

Competitor Backlink Analysis: An A-Z Guide (With Link Tracking Template and Scripts)

 robbierichards.com/algo.html

Robbie

Are you tired of being outranked by your competitors?

Do you wish you could steal their backlinks, rankings and traffic?

(“YES, THAT’S EXACTLY WHAT I WANT, ROBBIE!”)

Good, because this is exactly what I’ll be showing you how to do in this post with a technique I like to call the **RLR approach**.

This is the first link building tactic I implement when taking on new clients, and has helped me land hundreds of high quality [links for businesses](#) across a range of industries, from B2B SaaS companies to national franchise operations.

And drive this blog steadily towards 1,000 referring domains:



This is a step-by-step “technique” that can be replicated for any website.

It requires zero creativity; all you need to do is follow the step-by-step framework laid out below.

Sound good?

Here’s the process in a nutshell:

1. Find competitors (i.e. similar websites and/or pages in your niche) with many high-authority inbound links (**research**)
2. Figure out *how* competitors are building links (**learn**)

3. Replicate/steal their tactics (**replicate**)

And if that sounds simple..*it's because it is.*

But before we dive into the tactics, let's better understand why we're doing this...

Why Should You Start Analyzing Competitor Backlink Profiles?

Competitor analysis is an important element of any link building campaign.

Why?

Because running an in-depth backlink analysis across your top competitors gives you several valuable insights that can save you a ton of time and money, while increasing your chances for success.

It teaches you about the industry:

Which competitors are landing the most backlinks, and which sites in your vertical are more likely to give backlinks.

It helps you understand several key things about your competitors:

- Get a behind-the-scenes look at your competitor's backlink profile, and *why* they rank for different search terms
- The specific strategies and tactics used to land quality links
- The growth of their link profile (are they dedicating a lot of resources?)
- The types of content attracting the most backlinks

And, arguably the most important insight:

Understand the resources that didn't acquire many links.

This information can help you avoid investing a ton of time and money into link building campaigns that have little to no chance of success.

It's kind of like having your own secret crystal ball :)

Ok, let's dive in!

Step #1 - Find top "linked-to" competitors (i.e. Research)

Before you can start replicating tactics, you first need to find competitors who have a proven track record of landing quality links.

I'm going to run through a process for doing this but first, let me ask you a question:

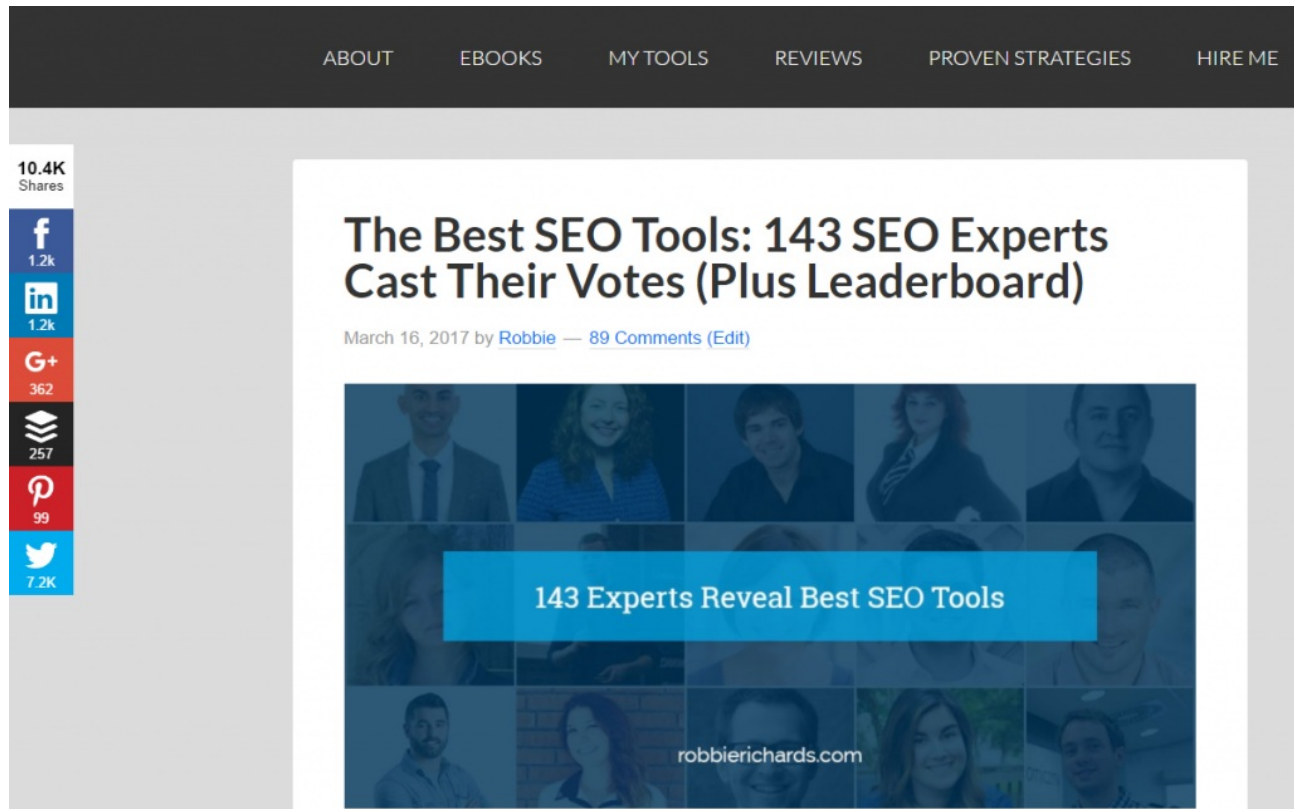
Are you trying to build links to a specific (already-existing) page, or to your site in general?

The competitor backlink analysis process will differ slightly depending on your answer.

Why?

Because if you're looking to build links to a particular page, you need to find page-level competitors rather than domain-level competitors.

Let's say that I was trying to build links to [this post](#), for example:



In this case, it'd make much more sense to find other highly linked-to pages about "seo tools" and reverse engineer the links pointing directly at those pages, rather than looking at links for the site as a whole.

But if you're looking to build links at the domain-level, analyze your competitor's overarching link building strategies (or are simply looking for "linkworthy" content ideas), it makes more sense to find domain-level competitors.

Either way, there are three main ways to find competitors, and the basic process is the same whether you're looking to replicate domain-level or page-level links.

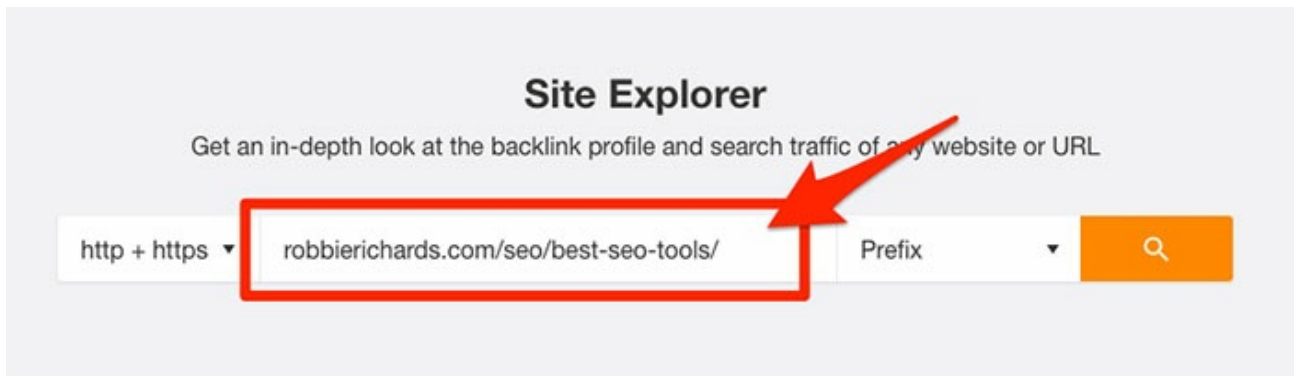
Let's walk through them now!

Method #1 - Find "competing domains" / "competing pages" (using Ahrefs)

Ahrefs has a nifty tool that allows you to pluck out competing domains (or pages) at the touch of a button.

Here's how to do it:

Go to [Site Explorer](#) and enter the domain (or URL) you want to build links to:



Select the "Competing domains" option from the left-hand menu:

The screenshot shows the left-hand menu of the Ahrefs Site Explorer. The menu items are: "Organic search" (with a dropdown arrow), "Organic keywords" (with sub-items "New" and "Movements"), "Top pages" (with a flame icon), "Competing domains" (highlighted with a red rectangle), "Competing pages", and "Content gap" (with a flame icon). Below the menu is a table with three columns of data.

Organic search ▼	11,980	870	308
Organic keywords	12,256	600	1,047
• New			
• Movements			
Top pages 🔥	12,449	407	0
Competing domains			
Competing pages	12,511	345	74
Content gap 🔥			
Pages ▼	10,500	804	0

This will show a list of sites ranking for similar keywords to your domain:

ahrefs Dashboard Alerts Site Explorer Content Explorer Keywords Explorer Tools ▾

http ▾ www.robberichards.com × *.domain/* ▾ 🔍 ⚙️ Settings

Overview
Backlink profile ▾
Backlinks

- New
- Lost
- Broken

Referring domains

- New
- Lost

Anchors

- Top referring content
- Referring IPs

Organic search ▾
Organic keywords

- New
- Movements

Top pages 🔥
Competing domains
Competing pages
Content gap 🔥
Pages ▾
Best by links
Best by links' growth
Best by shares
Top content
Outgoing links ▾

Competing Domains

Volume ▾ KD ▾ CPC ▾ Words ▾

🇺🇸 US 🇮🇳 IN 🇬🇧 GB 🇦🇺 AU More ▾

Keywords				Competing domain
Unique www.robberichards.com	Common ↓	Unique competitor's		
1,250	1,981	216,910		moz.com ▾
1,335	1,896	192,165		kissmetrics.com ▾
1,688	1,543	148,185		shoutmeloud.com ▾
1,708	1,523	67,350		neilpatel.com ▾
1,741	1,490	561,351		hubspot.com ▾
1,817	1,414	120,605		wordstream.com ▾
1,881	1,350	28,623		semrush.com ▾
1,912	1,319	17,481		backlinko.com ▾
1,973	1,258	183,974		searchengineland.com ▾
2,033	1,198	24,334		seobook.com ▾
2,141	1,090	13,414		ahrefs.com ▾

Note: If you're building links at the page-level, select "Competing pages" instead (this is directly under "competing domains")

You should now see a list of competing domains or URLs.

Here are the competing pages for my list of SEO tools:

Competing Pages

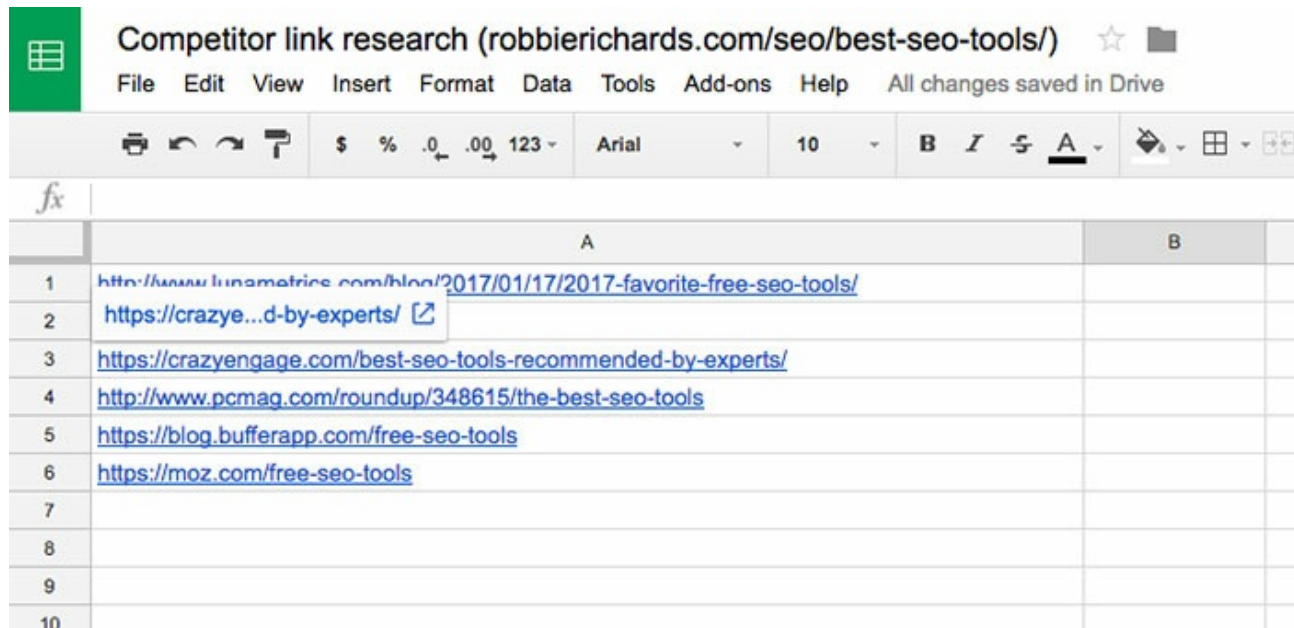
Volume ▾ KD ▾ CPC ▾ Words ▾

🇺🇸 US 🇮🇳 IN 🇬🇧 GB 🇦🇺 AU More ▾

Keywords				Competing page
Unique www.robberichards.com	Common ↓	Unique competitor's		
0	156	0		http://www.robberichards.com/seo/best-seo-tools/ ▾
78	78	2,152		http://www.lunametrics.com/blog/2017/01/17/2017-favorite-free-seo-tools/ ▾
80	76	1,191		http://backlinko.com/seo-tools ▾
89	67	248		http://www.pcmag.com/roundup/348615/the-best-seo-tools ▾
89	67	86		https://crazyengage.com/best-seo-tools-recommended-by-experts/ ▾
98	58	863		https://blog.bufferapp.com/free-seo-tools ▾
115	41	414		https://moz.com/free-seo-tools ▾

Look through the competing pages.

Add any pages/sites that compete with your content to the Google Sheet (in the Prospects tab):



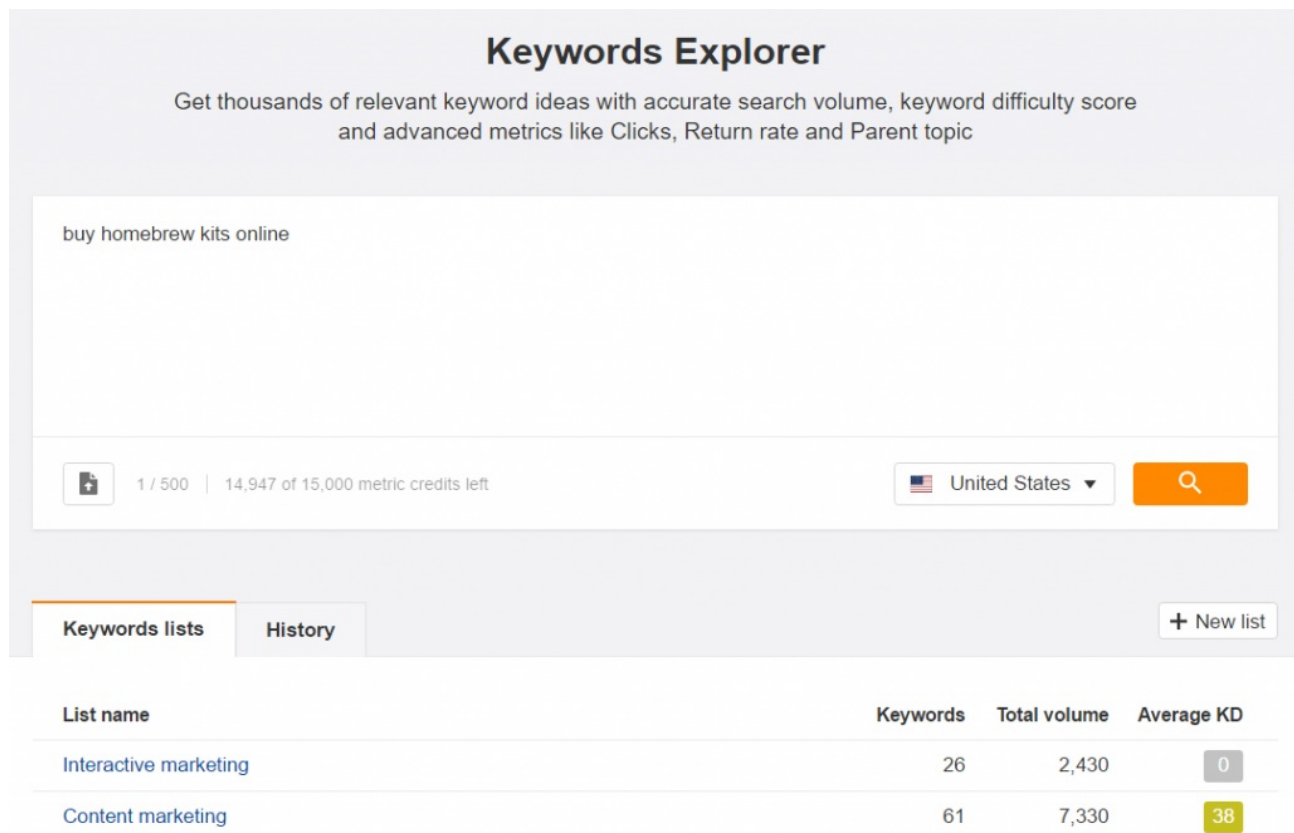
Competitor link research (robbierichards.com/seo/best-seo-tools/)

	A	B
1	http://www.lunametrics.com/blog/2017/01/17/2017-favorite-free-seo-tools/	
2	https://crazyengagedbyexperts/	
3	https://crazyengage.com/best-seo-tools-recommended-by-experts/	
4	http://www.pcmag.com/roundup/348615/the-best-seo-tools	
5	https://blog.bufferapp.com/free-seo-tools	
6	https://moz.com/free-seo-tools	
7		
8		
9		
10		

Method #2 - Find the top 10 ranking pages for your target search term (via Ahrefs KW Explorer)

Go to [Keyword Explorer](#).

Enter a target keyword (e.g. “*buy homebrew kits online*”):



Keywords Explorer

Get thousands of relevant keyword ideas with accurate search volume, keyword difficulty score and advanced metrics like Clicks, Return rate and Parent topic

buy homebrew kits online

1 / 500 | 14,947 of 15,000 metric credits left

United States

Keywords lists | History | + New list

List name	Keywords	Total volume	Average KD
Interactive marketing	26	2,430	0
Content marketing	61	7,330	38

Hit search.

Scroll down to the SERP overview. This shows you the top 10 ranking pages (in Google) for that search term:

Search results ⁱ		AR ⁱ	DR ⁱ	UR ⁱ	Backlinks ⁱ	Domains ⁱ	Ti
► Shopping result							
► 3 adwords top							
1	Northern Brewer: America's #1 Home Brewing Supplies https://www.northernbrewer.com/ ▼	106K	58	26	93	33	2
► 4 site links							
2	Homebrew Supply - Ingredients, Kits, Equipment and More! https://www.homebrewsupply.com/ ▼	2M	49	36	171,278	138	
► 3 site links							
3	Top online home brew stores Community BeerAdvocate https://www.beeradvocate.com/community/threads/top-online-home-brew-stores.68847/ ▼	12K	65	12	1	1	
4	Austin Homebrew Supply - Brewing Supplies - Wine Making Supplies http://www.austinhomebrew.com/ ▼	856K	51	49	13,872	586	
5	MoreBeer - Beer Making Kits and Home Brewing Supplies https://www.morebeer.com/ ▼	137K	57	54	249,201	974	1
6	Rebel Brewer Homebrewing Supplies https://www.rebelbrewer.com/ ▼	4M	45	12	1	1	

It will also provide several page-level SEO metrics, including URL rating, backlink and referring domain count.

Add competing content to your Google Sheet (again, just add them onto the Prospects tab):

Note: I recommend adding only sites with 20+ referring domains (RDs) to your spreadsheet. Any sites/URLs with less than 20 RD's usually aren't worth the time investment because of the filters we'll be setting up later in this tutorial.

Method #3 - Search Google for “competing domains” / “competing pages”

At this stage, you probably have a decent sized list to work with.

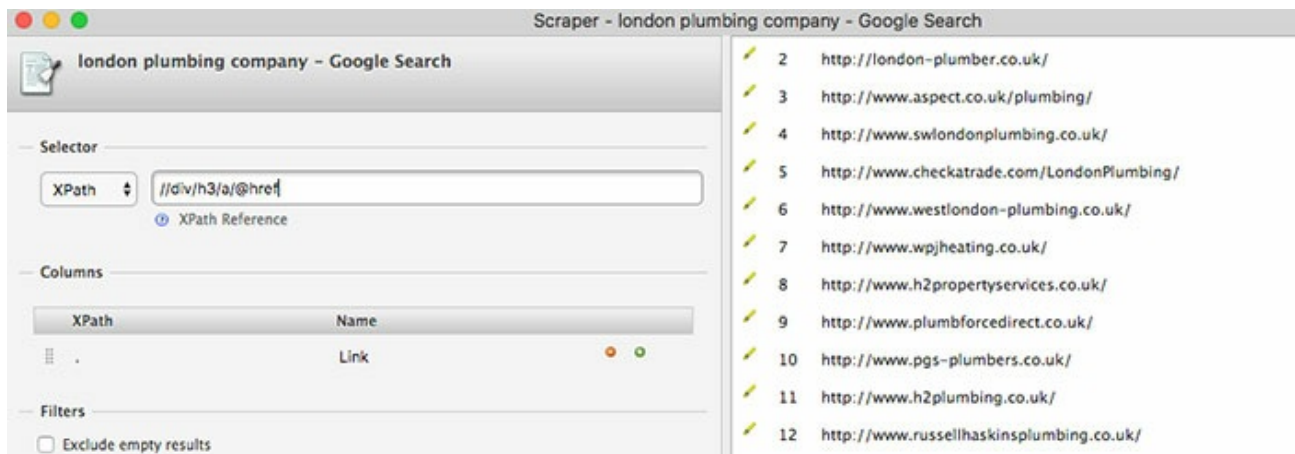
But if you still want to scale up and find more sites (or if your site doesn't currently really rank for much and, thus, Ahrefs has a hard time finding a good list of competitors), do this:

Go to Google and enter a keyword/phrase that defines what your site (or page) is all about (e.g. if you run a plumbing company in London, you might search for “*london plumbing company*”):

london plumbing company



Use [this free scraper extension](#) (for Chrome) to extract the search results into a neat list:



Note: Make sure to use the settings shown in the screenshot above!

“Copy to clipboard” and...yep, you guessed it, paste them into the *Prospects* tab in your spreadsheet.

Rinse and repeat this process for additional pages and/or keywords if necessary.

Note: Because you’re scraping all results here, you may need to manually remove any non-relevant results from your spreadsheet.

This can be solved in two ways:

#1. Run your entire list through [URL Profiler](#).

Just make sure to check the *Ahrefs* checkbox under *URL Level Data*:

This will kick back a spreadsheet with both the number of backlinks + referring domains.

Remove the other columns then copy/paste the data into your Google Sheet (I recommend that you just overwrite the existing data in the Prospects tab, it won't matter).

Here's an example of how it should look (I also added a filter and sorted by # of RDs):

A	B	C
URL	URL Ahrefs Backlin	URL Ahrefs Ref Doma
https://moz.com/free-seo-tools	390223	2662
http://tools.seobook.com/	125864	1639
http://backlinko.com/seo-tools	1189	353
http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/tools/free-seo-tools/	608	189
https://blog.bufferapp.com/free-seo-tools	596	140
http://www.creativeblog.com/web-design/best-new-seo-tools-7133746	469	121
http://www.toptenreviews.com/business/marketing/best-seo-tools/	650	115
http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/best-seo-tools/	428	109
http://www.lunametrics.com/blog/2017/01/17/2017-favorite-free-seo-tools/	286	93
https://searchenginewatch.com/sew/how-to/2402794/the-best-seo-tools-2015-edition	415	90
http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/6948-seo-tools.html	195	82
https://curatedseotools.com/	196	57
http://www.pcmag.com/roundup/348615/the-best-seo-tools	171	54
https://blog.kissmetrics.com/seven-free-seo-tools/	96	53
https://crazyengage.com/best-seo-tools-recommended-by-experts/	113	47
https://www.webceo.com/online-seo-tools.htm	226	46
https://www.link-assistant.com/seo-software/compare-seo-tools.html	159	38

Now you will have a massive list of competing content with the number of backlinks and referring domains mapped back to each page.

You can quickly remove pages/posts that do not meet the minimum RD threshold discussed in the previous step.

#2. If you don't have URL Profiler, you can use the [Ahrefs Batch Analysis tool](#) to do this. However, you'll be limited to 200 URLs at a time.

Simply paste the URLs into the tool and hit "Start Analysis":

ahrefs Dashboard Alerts Site Explorer Content Explorer Keywords Explorer Tools ▼

Quick Batch Analysis Generate multiple backlink reports at once by entering a list of domains or URLs

[https://moz.com/free-seo-tools](#)
[http://tools.seobook.com/](#)
[http://backlinko.com/seo-tools](#)
[http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/tools/free-seo-tools/](#)
[https://blog.bufferapp.com/free-seo-tools](#)
[http://www.creativeblog.com/web-design/best-new-seo-tools-7133746](#)

Auto mode ▼ Fresh index ▼ **Start Analysis** Up to 200 URLs

38 Domains/URLs have been analyzed. [Export](#)

Referring domains

Domain/URL	Organic search	Ahrefs ratings	Referring domains
Target	Keywords	Traffic	UR DR Ahrefs Total gov .edu
https://moz.com/free-seo-tools	1,830	15,491	80 74 618 2,863 2 10
http://tools.seobook.com/	3,057	20,989	77 67 6,444 1,881 1 3
http://backlinko.com/seo-tools	3,116	5,024	46 66 7,151 454 0 2
http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/tools/free-seo-tools/	653	297	40 59 68,819 263 0 1
https://blog.bufferapp.com/free-seo-tools	2,697	46,442	38 74 764 183 0 0
http://www.creativeblog.com/web-design/best-new-seo-tools-7133746	157	13	35 70 2,584 178 0 2
http://www.toptenreviews.com/business/marketing/best-seo-tools/	455	351	36 67 5,304 160 0 1
http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/best-seo-tools/	828	369	34 59 60,072 143 0 0

The tool will map a bunch of link and keyword data back to each URL.

Export the list and filter by number of RDs to get a cleaned list of targets to start replicating.

Step #2 - Finding where (and how) competitors are landing backlinks (i.e. Learn)

Now you've got a list of competing websites/URLs, it's time to start reverse engineering their backlink profiles and figure out *where* they're getting links.

I'm going to split this step into two sections:

1. **Getting a 10,000-foot view** — I'll discuss a few tactics for getting a high-level view as to where and how your competitors are getting links.
2. **Five quick-win tactics** — my five go-to tactics when doing competitor research; these are super-actionable things you can implement right away.

Note: I'll be using Ahrefs for most of this guide going forward. While I do wholeheartedly recommend using Ahrefs if you intend to follow this guide (you can get a 14-day free trial [here!](#)), you can also use other tools like [SEMrush](#), [Majestic](#), [Open Site Explorer](#) or just find out what the top link builders use [here](#).

The 10,000 Ft View: Find where your competitors get links

The "10,000-foot" process is not about pinpointing (and replicating) exact link sources, but rather:

- Analysing the niche as a whole to identify where and how competitors are getting links.
- Understanding the common backlink types and sources in the niche (e.g. forum links, guest posts, product reviews, directories, etc.)
- Figuring out what type of content is going to land links (e.g. long-form blog posts, videos, interactive content, case studies)

In short, **it's about getting a high-level view of what's working (and what isn't working)** for the competition. This will help define your SEO and content strategies going forward.

Here are 3 ways you can do this:

#1 - Look at all competitor backlinks

Go to [Site Explorer](#), paste in a competitor's domain, then go to:

Backlink profile > Referring domains > add a dofollow filter:

Overview

Backlink profile ▾

Backlinks

- New
- Lost
- Broken

Referring domains

- New
- Lost

Organic search ▾

Referring Domainsⁱ

Dofollow ▾ TLDs ▾ Search in results 🔍

Fresh index | **Live index**ⁱ 8,601 results

Referring domain	DR ↓ ⁱ	Ahrefs rank ⁱ	Backlinks ⁱ	/
plus.google.com ▾	94	4	69 ▾	
wordpress.org ▾	93	6	4 ▾	
linkedin.com ▾	93	7	1 ▾	

Look over the domains and find patterns as to where the links are coming from (e.g. forums, blogs, directories, etc.) — if you do this for a few of your competitors, you'll start to see common themes and quickly understand the link building strategies that work well in your niche:

6	50 best free fonts for designers Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/graphic-design-tips/best-free-fonts-for-designers-1233380 ▾ EN	50	585	13,351	826	23	8 Aug '13	8 d
								list post
7	25 logo design tips from the experts Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/graphic-design/pro-guide-logo-design-21221 ▾ EN	49	512	1,417	686	10	8 Aug '13	11 h
								list post
8	10 free tools for creating infographics Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/infographic/tools-2131971 ▾ EN COMMENT-SYSTEMS	49	498	964	859	11	8 Aug '13	4 d
								list post
9	The 38 best tools for data visualization Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/design-tools/data-visualization-712402 ▾ EN COMMENT-SYSTEMS	46	373	2,521	626	9	8 Aug '13	4 d
								list post
10	18 great parallax scrolling websites Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/web-design/parallax-scrolling-1131762 ▾ EN COMMENT-SYSTEMS	46	346	533	195	13	8 Aug '13	45 h
								list post
11	34 brilliantly designed 404 error pages Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/web-design/best-404-pages-812505 ▾ EN COMMENT-SYSTEMS	44	307	866	132	5	26 Feb '14	19 d
								list post
12	The 100 best infographics Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/graphic-design-tips/information-graph-ics-1232836 ▾ EN COMMENT-SYSTEMS	44	302	480	571	5	8 Aug '13	5 d
								list post

#2 - Look at branded anchors

Go to Site Explorer, paste in a competitor's domain, then go to:

Backlink profile > Anchors > add a dofollow filter:

Anchors

Anchors

Terms

Terms 2 words

Terms 3 words

Terms 4 words

Dofollow

Search in results

Q

Fresh Index

Live Index

758 phrases

Export

Anchor text	Referring domains	/ dofollow	Referring pages	First seen
robbie richards	94 13%	164 8%	18 Mar '15	
robbierichards.com	72 10%	113 6%	18 Mar '15	
16 explosive content promotion strategies	33 5%	42 2%	16 Mar '15	
60 experts reveal top 3 tools to grow your email list	14 2%	16 < 1%	17 Mar '15	
61 experts reveal best keyword research tool for seo	13 2%	8 < 1%	1 Oct '16	
semrush review	13 2%	13 < 1%	1 Jan '16	
robbierichard	12 2%	9 < 1%	9 Feb '17	

Branded anchor links usually derive from one of the following sources: guest posts, directories, editorial mentions, or testimonials.

These are links that can quickly boost authority for sites of any age, and are relatively simple to replicate.

So, if you notice that one or more of your competitors has a lot of branded mentions, it may be the case that one (or more) of these [link building strategies](#) works well in your particular niche.

Hit *Details > Referring domains* to take a closer look at the sources for these links:

Anchor text ⁱ	Referring domains ⁱ	/ dofollow ⁱ	Referring pages ⁱ	First seen ⁱ	Last changed ⁱ	
on-page seo	117 10%	117 10%	172 8%	2 Feb '17	14 h	Details ▲
Referring Domains		Snippets				
Domains with anchor	DR	Backlinks				
seologics.blogspot.com ▼	18	43 ▼				
1010wcsi.com ▼	50	7 ▼				
worldlinksdirectory.com ▼	40	7 ▼				
smpcreative.com.au ▼	40	6 ▼				
gopixel.co.uk ▼	47	6 ▼				
digital-marketing.blogspot.com ▼	22	5 ▼				
knowledgegerise.blogspot.com ▼	16	5 ▼				
seo-analyst-in-india.blogspot.com ▼	10	5 ▼				
localtoprank.blogspot.com ▼	28	4 ▼				
seoserviceproviderr.blogspot.com ▼	17	4 ▼				
Next 10 Next 100 Hide All Export						

link source

of links

Click the "Backlinks" dropdown to find the individual pages on each domain linking to your competitors.

#3 - Look at the site's most linked-to content

In Site Explorer, enter a competitor's domain and go to:

Pages > Best by links

This will show you the most linked-to pages on that domain:

ahrefs Dashboard Alerts Site Explorer Content Explorer Keywords Explorer Tools

http + https roblierichards.com *.domain/ Settings

Overview

Backlink profile

Backlinks

- New
- Lost
- Broken

Referring domains

- New
- Lost

Anchor

Top referring content

Referring IPs

Organic search

Organic keywords

- New
- Movements

Top pages

Competing domains

Competing pages

Content gap

Pages

Best by links

Best by links' growth

Best by shares

Top content

The Best Pages by Backlinks

of referring domains

748 results

#	Page	UR ↓	RD	Dofollow	Nofollow	Redirects
1	Robbie Richards Actionable Online Marketing Strategies www.roblierichards.com/ EN WORDPRESS		169	284	67	2
2	61 Experts Reveal Best Keyword Research Tool For SEO www.roblierichards.com/seo/best-keyword-research-tool/ EN WORDPRESS	34	108	123	91	1
3	16 Explosive Content Promotion Strategies www.roblierichards.com/seo/16-explosive-content-promotion-strategies/ EN WORDPRESS	33	91	114	80	2
4	How To Promote Your Blog Posts to Get 20,109 Social Shares www.roblierichards.com/social/how-to-promote-your-blog-post/ EN WORDPRESS	32	75	87	66	6
5	Content Marketing Case Study: How To Increase Traffic 272% In 30 Days (Without Spending A Penny) www.roblierichards.com/seo/case-study-triple-traffic-in-30-days/ EN WORDPRESS	29	64	74	23	5

If you do this for a few competing domains, you'll start to get a sense about which content types and topics attract the most backlinks in your niche.

For example, in the SEO niche, lengthy blog posts seem to attract the most backlinks:

1,646 results Export

#	Page	UR ↓	RD	Dofollow	Nofollow	Redirects	First Seen	Last check
1	SEO Training and Link Building Strategies – Backlinko backlinko.com/ EN WORDPRESS homepage	81	2,777	12,881	2,621	19	8 Aug '13	36 h
2	Google's 200 Ranking Factors: The Complete List backlinko.com/google-ranking-factors EN WORDPRESS blog post	80	2,257	5,511	1,163	36	8 Aug '13	10 h
3	We Analyzed 1 Million Google Search Results. Here's What We Learned About SEO backlinko.com/search-engine-ranking EN WORDPRESS blog post	76	1,383	2,851	681	21	20 Jan '16	7 d
4	Link Building Case Study: How I Increased My Search Traffic by 110% in 14 Days backlinko.com/skyscraper-technique EN WORDPRESS blog post	75	1,396	4,094	472	10	8 Aug '13	19 d
5	On-Page SEO: Anatomy of a Perfectly Optimized Page (2016 Update) backlinko.com/on-page-seo EN WORDPRESS blog post	56	1,073	1,988	551	11	8 Aug '13	24 h
6	Keyword Research for SEO: The Definitive Guide (2017 Update) backlinko.com/keyword-research EN WORDPRESS blog post	50	578	880	317	8	20 Feb '14	6 d
7	Link Building for SEO: The Definitive Guide (2017 Update) backlinko.com/link-building EN WORDPRESS blog post	50	534	1,046	284	10	8 Aug '13	2 h

But in the graphic design niche, it seems that “list posts” (e.g. “XX ways to do _____”) attract a lot of links:

6	50 best free fonts for designers Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/graphic-design-tips/best-free-fonts-for-designers-1233380 ▼ EN	50	585	13,351	826	23	8 Aug '13	8 d
7	25 logo design tips from the experts Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/graphic-design/pro-guide-logo-design-21221 ▼ EN	49	512	1,417	686	10	8 Aug '13	11 h
8	10 free tools for creating infographics Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/infographic/tools-2131971 ▼ EN COMMENT-SYSTEMS	49	498	964	859	11	8 Aug '13	4 d
9	The 38 best tools for data visualization Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/design-tools/data-visualization-712402 ▼ EN COMMENT-SYSTEMS	46	373	2,521	626	9	8 Aug '13	4 d
10	18 great parallax scrolling websites Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/web-design/parallax-scrolling-1131762 ▼ EN COMMENT-SYSTEMS	46	346	533	195	13	8 Aug '13	45 h
11	34 brilliantly designed 404 error pages Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/web-design/best-404-pages-812505 ▼ EN COMMENT-SYSTEMS	44	307	866	132	5	26 Feb '14	19 d
12	The 100 best infographics Creative Bloq www.creativebloq.com/graphic-design-tips/information-graph-ics-1232836 ▼ EN COMMENT-SYSTEMS	44	302	480	571	5	8 Aug '13	5 d

Whereas personal injury attorneys in competitive locations like Houston get quality links (.edu) from scholarship campaigns and interactive maps:

ahrefs Dashboard Alerts Site Explorer Content Explorer Keywords Explorer Tools ▼

https attorneyguss.com/ × *.domain/* 🔍 ⚙️ Settings

Overview

Backlink profile ▼

Backlinks

- New
- Lost
- Broken

Referring domains

- New
- Lost

Anchors

Top referring content

Referring IPs

Organic search ▼

Organic keywords

- New
- Movements

The Best Pages by Backlinksⁱ

Platforms Languages All HTTP codes Search in results 🔍

1,253 results

#	Page	UR ↓	RD
1	Houston Personal Injury Lawyer - Stewart J. Guss, Attorney At Law - Accident Lawyer in North Houston attorneyguss.com/ ▼ EN WORDPRESS	39	172
2	The Annual Stewart J. Guss College Student Scholarship attorneyguss.com/annual-stewart-j-guss-college-student-scholarship/ ▼ EN WORDPRESS	31	74
3	Houston Accident Map attorneyguss.com/houston-texas-interactive-accident-map/ ▼ EN WORDPRESS	24	43

Clicking on the RDs link for the scholarship page shows all the authoritative .edu links this attorney has been able to generate with a single niche-targeted scholarship campaign:

Overview

Backlink profile ▾

Backlinks

- New
- Lost
- Broken

Referring domains

- New
- Lost

Organic search ▾

Organic keywords

- New
- Movements

Top pages 🔥

Competing domains

Competing pages

Content gap 🔥

Pages ▾

Best by links

Best by links' growth

Best by shares

Top content

Outgoing links ▾

Linked domains

Broken links

English

Referring Domains ⁱ

Educational ▾ TLDs ▾ Search in results 🔍

Fresh index ⁱ | **Live index ⁱ** 74 results ← **Lots of scholarship links**

Referring domain	DR ⁱ	Ahrefs rank ⁱ	Backlinks ⁱ	/ dofollow ⁱ
indiana.edu ▾	72	1,407	2 ▾	2
uci.edu ▾	71	1,446	1 ▲	2
Referring page				
DR UR Ext. Anchor and backlink				
Outside Scholarships www.law.uci.edu/admission/tuition-aid/outside-scholarships.html ▾	71	13	182	Web site: attorneyguss.com/annual-stewardship-report attorneyguss.com/annual-stewardship-report
Hide All Export				
georgetown.edu ▾	70	2,036	1 ▾	1
oregonstate.edu ▾	70	2,067	1 ▾	1
uh.edu ▾	68	4,484	1 ▾	1
louisville.edu ▾	65	10,894	1 ▾	1
wfu.edu ▾	65	11,261	1 ▾	1

After you've followed the 3 steps shown above you should be starting to get a clearer idea of the strategies, tactics and types of content your top rankings competitors are using to build backlinks.

But:

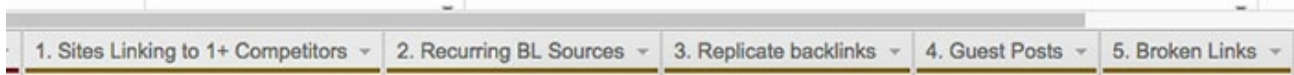
Knowledge is only as powerful as the execution. Now it's time to start replicating your competitor's best backlink sources...

5 “quick win” tactics for replicating competitors links (today)

I'm going to share five super actionable tactics for replicating competitor links.

This is where the [Link Tracking Sheet](#) comes in.

At the bottom of the sheet, you'll see five different tabs:



This is where you'll be logging the prospects you find using each of the five tactics covered below.

Make a copy of the Sheet and let's get started!

Method #1 - Find websites linking to one or more competitors

If a site is linking to one or more of your competitors, chances are they'll be open to linking to you, too.

These sites are high-priority prospects.

But how do you find sites linking to multiple competitors?

The Ahrefs' Link Intersect Tool.

Here's how it works:

Grab a handful of competing domains/URLs from the *Prospects* tab in the Tracking Template (up to 10) and paste them into the tool one-by-one.

Add your domain/URL under the "But doesn't link to (optional)" section:

Note: You should also select the "Any of the below targets" from the "Show me who is linking to..." drop-down at the top of the table.

Click "show link opportunities".

It will now show you all the websites linking to one or more of the competing domains/URLs you entered, but not your page.

By default, the results are ordered by # of link intersects (from highest to lowest):

ahrefs Dashboard Alerts Site Explorer Content Explorer Keywords Explorer Tools ▾

< **Link Intersect** Taking advantage of competitors' links

3,713 domains found not linking to **robberichards.com/seo/best-seo-tools/**

of link intersections

Referring domain	DR	Ahrefs rank	Intersect ↓	1 moz.com/free-seo-tools	2 crazyengage.com/bes
webodir.com ▾	43	7,338,684	3	20	1
webbacklinks.net ▾	39	19,377,322	3		2
lunametrics.com ▾	62	27,199	3	4	2
seoland.in ▾	39	20,069,660	3	1	1
richardnata.blogspot.com ▾	33	46,658,651	3	1	1
weknowtheanswer.com ▾	40	17,536,686	3	1	1
onlinesalesguidetip.com ▾	40	15,784,802	3	2	1
scooblir.com ▾	38	24,347,200	3	1	2
paguito.com ▾	50	1,093,236	2	15	n/a
sitelinks.info ▾	46	3,503,019	2	5	n/a

If you click the corresponding numbers below each URL, it'll show you individual links:

Referring domain	DR	Ahrefs rank	Intersect ↓	1 moz.com/free-seo-tools	2 crazye
webodir.com ▾	43	7,338,684	3		1
webbacklinks.net ▾	39	19,377,322	3		2
lunametrics.com ▾	62	27,199	3	4 ▲	2

individual links

Referring page	DR	URL	Ext.	Anchor and backlink
Our Favorite Free SEO Tools for 2017 www.lunametrics.com/blog/2017/01/17/2017-favorite-free-seo-tools/ ▾	62	33	462	Moz is a suite of user-friendly int moz.com/free-seo-tools ▾
Using Bit.ly for Spying, Link Building and Happiness www.lunametrics.com/blog/2010/02/12/bitly-education-advanced/ ▾	62	19	65	are the most popular. You can us bership required) or search Goog moz.com/free-seo-tools ▾
Our Favorite Free SEO Tools for 2017 www.lunametrics.com/blog/2017/01/17/2017-favorite-free-seo-tools/ ▾	62	13	459	Moz is a suite of user-friendly int moz.com/free-seo-tools ▾
Using Bit.ly for Spying, Link Building and Happiness www.lunametrics.com/blog/2010/02/12/bitly-education-advanced/ ▾	62	11	65	are the most popular. You can us bership required) or search Goog moz.com/free-seo-tools ▾

Work your way down this list and add any high-priority prospects to your spreadsheet.

Basically, you should make sure to log the referring domain/URL + site type (e.g. blog) for each prospect. If you like, you can also note which of your competitors the site is linking to:

Referring Domain / URL	Site type	Links to (#1)	Links to (#2)
http://www.weknowtheanswer.com/	Community	http://backlinko.com	moz.com/
searchenginejournal.com/	Blog	http://backlinko.com	https://blog.moz.com/
http://quicksprout.com/	Forum	https://moz.com/free-seo-tools	

Method #2 - Find recurring backlink sources for your competitors

If you see that a competitor is getting links from the same website time and time again, it tells you two things:

1. That website is likely very receptive to link requests
2. They're likely to be interested in the content on your website (as they're linking out to similar content already)

These two attributes make for a great link prospect.

Here's how to use [Ahrefs Link Intercept tool](#) to find these recurring backlink sources:

To begin, pick one of your competitors from the spreadsheet.

Paste it into [Site Explorer](#):

Site Explorer

Get an in-depth look at the backlink profile and search traffic of any website or URL

http + https ▾

matthewoodward.co.uk

.domain/ ▾

🔍

Note: It's important that you use the root domain here, not an exact URL.

Select: Pages > Best by Links > filter for only pages that return the status code 200

ahrefs

Dashboard
Alerts
Site Explorer
Content Explorer
Keywords Explorer
Tools

http + https
matthewwoodward.co.uk

X
*.domain/

Search

Settings

Overview

Backlink profile

Backlinks

- New
- Lost
- Broken

Referring domains

- New
- Lost

Anchors

Top referring content

Referring IPs

Organic search

Organic keywords

- New
- Movements

Top pages

Competing domains

Competing pages

Content gap

Pages

Best by links

Best by links' growth

Award Winning Internet Marketing Blog - Matthew Woodward
matthewwoodward.co.uk

Ahrefs Rank

78,227

UR

13

DR

59

Backlinks

147K

+506

Live 109K

Referring domains

4.87K

+10

Live 3.63K

Organic keywords

28K

-116

Organic

28K

Backlink profile

Organic search

Paid search

Content overview

Ahrefs Rank

Today

78,227

↓ 1,666

avg 7 days

76,097

↓ 8,272

avg 1 month

69,950

↓ 5,169

avg 3 months

72,070

↓ 11,831

Past 3 months

Referring domains

LIVE INDEX

All time

One year

Last 30 days

Crawled pag

Referring do

dofollow

.gov

.edu

.com

.net

.org

Dashboard
Alerts
Site Explorer
Content Explorer
Keywords Explorer
Tools

amazinjosh@gmail.com

Link Intersect

Taking advantage of competitors' links

Show me who is linking to **Any of the below targets**

URL	http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/tools/free-seo-tools/	
URL	http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/tutorials/how-i-built-a-top-	
URL	http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/tutorials/the-ultimate-guide-	
URL	http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/experiments/backlink-checker/	×
URL	http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/tutorials/backlink-competitor-analysis/	×
URL	http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/income-reports/	×
URL	http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/tutorials/how-to-start-a-blog/	×
URL	http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/experiments/ahrefs-majestic-compare/	×
URL	http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/tutorials/e-commerce/	×
URL	http://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/experiments/the-truth-about-seo/	×

But doesn't link to (optional)

Prefix	
--------	--

Show link opportunities

Click “*show link opportunities*”.

You will now see a list of domains that link to your chosen competitor's website at least once. Results will be ordered by # of link intersects:

ahrefs Dashboard Alerts Site Explorer Content Explorer Keywords Explorer Tools ▼ amazonjosh@gmail.com ▼

< **Link Intersect** Taking advantage of competitors' links

793 domains found Export

recurring backlink sources

Referring domain	DR	Ahrefs rank	Intersect ↓	1 www.	2 www.	3 www.	4 www.	5 www.	6 www.	7 www.
seodoctor.us ▼	32	49,285,163	9	1	1	2	7	5	1	2
dougleschan.com ▼	47	2,609,232	9	1	1	n/a	2	2	4	1
semhat.com ▼	34	39,507,314	8	3	5	6	11	2	23	24
sitelinks.info ▼	46	3,503,019	8	5	10	n/a	3	1	1	n/a
scottsdigital.com ▼	44	6,517,786	8	1	3	n/a	4	2	3	n/a
richardnata.blogspot.com ▼	33	46,658,651	8	1	2	1	2	n/a	2	2
rss2.com ▼	47	2,836,094	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
welovewebmarketing.com ▼	43	8,842,453	7	3	1	n/a	6	1	7	8
plus.google.com ▼	94	4	7	n/a	6	4	1	3	n/a	3
1upmedia.com ▼	44	7,234,568	7	3	1	n/a	1	1	4	n/a
prlog.ru ▼	60	55,880	6	n/a	1	1	n/a	n/a	2	1
scoop.it ▼	70	2,039	5	145	18	n/a	3	1	n/a	1
blogs4all.co.uk ▼	33	44,359,160	5	13	n/a	n/a	16	n/a	20	22

Most of the websites will likely be forums, communities (e.g. Inbound.org), and other content sharing websites. While these are rarely the most powerful links, they will usually be easy to replicate and provide potential new referral traffic channels.

But, I recommend looking out for any high-authority blogs with multiple link intersects. These are sites you really should begin forging relationships with, as they're likely to be very receptive to link requests further down the line.

Add any prospects that fit the bill to the tab labelled **"2. Recurring BL Sources"**:

A	B	D	E
Referring Domain	Site type	Links to:	# of Intercepts
http://godofseo.ca/	Blog ▼	matthewwoodward.co.uk	4
http://www.bloggingtips.com/	Blog ▼	matthewwoodward.co.uk	4
http://copyranger.com/	Blog ▼	matthewwoodward.co.uk	4
reddit.com	Community ▼	matthewwoodward.co.uk	4
http://zacjohnson.com/	Blog ▼	matthewwoodward.co.uk	4
http://nichehacks.com/	Blog ▼	matthewwoodward.co.uk	4

Rinse and repeat this entire process for the rest of your top competitors.

Method #3 - Replicate your competitors best backlinks

If you plug a URL into Ahrefs Site Explorer, it'll show you all backlinks pointing to that URL.

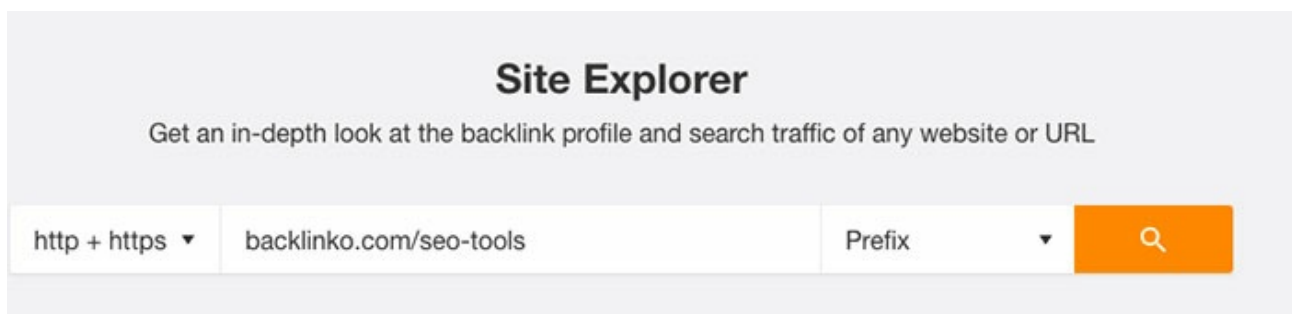
Now, you could export *all* of these links and try to replicate each and every one.

But, given the fact that most sites have hundreds (if not thousands) of links, this would be a time-consuming process.

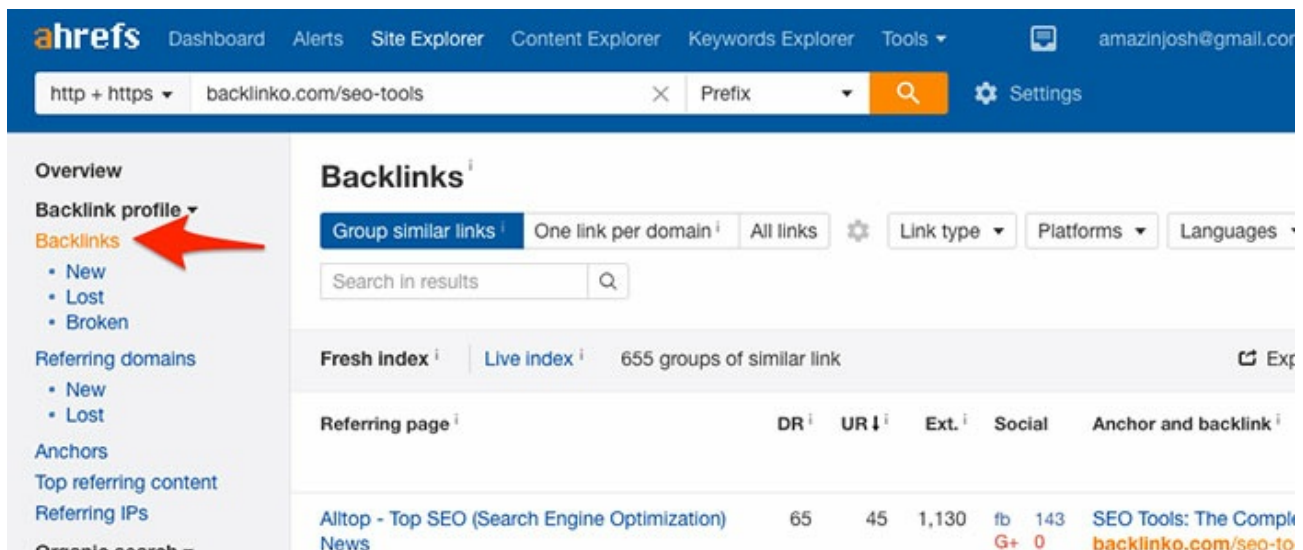
So rather than try to replicate each and every link pointing to your competitor's website/URL (including the spammy/low-quality ones!), I recommend you focus on replicating only the best ones.

Here's how to do it:

Paste a competing URL (from your spreadsheet) into Site Explorer:

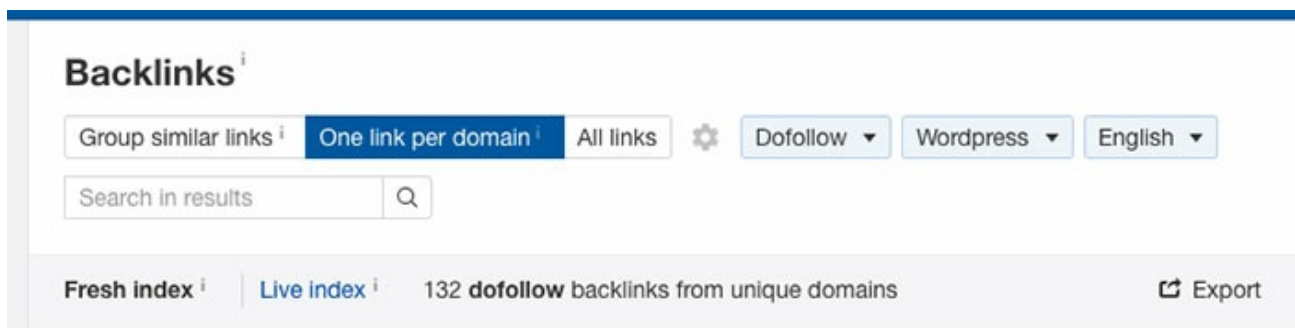


Go to Backlinks profile > Backlinks (on the left-hand menu):



Add the following filters:

- *One link per domain*
- *Platforms > WordPress*
- *Languages > English*
- *Link type > Dofollow*



I've found that applying this filters reduces the number of backlinks by roughly 50-60%, in most cases.

But why am I telling you to filter out over half of your prospects? Isn't that counter intuitive?

Not at all.

Doing this filters out the junk prospects and leaves you with the cream of the crop. Almost all remaining prospects should now be:

- English-speaking sites (or set language relevant to your target outreach audience)
- Real blogs hosted on a WordPress CMS (easy for folks to quickly add a link to your site)
- Likely to link out using dofollow links (pass link equity)

Note: If you still have a ton of junk prospects after adding the filters, add a Domain Rating (DR) filter too (I recommend DR 30+).

Add any worthwhile prospects to the tab labelled "**3. Replicate backlinks**":

A	B	D
Referring Domain / URL	Site type	Links to
http://neilpatel.com/blog/why-you-need-to-create	Blog	http://backlinko.com/seo-tools
http://neilpatel.com/blog/why-you-need-to-create		

BONUS TIP:

The tactic above is one I use to launch large scale cold outreach campaigns to land quick link wins in the new niches.

After identifying top competing article (by link count), I'll add all the URLs into a "Competitors" tab. Here is an example for my recent on-page SEO post:

On-Page SEO Outreach Prospects		
File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help Last edit was made on May 30 by anonymous		
fx Competing Article		
A		Title
1	Competing Article	
2	http://backlinko.com/on-page-seo	
3	http://altitudemarketing.com/seo-checklist/	
4	https://webrunnermedia.com/seo-checklist/	
5	http://www.bruceclay.com/blog/seo-checklist/	
6	http://www.clickminded.com/seo-checklist/	
7	https://www.orbitmedia.com/blog/seo-best-practices/	
8	https://moz.com/learn/seo/on-page-factors	
9	http://neilpatel.com/blog/the-on-page-seo-cheat-sheet/	
10	https://www.searchenginejournal.com/everything-need-know-page-seo/173577/	
11	http://www.searchmetrics.com/glossary/on-page-optimization/	
12	https://ahrefs.com/blog/on-page-seo/	
13	http://onlineincometeacher.com/traffic/on-page-seo-techniques/	
14	https://www.reliablesoft.net/5-on-page-seo-techniques-thatll-boost-your-rankings-checklist-included/	
15	http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/O/on_page_optimization.html	
16	https://www.shoutmeloud.com/on-page-seo.html	
17	http://backlinko.com/seo-techniques	
18	https://www.searchenginejournal.com/8-advanced-page-seo-techniques-boss-expects-know/122100/	
19	http://justcreative.com/2013/12/26/21-on-page-seo-techniques-tips2014/	
20	http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/seo-tutorial/	
21		
22		
+ Competitor Articles Backlinko Altitude Marketing Web Runner Media Bruce Clay Click Minded		

I will then have a VA go through each competing article and set the filters shown above.

From there, the VA will spend a maximum of 1-2 minutes finding contact information for each referring page.

This process will be repeated across the tabs created for each competing URL:

On-Page SEO Outreach Prospects					
File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help Last edit was made on May 30 by anonymous					
fx Domain					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Domain	Referring Page URL	Competitor First Name	Last Name	Email	
1					
2	blog.bufferapp.com	Backlinko	Kevan Lee		
3	www.computerservices.ie	Backlinko	Michael Collins		
4	www.razorsocial.com	Backlinko	Ian Cleary		
5	www.onlinemediamasters.com	Backlinko	TOM DUPUIS		
6	www.siegemedia.com	Backlinko	Ross Hudgens		
7	kinsta.com	Backlinko	Brian Jackson		
8	beabetterblogger.com	Backlinko	Kevin Duncan		
9	www.bloggertricks.com	Backlinko	ANKIT SINGLA		
10	coschedule.com	Backlinko	Nathan Ellering		
11	www.nichepursuits.com	Backlinko	Spencer Haws		
12	www.markinblog.com	Backlinko	marius kinullis		
13	blog.linkody.com	Backlinko	Helvijs Smoteks		
14	www.sitepoint.com	Backlinko	Eric Slu		
15	www.hitreach.com	Backlinko	Chris Gilchrist		
16	nichehacks.com	Backlinko	Nader Oudimat		
17	nichepie.com	Backlinko	Luqman Khan		
18	novasolutions.ca	Backlinko	Shamil Shamilov		

I'll be left with hundreds of relevant link prospects I can now target with semi-personal outreach.

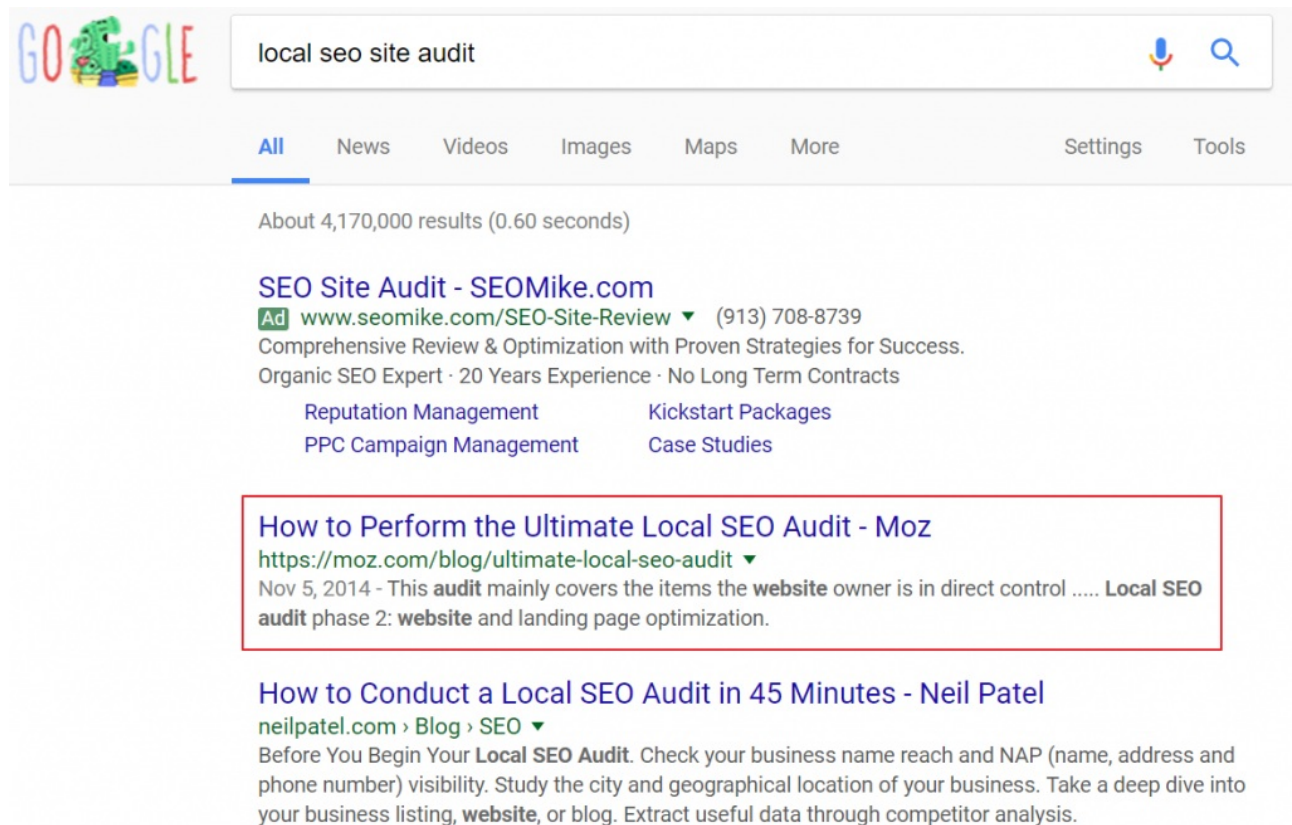
Method #4 - Reverse engineer your competitors for guest post opportunities

Guest posting remains one of the best ways to not only build links (note: be careful with this), but also get the word out about your website/business.

I mean, there are companies out there that use guest posting to leveraging the domain authority of large websites to quickly rank for competitive search terms that drive ultra targeted referral traffic to their websites.

Let's take Moz as an example...

Casey Meraz, the owner of Juris Digital, leveraged the authority of Moz to rank for the highly competitive search term "local seo":



This article has probably been a healthy meal ticket for Casey's agency over the last 3 years.

But:

Finding guest post opportunities can be a mundane, time-consuming process.

I mean, who really wants to sift through thousands of "intitle:write for us" search results!?

Not me!

Luckily there's a better way: reverse engineer your competitors.

Note: In order to do this, you'll need to know the name of the person behind each site on your list. This is easily done with personal blogs (e.g. it doesn't take a genius to work out that the guy behind *robbierichards.com* is, in fact, *Robbie Richards* 😊), but it can take a bit more research if it's a multi-author blog. I recommend getting a VA to do this.

Here are 3 methods for doing this:

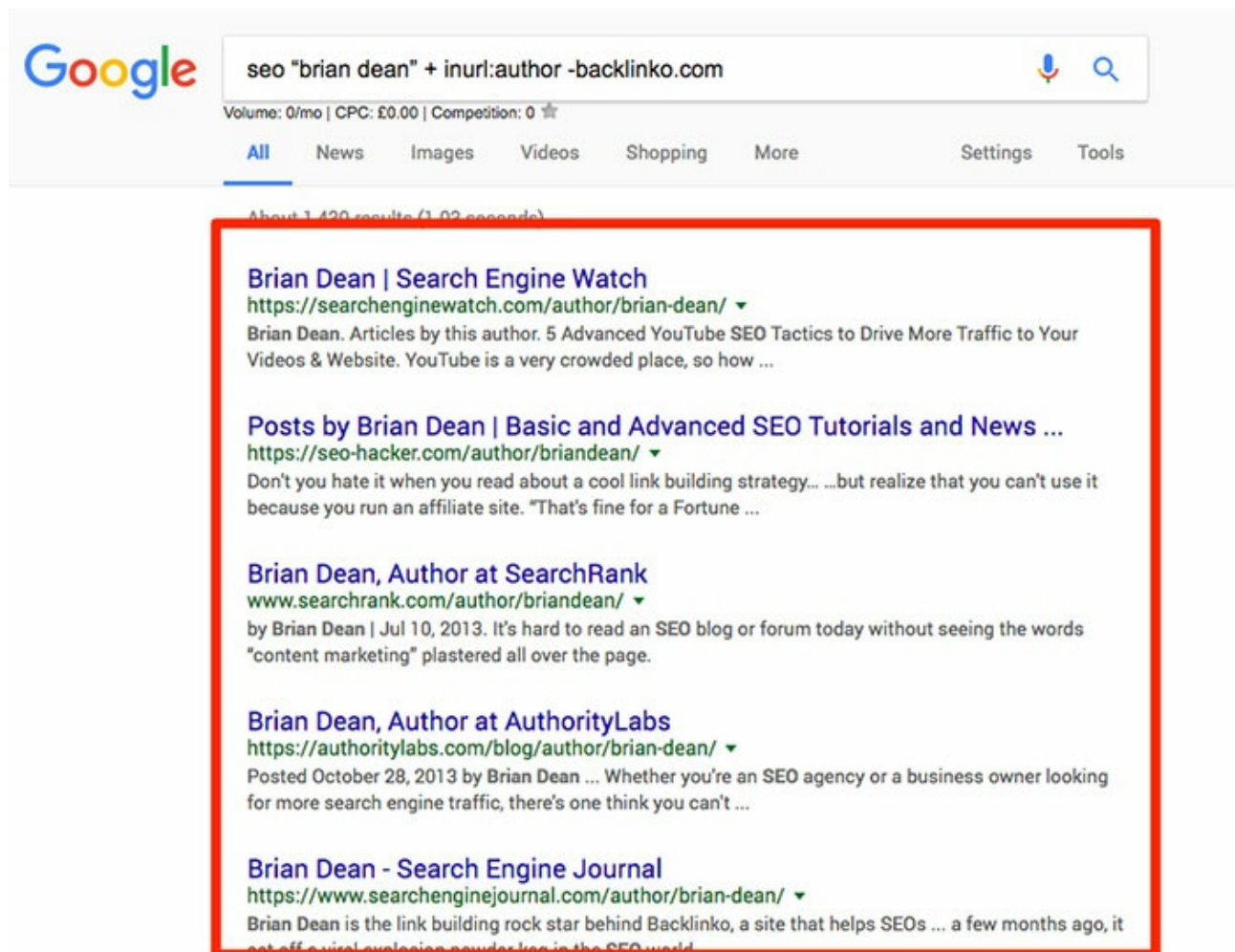
#1 - Search Google for "author" pages

Let's assume that I've identified Backlinko.com as a competing site and I want to know what other sites Brian [Dean] has written for.

I could use the following search term:

- TOPIC + "author name" + inurl:author -competitordomain.com

Here's the search term in action:



#2 - Find posts by the author with Ahrefs Content Explorer

Content Explorer allows you to use the “author:” operator to restrict results to posts written by a certain person.

Here’s an example:

The screenshot shows the Ahrefs Content Explorer interface. At the top, the search bar contains the query "author:'brian dean'" and the location is set to "Everywhere". A red arrow points to the search bar. Below the search bar, the title "Most Popular Content for author:'brian dean'" is displayed. There are several filters: "Publish date", "Languages", "Shares", "Domain Rating", "Referring domains", "Organic traffic", and "Word count". A checkbox for "One article per domain" is checked. The results are sorted by "Referring domains". There are 14 results. The first three results are shown:

- Blogger Outreach Made Simple: A Step-by-Step Guide**
smartblogger.com/blogger-outreach/
Ever noticed how some blogs seem to arrive with a bang out of nowhere? Chances are, they're using blogger outreach. Find...
3,873 words | Brian Dean | 6 Mar '14
Social shares: 46 (Twitter), 149 (Facebook), 16 (Google+), 42 (LinkedIn), 37 (Pinterest)
Total 290 | Median 46
- The SEO ranking factor you MUST master in 2017 (an...**
www.youtube.com/watch
If you want to rank in Google today, there's a new SEO ranking factor to pay attention to. And if you optimize for this factor...
240 words | Brian Dean | 17 May '16
Social shares: 32 (Twitter), 941 (Facebook), 801 (Google+), 265 (LinkedIn), 17 (Pinterest)
Total 2.1K | Median 265
- The Ultimate Guide to Reverse Engineering Your Com...**
ahrefs.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-reverse-engineering-your-competitors-backlinks/
Here's the secret to ranking for any keyword in any niche: If you can get the same backlinks that your competitor's have...
1,949 words | Brian Dean | 3 Dec '15
Social shares: 0 (Twitter), 1 (Facebook), 2 (Google+), 0 (LinkedIn), 0 (Pinterest)
Total 3 | Median 1

Copy/paste any relevant sites into your Google Sheet.

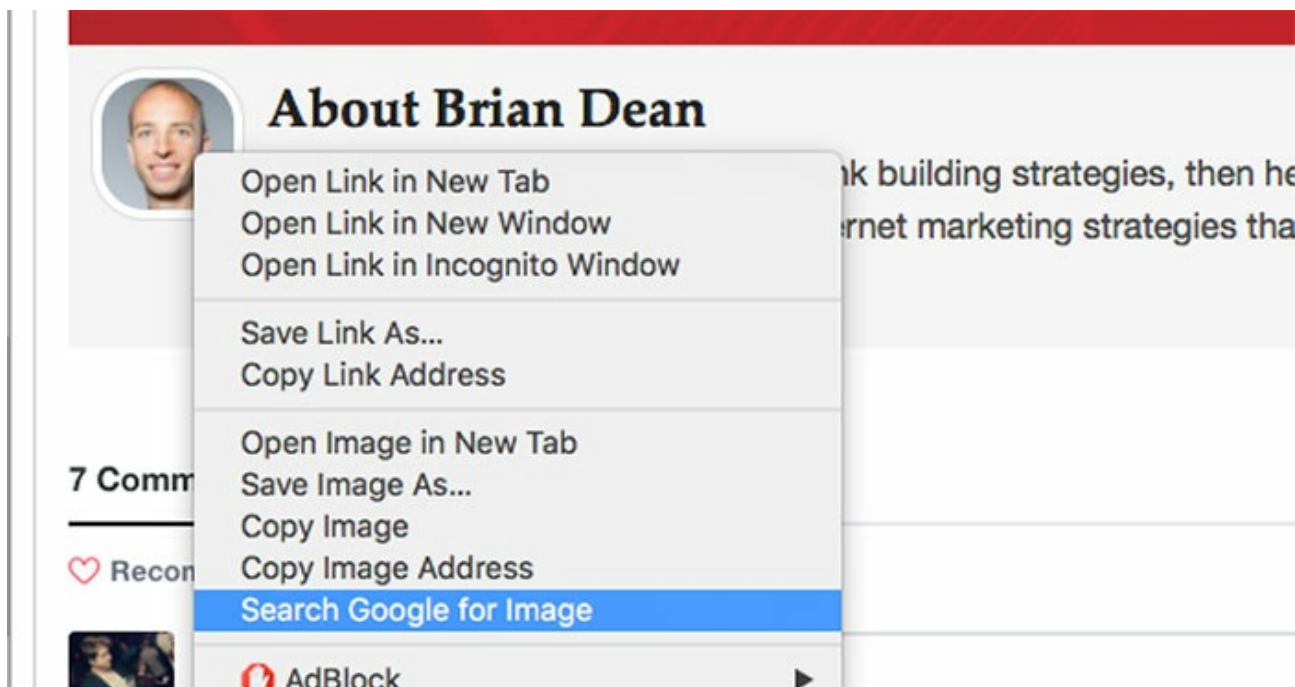
Note: I recommend checking the one article per domain checkbox, otherwise you can end up with a ton of results from twitter/youtube/etc

#3 - Search Google Images for posts containing the authors headshot

Look through the guest posts you’ve already found for each author and see if there’s an author headshot included.

If there is (and if he/she is using the same headshot for multiple guest posts), you can do a reverse image search to find every page containing that image.

Just right-click on the image and select *Search Google for Image*:



This will find every other page on which the headshot appears, some of which will be guest posts:

4 Outside-the-Box Link Building Tactics - Point Blank SEO



pointblankseo.com/4-unique-link-building-ideas ▼

96 × 96 - Apr 15, 2013 - This is a **guest post** by Brian Dean from Backlinko. If you're like most SEOs, you're as confused as the cast of Jersey Shore at a TED Talk...

Add any websites to the tab labelled "4. Guest Posts" in your spreadsheet:

A	B	D	E
Referring Domain / URL	Site Type	Author	Author Website
https://author...r/brian-dean/  briandean.com/	Blog	Brian Dean	backlinko.com
https://authoritylabs.com/blog/author/brian-dean/	Blog	Brian Dean	backlinko.com
https://www.searchenginejournal.com/author/tim-soulo/	Blog	Tim Soulo	ahrefs.com
https://shanebarker.com/blog/author/timsoulo/	Blog	Tim Soulo	ahrefs.com
https://shanebarker.com/blog/author/timsoulo/	Blog		

Method #5 - Fix competitor broken links

Broken links are surprisingly common; some of the largest sites are riddled with them.

While this is bad news for website owners, it's good news for you.

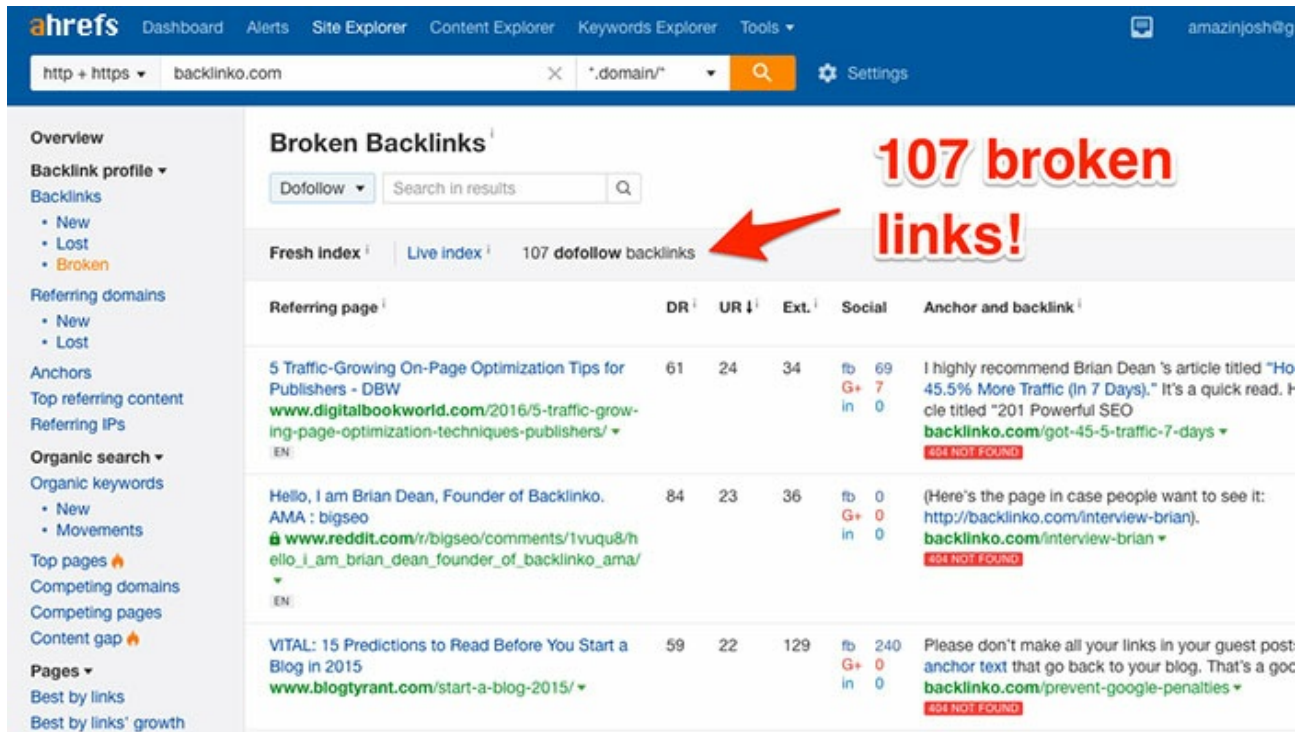
Why? Because if you can find broken inbound links to pages on competing domains, you have a good chance to steal those links for your website.

Here's how to find them:

Go to Site Explorer, paste in a competitor's domain (or specific page), then go to:

Backlink profile > Backlinks > Broken > add a dofollow filter

This will show you all broken inbound links pointing towards that domain/URL:



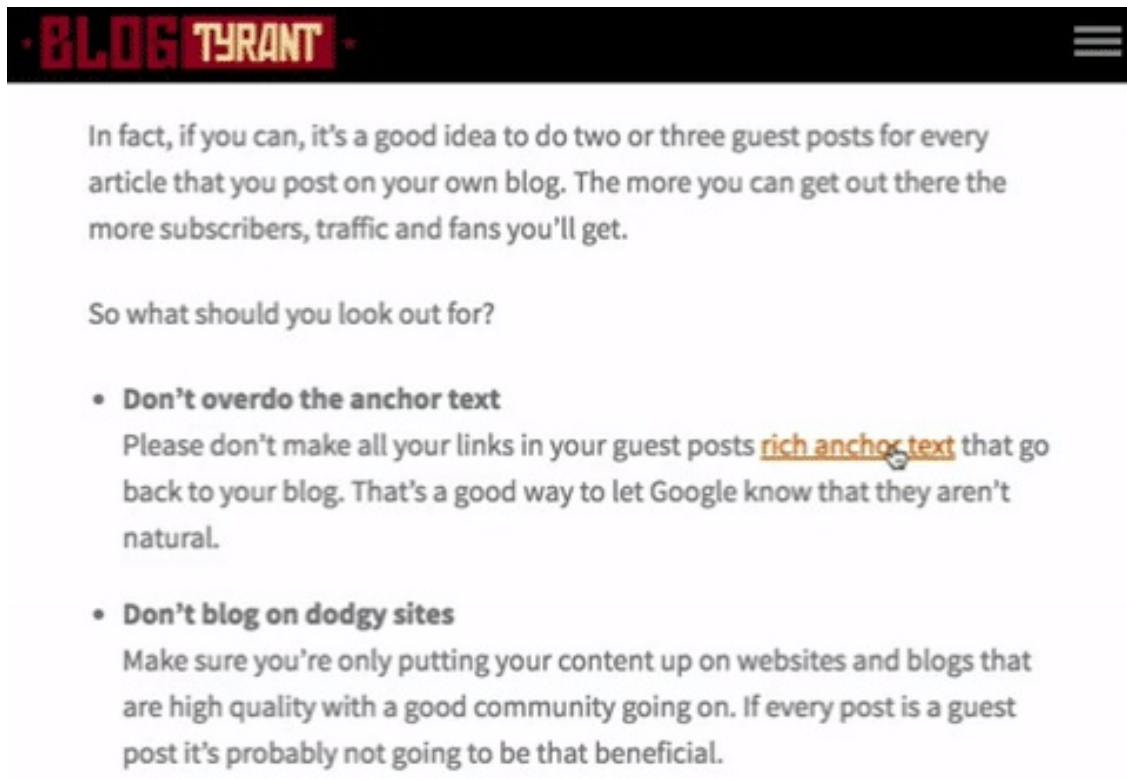
Broken Backlinks

Dofollow Search in results Q

Fresh index Live index 107 dofollow backlinks

Referring page	DR	UR	Ext.	Social	Anchor and backlink
5 Traffic-Growing On-Page Optimization Tips for Publishers - DBW www.digitalbookworld.com/2016/5-traffic-growing-page-optimization-techniques-publishers/	61	24	34	fb 69 G+ 7 in 0	I highly recommend Brian Dean's article titled "How 45.5% More Traffic (in 7 Days)." It's a quick read. It's titled "201 Powerful SEO backlinko.com/got-45-5-traffic-7-days" 404 NOT FOUND
Hello, I am Brian Dean, Founder of Backlinko. AMA : bigseo www.reddit.com/r/bigseo/comments/1vuqu8/hello_i_am_brian_dean_founder_of_backlinko_ama/	84	23	36	fb 0 G+ 0 in 0	(Here's the page in case people want to see it: http://backlinko.com/interview-brian). backlinko.com/interview-brian 404 NOT FOUND
VITAL: 15 Predictions to Read Before You Start a Blog in 2015 www.blogtyrant.com/start-a-blog-2015/	59	22	129	fb 240 G+ 0 in 0	Please don't make all your links in your guest post anchor text that go back to your blog. That's a good backlinko.com/prevent-google-penalties 404 NOT FOUND

Here's what happen when we click the broken link on this page:



BLOG TYRANT

In fact, if you can, it's a good idea to do two or three guest posts for every article that you post on your own blog. The more you can get out there the more subscribers, traffic and fans you'll get.

So what should you look out for?

- **Don't overdo the anchor text**
Please don't make all your links in your guest posts **rich anchor text** that go back to your blog. That's a good way to let Google know that they aren't natural.
- **Don't blog on dodgy sites**
Make sure you're only putting your content up on websites and blogs that are high quality with a good community going on. If every post is a guest post it's probably not going to be that beneficial.

Add any broken links you want to steal to the "5. Broken links" tab in your Google Sheet.

A	B	D	E
Referring URL	Site Type	Broken Link	Your Similar Content
http://www.seocompany.ca/tool/seo-tools.html	Blog	http://backlinko.com/prevent-google-penalties	http://www.robberichards.com/seo/identify-recover-google-penalty/
http://www.seo...eo-tools.html  09/07/5-ways-to-build	Blog	http://backlinko.com/prevent-google-penalties	http://www.robberichards.com/seo/identify-recover-google-penalty/
http://www.progyrants.com/gyrants-a-blog-2015/	Blog	http://backlinko.com/prevent-google-penalties	http://www.robberichards.com/seo/identify-recover-google-penalty/
http://freelancelofreedomproject.com/truth-about-improv	Blog	http://backlinko.com/5-seo-lessons	http://www.robberichards.com/seo/case-study/

It's then a case of reaching out to these sites and suggesting they replace the broken link with a link to your content instead.

Just make sure the content you're asking them to swap the link for is similar to the original broken content. If you're unsure what the broken content was, use the [Wayback Explorer](#) to check it out.

Tip: If you identify a page with a ton of broken links — yet you don't have anything similar on your site already — it may be worth creating something similar so you can launch a broken link building campaign!

Or, you could just let them know to seed the relationship for future outreach opportunities 😊

Step #3 - Steal your competitors tactics (i.e. Replicate)

OK, so you've analysed your competitors and filled the [spreadsheet](#) with a bunch of actionable information...

Now what?

Well, it's time to "steal" (i.e. build) some links!

Some of your competitor's links will be easy to replicate.

Directory links can be obtained in minutes.

Forum/community links can be acquired by simply registering and posting (in most cases).

But, **most of the super-valuable links will require outreach.**

While outreach can seem confusing, there is a simple process you can use to streamline things and get the greatest return on your time investment.

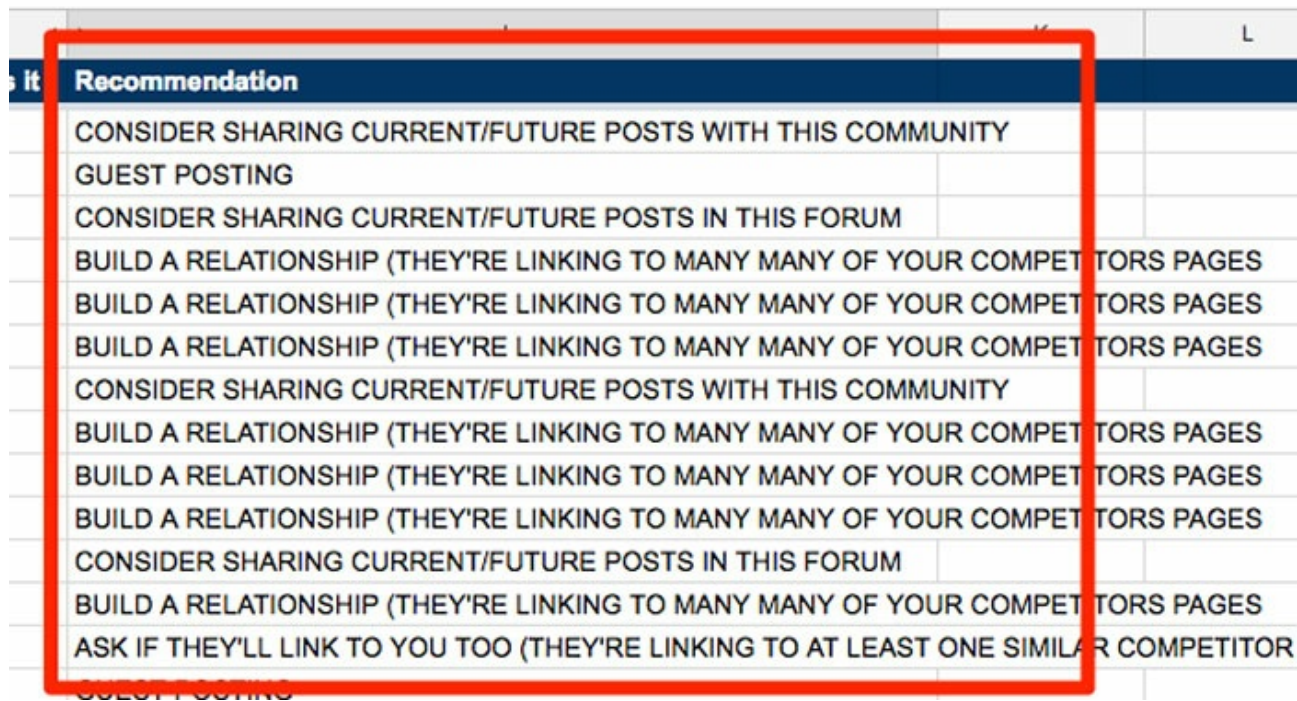
Here's the basic process:

1. Find the appropriate contact information (i.e. name + email address; [here](#) is a great video on doing this).
2. Send the person an email (this can be done either manually or using automated tools — I'll touch on these in a moment).
3. Track the responses and follow-up where required.

It really is that simple. Don't overcomplicate things.

And, if you're wondering what your outreach email should say, it depends on the *type* of link you're trying to acquire.

If you navigate to the "*Recommendations*" tab within your Google Sheet, you'll see the spreadsheet automatically recommends the link building tactic it feels is most appropriate for that particular prospect. It also tells you why this is the recommended tactic in most cases:

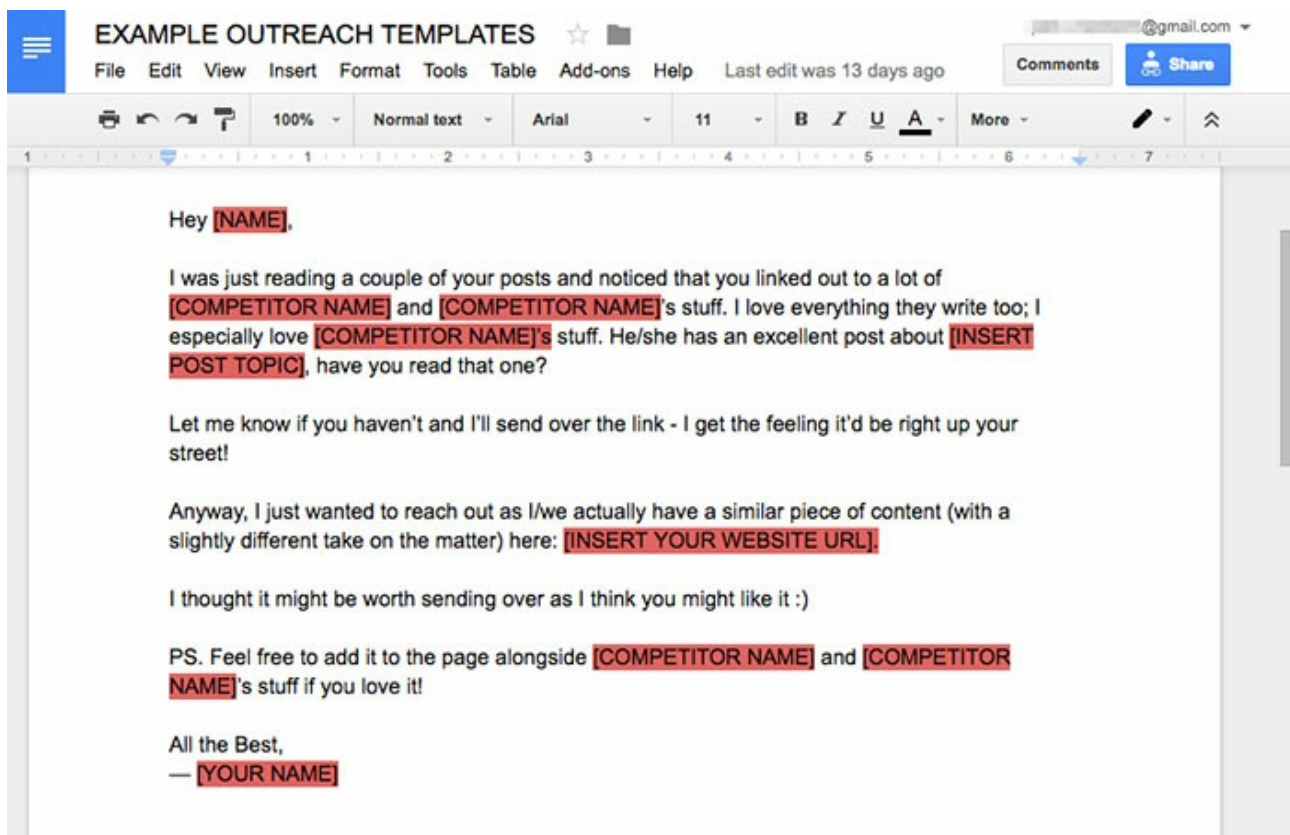


Recommendation	L
CONSIDER SHARING CURRENT/FUTURE POSTS WITH THIS COMMUNITY	
GUEST POSTING	
CONSIDER SHARING CURRENT/FUTURE POSTS IN THIS FORUM	
BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR COMPETITORS PAGES	
BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR COMPETITORS PAGES	
BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR COMPETITORS PAGES	
CONSIDER SHARING CURRENT/FUTURE POSTS WITH THIS COMMUNITY	
BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR COMPETITORS PAGES	
BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR COMPETITORS PAGES	
BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR COMPETITORS PAGES	
CONSIDER SHARING CURRENT/FUTURE POSTS IN THIS FORUM	
BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR COMPETITORS PAGES	
ASK IF THEY'LL LINK TO YOU TOO (THEY'RE LINKING TO AT LEAST ONE SIMILAR COMPETITOR	
GUEST POSTING	

Note: While I've tried to recommend the most effective tactic here, it's worth noting that some sites will respond well to a number of tactics (e.g. guest posting, broken link building campaign, etc.).

Your choice of tactic is your decision at the end of the day; the recommendation is only there as a helpful guideline.

I've also included a link to a document full of example scripts inside the competitor link research spreadsheet ([download here](#)).



I don't recommend using these exactly as they are (you should always customise your outreach!), but they're a good starting point. Just match the outreach email with the tactic you want to use.

In terms of what you should be using for outreach, there are several great tools I recommend checking out:

- [Buzzstream](#)
- [Mailshake](#)
- [NinjaOutreach](#)
- [Pitchbox](#)
- [GMass](#)

There's also the option of a manual approach (i.e. sending each email one-by-one) but this can be very time-consuming, so I don't recommend it.

Whatever your choice of software, I recommend using the "*link tracker*" tab built into the spreadsheet.

The way this works is extremely simple:

1. Add any site you want to contact to the "website" column
2. Find their contact info (i.e. email + first name) and add it to the appropriate columns
3. Choose the outreach strategy/approach you want to use (e.g. guest post request, etc.)
4. Keep track of the outreach status for each prospect in the "status" tab.

Here's an example of how this might look:

D	E	F
Case	Status	
quest	Not yet contacted	

There's also an (optional) column where you can add a follow-up reminder date — this will highlight red if the follow-up is due:

E	F
Status	Follow-up on...
Not yet contacted	2017-05-17

This is also a good place to keep track of live links:

E	F	G
Status	Follow-up on...	
Live link	2017-05-17	

I'm not going to cover each outreach script one-by-one in this post, but you can access examples for each link building strategy in the Recommendations tab in the link tracking document:

Competitor Backlink Template >>Make a Copy to Edit<<				
File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help All changes saved in Drive				
Referring Domain / Page				
A	B	C	D	E
Referring Domain / Page	Domain	What type of site is it?	Recommendation	Link to outreach scripts
http://www.weknowtheanswer.com/	weknowtheanswer.com	Community	CONSIDER SHARING CURRENT/FUTURE POSTS WITH THIS COMMUNITY	Click here
http://www.weknowtheanswer.com/	searchenginejournal.com	Blog	GUEST POSTING	Click here
http://www.weknowtheanswer.com/	quicksprout.com	Forum	CONSIDER SHARING CURRENT/FUTURE POSTS IN THIS FORUM	Click here
http://godofseo.ca/	godofseo.ca	Blog	BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR CONTENTS)	Click here
http://www.bloggingtips.com/	bloggingtips.com	Blog	BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR CONTENTS)	Click here
http://copyranger.com/	copyranger.com	Blog	BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR CONTENTS)	Click here
reddit.com	reddit.com	Community	CONSIDER SHARING CURRENT/FUTURE POSTS WITH THIS COMMUNITY	Click here
http://zacjohnson.com/	zacjohnson.com	Blog	BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR CONTENTS)	Click here
http://nichehacks.com/	nichehacks.com	Blog	BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR CONTENTS)	Click here
https://www.link-assistant.com/	link-assistant.com	Blog	BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR CONTENTS)	Click here
http://digitalpoint.com/	digitalpoint.com	Forum	CONSIDER SHARING CURRENT/FUTURE POSTS IN THIS FORUM	Click here
moz.com	moz.com	Blog	BUILD A RELATIONSHIP (THEY'RE LINKING TO MANY MANY OF YOUR CONTENTS)	Click here
http://neilpatel.com/blog/why-you-need-to-create-evergreen-content/	neilpatel.com	Blog	ASK IF THEY'LL LINK TO YOU TOO (THEY'RE LINKING TO AT LEAST 10 OTHER SITES)	Click here
https://seo-hacker.com/author/brian-dean/	seo-hacker.com	Blog	GUEST POSTING	Click here
https://authoritylabs.com/blog/author/brian-dean/	authoritylabs.com	Blog	GUEST POSTING	Click here
https://www.searchenginejournal.com/author/tim-soulo/	searchenginejournal.com	Blog	GUEST POSTING	Click here
https://shanebarker.com/blog/author/timsoulo/	shanebarker.com	Blog	GUEST POSTING	Click here
http://www.seocompany.ca/tool/seo-tools.html	seocompany.ca	Blog	BROKEN LINK BUILDING	Click here
https://www.quicksprout.com/2015/09/07/5-ways-to-build-links/	quicksprout.com	Blog	BROKEN LINK BUILDING	Click here

Remember, organisation is key when it comes to outreach, so make sure to keep on top of it!

Conclusion (+ one final tip!)

Before I wrap this up, I want to give you one last bonus tip...

Assuming you've done everything mentioned above, you will now know *who* your competitors are, *how* they are getting links, *where* they are getting links from, and you should have replicated as many as possible.

But don't stop there...

Keep tabs on your competitor's ongoing campaigns to find out where and how they are landing *new* links.

That way, if they land any new links, you can jump right in and grab them for yourself.

Ahrefs alerts provides an easy way to do this.

Select “+New Alert” and enter one of your competitors domains:

The screenshot shows the 'New alert' form in Ahrefs. The form is titled 'New alert' and indicates '40 of 40 available'. It contains the following fields and options:

- Domain or URL:** backlinko.com
- Mode:** *.domain/*
- Scope:** All backlinks
- Recipients:** youremail@gmail.com
- Interval:** Monthly
- Send email:** Toggle switch is turned on (green).

At the bottom of the form are two buttons: 'Add' (orange) and 'Cancel' (grey).

Now, whenever they land new links, you'll get an automated email telling you about them.

It's then simply a case of checking out the links and seeing how you may be able to replicate them.

BOOM.

Finally, I must note that while replicating competitor links is an amazing long-term strategy, it should never be your only link building strategy.

Replicating competitor links will only get you so far, so make sure to seek out independent opportunities, too. This is the only way to gain an edge over the competition.

Have any questions? Let me know in the comments below.