial whether such links are powerful from Google’s perspective or not. As long as they lead to greater business for the dermatology practice, they should be pursued vigorously.

**Forum and social media links.** Natural links from respected online discussion forums continue to remain important even today. Links from social networks such as Facebook and Twitter are also very valuable from an SEO perspective. Search engines have recognized the massive reach and power of social media and are willing to acknowledge websites that enjoy significant social network activity and social media links.

**Links through column writing and blogging.** One of the effective ways for a dermatologist to achieve high quality links is to engage with reputed online publications and top blogs for guest writing. Columns, articles, and blogs published on leading websites can yield superior links for the dermatologist’s website and help build excellent SEO value over a period of time.

## LINK BUILDING TRENDS TO WATCH OUT FOR

While it is almost certainly going to be futile to indulge in old strategies, such as purchasing ready-made link building packages or working with link directories, there are certain new trends that can strengthen organic link building.

**Infographics.** Accurate, creative, and unique infographics can add substantial value to the link building efforts for a dermatology practice. It is not necessary to create complicated and jargon-filled infographics. The goal must be to deliver relevant information to the target audience in a highly efficient and attractive manner.

**Videos.** A growing number of readers prefer to view a brief but succinct video as opposed to reading through reams of text. Video links have better chances to go viral and produce many back links for the website. The focus should be on creating high-quality, original videos that provide exclusive value to the target audience.

**Specialist directories.** The day of the generic directory created solely for the purpose of link building is over. However, this does not signal the end of the genuine, specialist directory that is topical, curated, and purposeful. Directories that do not indulge in any manipulative tactics to outwit search engine algorithms should be valued for link building. Dermatologists can look for such specialist directories and websites to generate good links.

**Links in press and media.** One of the biggest trends in link building in the near future is going to be the integration between public relations and SEO. Dermatology marketers that can successfully engage with print, electronic, and digital media journalists may end up achieving links through their publications. Such links can prove to be very powerful and continue to yield value for a long time to come.

## LINK WISELY

The new Internet search paradigm is less about links and SEO and more about creating value for the readers. Dermatologists should identify and recognize the innovative ways in which their practice, services, knowledge, and ideas can be discovered, shared, and linked on the Internet for maximum effect. The Internet marketers who will focus on linking wisely rather than linking recklessly are going to achieve remarkable results for their dermatologist clients in 2013 and beyond. ■

*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 130+ full-time marketers, Ekwa.com helps one doctor in an area dominate their market and grow their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call Naren direct at 877-249-9666.*

