

RezNEWS Feature Article Link Building and Top Revenue Generating Directories

Website search engine optimization (SEO) requires skill, diligent effort, and diverse strategies. SEO techniques such as adjusting meta tags, page content, and pay per click campaigns, can have almost immediate impact on increasing your website revenue. Other activities such as content building, press releases, and link building, are done to improve the “organic positioning” (i.e. natural ranking) of your website over time. There are no quick fixes to getting a website to the top of major search engines such as Google, MSN, or Yahoo. It takes time and consistent effort. If you don't do the work, your website's organic positioning will suffer. This month's **RezNEWS** feature article will focus on the role of link building and directories, in improving your organic positioning in major search engines.

Link building plays an intricate part of the success or failure of your website's organic positioning. The major search engines tend to favor older, larger websites, which have relevant content, and a high number of incoming relevant links. Link building is the process of increasing the number of incoming relevant links to your website, to increase your “link popularity.”

The *relevancy* of a link refers to how these links to your site complement or relate to your website. In other words, if a well known lodging directory links to you, it is better than if you get a link from your cousin's muffler website. It should also be noted that link building takes time, costs money, and the results take time to measure. However, those who diligently do link building, as a steady component of their Internet marketing program, will see improvement in their organic website search engine placement.

The difference between search engine “organic listings” and pay per click listings are often confused. Organic listings are frequently called “free listings” and display down the left-hand side of a search engine's web page, as you look below the *highlighted* pay per click ads (which are located both on the top *and* right-hand side of most major search engines).

Organic listings are not actually “free.” It takes time, money, and diligent hard work, to move up in the organic listings of the major search engines. All consumers want their websites to be on the first page of Google for key search terms. This goal can be even more challenging if you exist in a competitive travel market, and are contending against directory websites, or websites that have been around a long time, are already optimized well, and have a high number of links from other relevant websites.

Link building contributes significantly in increasing the link popularity of your own website. Websites are found by search engines, via their web crawl, and are displayed in order of their relevance according to that search engine's algorithm. Simply put the more relevant links you have, the higher your organic placement will be. Some links are free, and some come with a yearly membership fee, or a one-time fee. RezStream recommends that you establish a yearly budget to purchase links and join website directories, which yield a high return on investment (ROI), and improve your organic placement in major search engines.

RezNEWS Tip: Once you add relevant links to your website it can take many months before these links are credited to your website and recognized by the search engines. Therefore, it is important to consistently add new links to your website over time.

Below are some leading lodging directories and websites that are known to produce positive results for hospitality businesses. While you may not join all of these directories, depending on your business model, or budget, they offer a good starting point for key lodging websites that you might want to consider.

Note: The following websites/directories are in order of relative priority (however, if you own a hotel property, you would probably not join a bed and breakfast directory).

Yahoo Directory	Yahoo Local	SkiCoupons.com
Google Maps	discoverourtown.com	Super Pages
bbonline.com	purpleroofts.com	petswelcome.com
roadandtravel.com	virtualcities.com	travelpost.com
bedandbreakfast.com	lanierbb.com	yourwedding101.com
spaindex.com	iloveinns.com	sidestep.com
bnbfinder.com	wheretostay.com	bnblist.com
vacationidea.com	bbdirectory.com	kayak.com
resortsandlodges.com	holidayjunction.com	roadlodging.com
luxurytravelmagazine.com	Google Images	pets-allowed-hotels.com
selectregistry.com	travelassist.com	theinnkeeper.com

Conclusion

Link building is a key component of a successful Internet marketing program. *RezStream recommends you budget \$250-1,000 a month for link building if you can afford it.* In most cases, the more you spend the better results you achieve in your long-term organic placement in search engines. Do you have a link-building strategy? Are you effectively budgeting, tracking, and actively submitting your website to beneficial directories? If not, call RezStream to learn how we can help you create a well rounded Internet marketing program.

About the author

Bill Mitchell is co-owner and Chief Operating Officer for RezStream. Bill has over 30 years experience in the hospitality industry with extensive knowledge in management and marketing for hotels, resorts, and bed and breakfasts. Bill is recognized nationally as a featured speaker and consultant for the hospitality industry.