

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE PBN



THE SMART WAY

DOMAINHUNTERGATHERER.COM

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INTRODUCTION



What is a PBN? If you're reading this book, you probably already should know what a PBN is. However, just for recap purposes, PBN stands for Private Blog Network. It's a network of seemingly unrelated blogs that exist for one primary reason. The reason, of course, is to use the existing link equity of the member blogs in the network for search engine optimization (SEO) purposes.

PBNs are fast becoming popular. In fact, with each passing month PBNs become more and more popular. The reason for this should be quite obvious: Google is updating like crazy and it's harder and harder to rank on search engines naturally and organically. PBNs give bloggers and website owners a head start when it comes to optimizing their websites for better search engine traffic.



HOW DO PBNs WORK?

PBNs use the existing link equity of expired domains. A significant chunk of expired domains used to have live websites associated with them. Throughout the life of a website, it can often pick up a backlink here and there. By simply filtering expired domains in terms of the quality and quantity of their expired backlinks, website owners and search engine optimization specialists can harvest this backlink juice. Your PBN harvests the backlink juice of all the member blogs in that network and collect it to target one particular website or a set of websites.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO BUILD A PBN?

As I've mentioned previously, ranking on Google on a purely organic and natural basis is getting harder and harder to do. It's not impossible, but it will take quite a bit of time. In many cases, if you've just started a website or have a fixed amount of start-up capital to work with, you don't have the luxury of time to wait. You need a relatively quick SEO solution. A well-put together PBN can definitely do that.

The other benefit to PBNs is that they bring to the table a wide range of monetization options. You don't just make money off PBNs by promoting one particular target site. Whether you make money through product or service sales, or affiliate marketing, it doesn't really matter. There are many ways to make money off PBNs besides directly boosting your target or your "money" websites.

I'm going to lay out in a later chapter of this book the wide range of monetization options PBNs bring to the table. This book steps you through the process of building a PBN the smart way. Just like with anything else in life, you could always choose to do things the easy way or the hard way. The good news is that the easy is almost always the smart way. Unfortunately, most of us find out in the worst way possible that the hard way of doing things tend to also be the most costly way to do things.

You have to understand that your time is money. If you choose to do one thing, you're necessarily not doing something else. What if that other alternative activity produces more money? Do you see how you're losing out based on your decisions as to where to invest your time? You have to focus on building your PBN the smart way, so not only do you save on time and capital you also stand to benefit more fully from its full range of benefits.



CHAPTER 1

THE FOUNDATION OF ALL PBNs: THE RIGHT EXPIRED DOMAINS

As I've mentioned previously, it's a dog-eat-dog world out there when it comes to ranking on search engines naturally. It seems that the more players enter the internet, either as publishers, e-commerce owners, or what not; it's gotten even more competitive. Regardless of your niche, there is no shortage of people competing to rank number one for your target pool of keywords.

The typical way to play this game is to build a website, create valuable content, establish relationships, get backlinks, build a brand, and hopefully something will stick. This of course will take quite a bit of time. Also, most people who are in a hurry to become successful, such as yourself, do not have the time or patience for the old "publish and pray" strategy. You can put together the best original content in your niche possible and still end up waiting a ridiculously long period of time. Thankfully, there is a better way to do things. The good news is you don't have to start from scratch.

When building a backlink network, you don't have to use fresh sites. You don't have to create your main website and then set up fresh installations of sister blogs to pump link juice to your main site. You don't have to go through all that trouble. You can leapfrog your competition by using dead websites' expired domain names. When you resurrect these dead domains, you tap into the former link equity and backlinks footprint those websites used to have.





You have to remember that backlinks provide two things. First, they provide quality signals. In other words, they tell Google how high to rank a particular website for a particular set of keywords. The second indicator of backlinks represent is the context. Google is fast evolving. It becomes more intelligent every few months with each update of its algorithm.

One key area that Google using machine language to master is link context. It used to be that Google is like a blind child. It can only focus on words and try to patch together themes and context in a very haphazard or ham-fisted way. Well, not anymore. Thanks to its recent updates, it's gotten quite scary as to how good Google is in establishing context. The good news is by building the right backlinks through your PBN, you can create the right contextual framework for your website, so as to rank more highly as far as your target keywords are concerned.

THE BOTTOM LINE?

PBN gives you head start, that's all it does. It saves you time instead of you doing what you're forced to normally do. Normally, you would set up your blog, put in all this content, put in a lot of work to establish relationships with third-party blogs, and then wait. You're simply forced to wait. Well, with PBNs, the wait time is much less. In fact, if you set up your system the right way, you don't have to wait long at all.

The best news is the fact that domain names expire all the time. For a wide variety of reasons, people simply don't renew their domain registrations. Of course, one of the biggest reasons is the fact that their blog failed, for whatever reason they just couldn't put everything together and the blog did not make enough money to cover its expenses. However, that's not the only reason. In many cases, high-quality blogs expire because the blogger just lost interest. I know it sounds crazy, but this happens all the time. Business bankruptcies also account for a large chunk of domain names expiring. Whatever the reason is, the fact that domains expire pretty much en masse throughout a wide range of niche is tremendous news for you.



It doesn't matter how otherwise esoteric your target niche is, you can rest assured that there will be some quality expired domain that is close enough to your niche for you to benefit from its backlink equity. With that said, keep in mind that you need to pick the right expired domains. As exciting as it is to just go out there and expired domain with a ton of backlinks, doing this alone is not going to ensure that your target website will rank highly. You need to pay attention to the following factors.

Niche specific

It's really important when looking through a list of expired domains to pick domain names that are as closely related to your niche as possible. As I've mentioned previously, Google is able to understand context based on backlink sources. If you pick the right domains that on face value alone are related to your niche, chances are pretty good that its backlink footprint is also related to your niche. Of course, this is not guaranteed. This is not bulletproof. But just by filtering domain names of the niche specificity of their name can go a long way in building the right context for your target site.

THE MUST HAVE THE RIGHT FUNDAMENTALS

In addition to being niche specific the dead domain that you're thinking of resurrecting for your PBN must also have solid fundamentals. You have to look at the total number of backlinks it has. You have to understand Domain Authority- the industry replacement standard for PageRank. As you probably already know, Google no longer updates its PageRank. Consequently, we have to use industry replacements like Domain Authority as a stand-in. While it's true that Domain Authority will never be as accurate in estimating a website's value as PageRank, for all practical purposes it comes close enough. Install the MozBar to your Chrome browser so you can start finding domains' Domain Authority scores.

Pay attention to Domain Authority scores. Also, pay attention to how varied the backlink sources a particular expired domain is. There are a lot of backlink checker tools available on the market. Use these tools to look at the URLs linking to the dead domain. Load these URLs and see if they share a particular theme.



Are they niche specific or are they close enough to your niche that they provide some sort of context?

Most importantly, you have to look at a domain's backlink footprint and make sure that the domain you're thinking of bringing back from the dead was not banned or penalized by Google. If you buy a domain that has a lot of porn or pharma backlinks, chances are quite high that that domain got penalized by Google. You're not helping your SEO any by bringing that domain back.

Finding quality dropped domains by hand is HARSH

Now, I've got some bad news for you. If you got all excited about the expired domain PBN building process I've outlined above, here is some unpleasant news. The sad truth is that trying to do everything by hand can be a total waste of your time. You have to understand that you have to process a huge amount of expired domains just to spot a few gems that would work in the proper context of your project. This would entail starting with a massive list of expired domains and then manually doing all this checking to see what's good and what's garbage. You also have to watch out for domains that look really good, but it turns out that they got banned, so they're a complete waste of your time.

You can choose to do thing by hand, but I'm telling you you're going to be wasting your time. You have to expend a lot of effort. A lot of this effort is going to be wasted because there are tons of quality indicators to verify and check.

Pay attention to the filters I've outlined above. Those are several filters you have to jump through. You have to put one single domain through many different quality filter hoops just so you can buy it. Thankfully, there are tools you can use to automate the process. You don't have to do backlink checking by hand. You don't have to do a lot of this filtering manually.



Use the right tools to hunt down expired domains

There are many expired domain selection and filtering tools out there. **Domain Hunter Gatherer** automates the process. This tool makes it quick and easy for you to pick quality domains you can base your PBN on. You not only save time and effort, you also increase your chances of finding higher-quality expired domains. Why? People who try to do domain selection manually often end up settling for lower quality domains because they simply feel that they are running out of time.

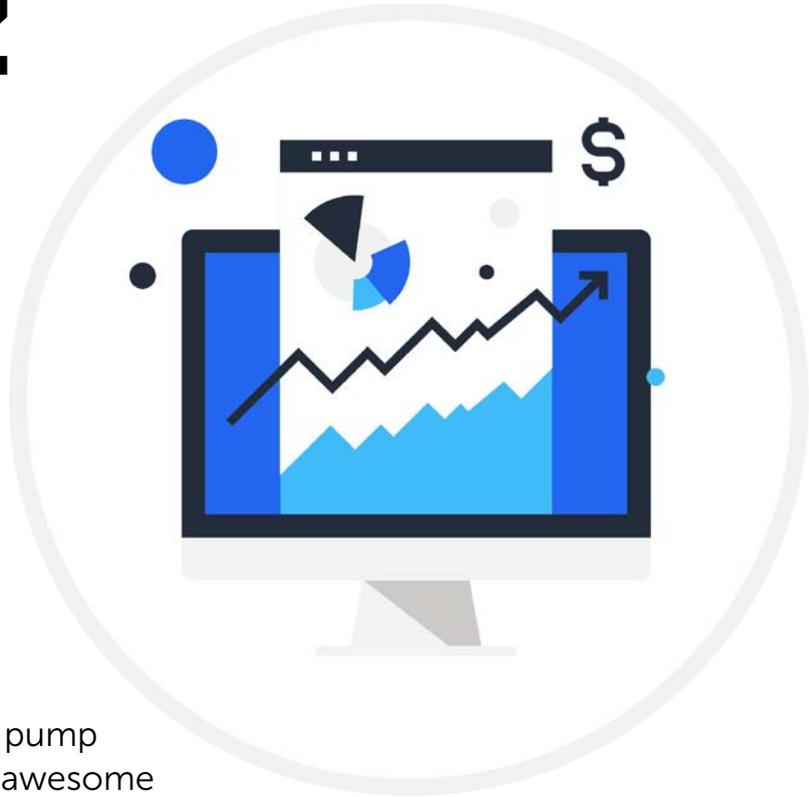
Just as you wouldn't want to build a house on a shaky foundation, you wouldn't want to build your PBN on less than optimal expired domains. Unfortunately, that's precisely the situation you will find yourself in if you settle for less than optimal expired domains. Filter your materials properly by using expired domain identification and selection software tools.



CHAPTER 2

BUILD YOUR PBN FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

In Chapter 1, I stepped you through the process of building a PBN using the right parameters. Chapter 1 is all about building an effective PBN. If you followed my advice in the previously chapter, your PBN would be able to produce highly-relevant links that can pump quite a bit of quality link juice. Sounds awesome so far, right? Well, don't get too excited.



Unfortunately, a lot of people stop at Chapter 1. They just focus on how to set up a PBN properly and they leave it at that. There is one other step that you need to take. This step has many different sub-steps. This additional step ensures that whatever PBN you create would withstand the test of time.

As you could probably already tell, Google is not very happy when people find a way around its system. As much as possible, Google would love online publishers to create blogs, put up content, and wait a ridiculously long amount of time to generate "natural" backlinks, that's Google's way. Unfortunately, it's completely unrealistic as far as running a business goes.

PBNs can help you get around this waiting game, but you have to build a sustainable system. You can't be sloppy when creating your PBN. Sadly, too many people who are excited about building PBNs become negligent regarding their system's footprints.



As a result, a lot of them get banned. I've seen this story play out time and time again. I go on a marketing forum and people are bragging about their PBNs, how well it's doing, and how much money they're making. After a couple of weeks or even a couple of months, the same people would post and they would say that their income just went up in smoke because their PBNs got banned. They then ask for advice as to how to either build a new PBN or try to fix their PBN. It really is a sad situation and you don't want to put yourself in such a situation.

Thankfully, people screw up their PBNs in a fairly predictable way. Just by paying attention to the discussion below, you can ensure that your PBN would be sustainable over the long haul.

Sloppy footprints can get your PBN banned

What is the number one reason why PBNs get banned? Their footprints. Google frowns on PBNs as link sources. They are the secret weapon many SEO agencies out there and Google knows this. This is why Google is not shy at all about bringing down the ban hammer on people who build PBNs with sloppy footprints. Don't get caught, or all your hard work will go up in smoke.

What do you stand to lose if you're PBN gets nuked?

So what exactly will you be losing if Google ends up penalizing your complete blog network? Well first, you're going to lose the time and effort it took to build your PBN. Depending how you chose to build it and depending on the tools you used, this can add up quite a lot of man hours and labor. Obviously, you also will lose money. Buying premium expired domains can get expensive even if you build a big network.

Even if you were able to snap up a niche-specific domain for \$25 to \$50 a pop, if you're building a network that is comprised of hundreds of domain names, this can get expensive very quickly. You say goodbye to all that domain registration money of your PBN gets wiped out due to a sloppy footprint.



What should your overall PBN strategy be?

Mix it up and make it all look natural. Your overall strategy for building a PBN that will withstand the test of time is fairly straightforward: mix things up and make it all look natural. The key here is to get Google off your trail. The more natural your network looks, the more guest posts or link sales you can generate. This also means that your PBN can last a long, long time and you would be able to pump high-quality link juice to where it needs to go.

The bottom line? A natural footprint, and network look and feel leads to greater system sustainability. For practical purposes, it's as if you built your whole network from scratch instead of using dropped domains to get a head start.

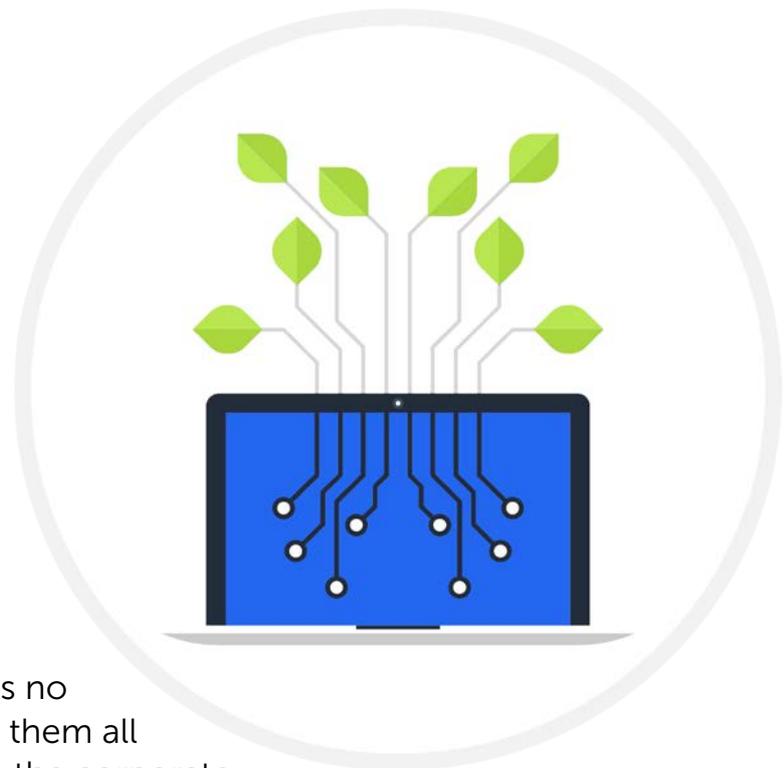
QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE THINGS YOU NEED TO MIX UP

As I've mentioned previously, you need to mix things up. It's really important to remember that there are three categories of site elements you can mix up. These are unique footprints, neutral footprints, and commonplace footprints. You have to know which is which. Just because your PBN has common footprints doesn't mean it's doomed. If these elements are common to all websites, then your chances of getting penalized is quite slim. Focus almost all your energy on mixing up elements that are unique to your websites.



CHAPTER 3

HOW TO MAKE YOUR PBN's DOMAIN REGISTRATION FOOTPRINT LOOK NATURAL



The first thing that you need to do is to register with as many different name registrars as possible. Thankfully, there is no shortage of registrars. There are tons of them all over the internet. Mix things up as far as the corporate identity and main domain of your registrars go. Also, pay attention to your whois information. It's really important to make sure that the addresses that appear on your whois are different from each other. This may seem quite difficult at first. I mean, after all, how many offices does your business run? How many homes do you have?

Thankfully, there is a shortcut to this. There are many address forwarding services or shared address services advertised on the internet. The best part is that they don't use P.O. boxes. It's also important to look at the DNS information of your domain registration. You may have taken a lot of care and effort in mixing things up as far as your domain registrars go, unfortunately it doesn't take much effort on Google's part to find out if all those different domains actually go to the same domain name server or DNS. That's a dead giveaway. It would easily appear that you have something to hide.

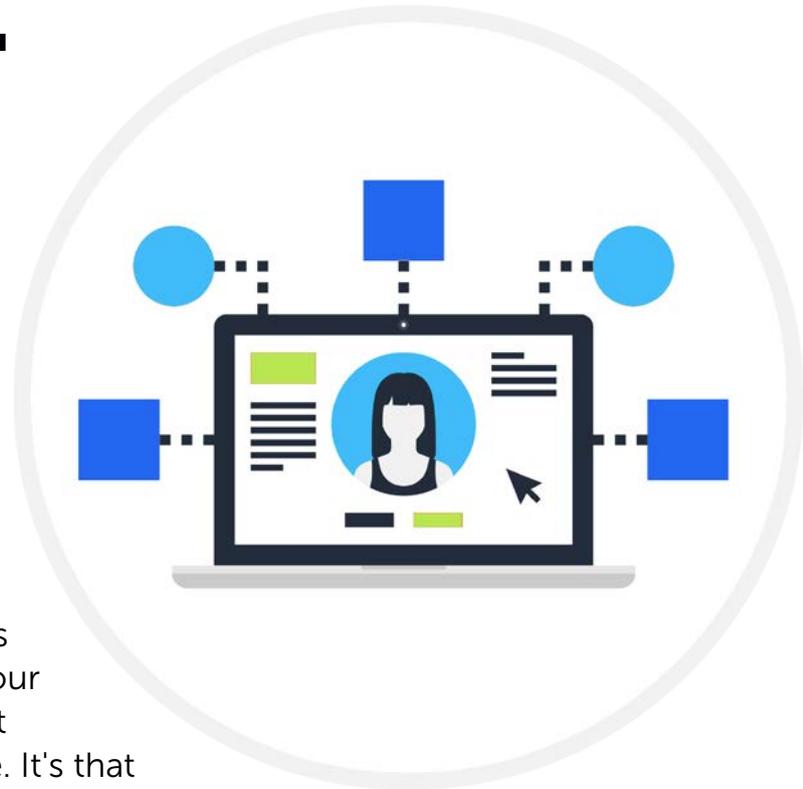


You might have a PBN comprised of dozens upon dozens or hundreds of different blogs with different registrars, but all of that goes down the toilet because they all are on the same hosting box sharing the same DNS. Do you see where I'm coming from here? As ridiculous as the situation may seem, people do get busted because they've set up their PBN this way. Put in another way, if you're ready, willing, and eager to put in the effort to mix up your registrars, it doesn't take much effort to also mix up your hosting providers, so you have different DNS servers.



CHAPTER 4

PROTECTING YOUR PBN THROUGH "NATURAL" HOSTING PATTERNS



Host with as many different companies as possible. A hosting service makes your website visible on the internet. Without hosting, people can't find your website. It's that simple. You pay a monthly fee for these hosting services.

The good news is that there are tons of web hosting companies. Keep in mind that they are either direct hosts or resellers. In other words, the company is a standalone business doing hosting or it's a company that's simply reselling another companies hosting services.

It's important to make you're PBNs hosting pattern as natural as possible. To do this, you have to use both direct and reseller hosting. It would look suspicious to Google if you're only using direct hosting. You have to throw in reseller hosting services in there to establish a more natural look.

Don't let cPanel give you away

Most hosting companies give their customers access to blog administration interface called cPanel. cPanel makes the managing your hosting so much easier and faster. The problem with cPanel is that this requires a hostmaster email address. If you are careless and you use the same email address for all your PBNs despite the fact that their different domains and hosts, it's easy for Google to nuke you. Why?



Your hostmaster cPanel email has given you away. This shows up in your domain's public record as part of your hosting details. It would be very easy for Google to detect your PBN by simply looking for one search string: your hostmaster email address. Don't screw up by making this mistake.

There are tons of free web-based email services out there like Gmail and Yahoo, knock yourself out getting as many different free web-host email addresses as possible. I know what this may seem like a headache right now because you're building a PBN comprised of hundreds of domains. As inconvenient as it is, compare what you would lose if you screw this up. You would lose thousands, if not tens of thousands of dollars' worth of domain registrations, not to mention the value of the time, effort, and energy you spent.

There is a cheap and quick workaround to this. The workaround is to hire a virtual assistant from Upwork.com or the Warriors for Hire section at the Warrior forum, or the For Hire section at BlackHatWorld and other affiliate marketing forums. Your virtual assistant, for a low flat fee, will go through the hassle of creating hundreds of email addresses, and verifying them by phone if need be. This can save you a tremendous amount of time as well as mental energy. Nothing is more tedious than creating emails by hand.



CHAPTER 5

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR CONTENT PATTERNS

Just as you need to mix up your domain and hosting footprints, you also have to pay attention to the content that you're going to be using for your PBN. It's extremely important that you follow the tips listed below. If you slip up in any of these, your mistake can undermine enough of your PBN blogs that they could have a cascading effect on the overall quality of the link juice you get from your PBN network. Indeed, if you screw up bad enough, your PBN might get nuked by Google.



Fill out your websites with unique content

The first thing that I need to get out of the way is that you need to use unique content. It has been firmly established by now, thanks to Google Panda, that you need original content for your materials. Thankfully, originality is pretty tightly defined. By "original", your material should pass Copyscape.com testing. If it passes muster at Copyscape, then for all practical purposes your content is unique. I can't emphasize this enough. You cannot screw around with non-unique, scraped, or duplicate content. If you're feeling lazy as far as content originality goes, just think of how much money you stand to lose if you cut corners on this particular site element.

Make use of the many sources of unique content

The good news is you don't have to spend an arm and a leg on unique content.



Since there are so many sources of unique content out there, you don't have to resign yourself to getting a top-notch and top-dollar writer in the United States to produce your content. You can use a wide variety of content sources to stuff your PBN with unique content. Consider the following sources.

Use dead domains' own "resurrected" content

There is a class of software that would use dead domains' own past content as the recovered domain's content. In other words, you are "scraping" the old site's archived content and placing it in the resurrected site. One particularly good tool for this is DomRecovery (<http://www.domrecovery.com>). This tool was built from the ground up for effective scraping of expired domains' past content. The good news is that this software also comes bundled with Domain Hunter Gatherer Pro. You get a better value buying these two tools together instead of buying them separately.

Spun PLR content with cheap editing

There is no shortage of content spinning software out there. Basically, you enter text into content spinning software and you create spin parameters for different words that you want synonymized. The spins software would then synonymize different sentences and mix sentences up to create original content. The downside to this is the fact that nine times out of ten the content produced is barely readable, assuming it's readable at all. It seems that regardless of how much programming goes into a spinning software it still rises and falls based on the amount of time and effort put into the "spin syntax" tags put in the original text to be spun.

The best way to do this is to first use high-quality PLR content. Since there are so many PLR sources out there, there are a lot of high-quality PLR materials that are dirt cheap. Next, hire a virtual assistant to put in the time to properly synonymize your PLR text. Run the spinner, then send the spun text to a cheap editor. Thanks to places like Upwork.com, Fiverr, and others, there is no shortage of people who would edit your spun content at a rate of \$5 for every 5000 words. This rate for that many words is not unheard of. Of course, you have to pay attention to quality. Make sure you hire somebody that actually knows what they're doing. After this person has edited the spun materials for maximum readability, run the materials through Copyscape just to make sure that everything is on the up and up.



Hire quality bulk content providers

If the options above aren't very attractive to you and you would rather prefer your materials completely written from scratch, then you can hire quality bulk content providers. These companies are in the business of producing high-quality materials for very little money. Five dollars for a 1000 word highly engaging article is not unheard of. Where can you find these providers? You can try the Warrior For Hire forum as well as BlackHatWorld.com's content marketplace. You could also try Freelancer.com.

Make sure that you test your writer's abilities. Look for grammar issues, sentence construction errors, and idiomatic expressions. A lot of writers from countries with massive populations of people who speak English as a second language have the technical aspect of written English down cold. They stumble on the fact that there are certain idiomatic expressions that non-native English speakers commonly make. Make sure you test them for idiomatic expression errors. Regardless of which content generation option you take, make sure that your content is unique and original. You don't want to jeopardize your PBN because you got cheap or lazy as far as content goes.

Create a different personality for each blog

It's really important to understand that content is not just text, but also look and feel. You have to make sure that each blog has its own specific personality. Some can look generic like a typical Wordpress installation. These blogs don't have much frills or anything fancy about them. Others should have "personas." By personas, I'm talking about an actual "person" behind the blog. This person is supposed to be the author or editor of the blog. Of course, you're going to be making this person up. Maybe you can use a cartoon image or a stock headshot. Whatever the case is, you have to go out of your way to personalize these persona-driven blogs.

These blogs should also have customized themes. The good news is customized themes don't have to cost you an arm and a leg. There are many theme templates out there that can be tweaked a little bit. What's important is once you do the customization, you don't recycle the customization. That's a dead giveaway. I will get into that in the next chapter.



THE BOTTOM LINE?

There shouldn't be one "look and feel" or personality for your whole PBN. You can't just build your whole PBN like fresh Wordpress installs. That's a dead giveaway. By the same token, you can't use the same persona or similar-looking personas for your PBN. You have to ensure that when people check out your network, it would seem that many different people made up these different blogs at different points in time.

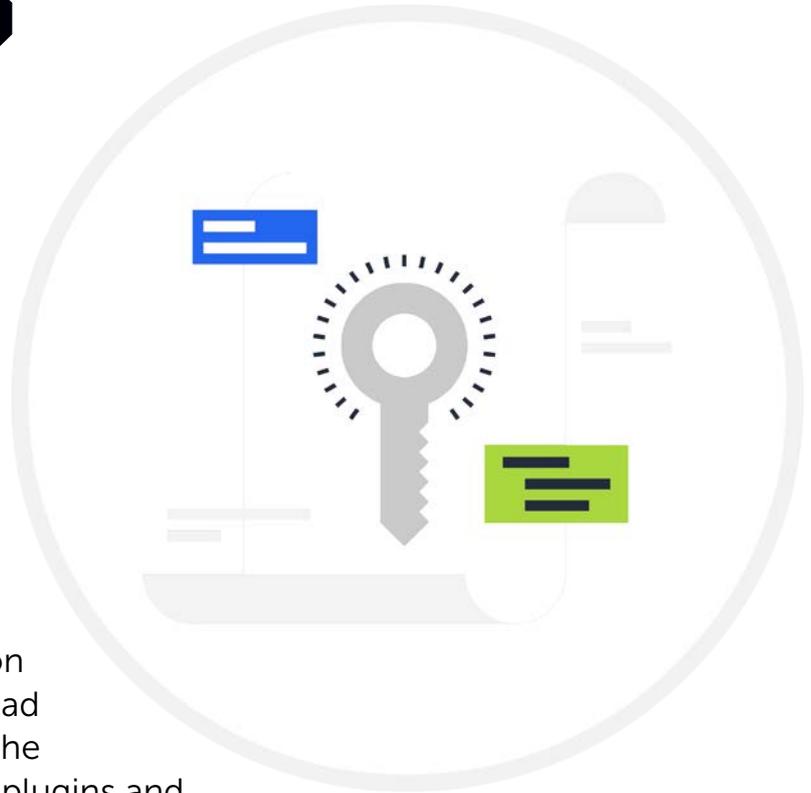
If you don't get that impression, then you need to put in the effort to customize your PBN's look and feel more. Again, this can be quite inconvenient, but it's definitely necessary. You can hire a virtual assistant to help you add the right amount of variety to your PBN. A virtual assistant doesn't have to cost much money.



CHAPTER 6

WATCH THESE TWO KEY WORDPRESS ELEMENTS CLOSELY

Not only do you have to mix up your domain name registrars, your hosting providers, as well as your content patterns, you also have to pay attention to how you set up Wordpress. One dead giveaway of Private Blog Networks is the consistent and uniform use of certain plugins and themes. For example, if your website network all uses the same blog theme, that's a telltale sign. Even if you were to mix up the different themes that you use to create a different look and feel, your blog network can still be dead in the water.



Why? It doesn't take Google that much time and effort to figure out which plugins, each and every blog in your network has installed. If Google sees weird linking patterns from many different blogs and notices that these blogs all use the exact same set of plugins, then this could be a problem. If paired with other factors, your common Wordpress theme or plugin choices might lead to your network getting banned by Google. To avoid this, pay attention to these two key Wordpress elements very closely: plugins and themes.

How to Spice Things Up with your plugins

If you use generic plugins that hundreds of thousands, or even millions of other blogs use, you're probably fine. If you're just using generic plugins, it's okay. As long as you mix them together.



For example, you can use some generic plugins for other blogs and use other generic plugins that perform the same tasks with other blogs. The key here is to look for the same set of tasks, but employ different generic free plugins to do the job.

Do you see how this all works out? Do not fall into the trap of getting lazy and using the exact same generic plugins for all your PBNs. You have to remember that plugins are designed to perform certain tasks. You should use these tasks as points of differentiation. There are many different plugins out there that can perform the same tasks. Your task requirements remain the same, but you can choose different plugins to meet those requirements.

Key Tips for Using Custom Program plugins

In my suggestion above, I was referring primarily to generic plugins. These are often free plugins. If, however, you're thinking of using custom program plugins, this can be a serious problem.

It can be problematic because your plugin footprint can be detected by Google. If it turns out that only blogs that you control are using a particular custom plugin, this gives your PBN away. You might as well hang a sign on all your blogs saying, "This is part of a Private Blog Network." Don't give yourself away, even if you are using custom program plugins. Make sure you change the labeling of the plugins you are using.

Also, work with your custom plugin coder to spice things up as far as the footprints of those plugins are concerned. Usually, when plugins work on a Wordpress blog and help render content, there's a footprint. Pay attention to this. Make sure that the footprints are different for each installation of those custom program plugins in your network.

Avoid These plugins if You Can Help it

Avoid plugins that are used primarily by the SEO community. There are certain plugins that are incredibly popular in the SEO community, but really aren't all that well known among rank and file bloggers. If only SEO people know about certain plugins, this can put your Private Blog Network in hot water. Try to avoid these plugins.



What you should do instead is to look for more generic plugins that address the tasks that you need done, but are used by most people with Wordpress blogs. Keep this tip in mind, especially for plugins preferred by people in the black hat SEO community. This is an ultra-targeted segment of the overall SEO community, and guess what? There are plugin usage patterns there as well. Try to steer clear of plugins that are used primarily by SEO specialists and most especially by people engaged in black hat SEO practices.

Pay Attention to the Themes that You Use

Just as your plugins can give you away, it's really important to note that your theme usage can expose you as well. While you can get away with using generic themes here and there, you cannot use them across the board. Similarly, if you use custom themes that only appear on your own particular blogs, this is a strong giveaway.

Follow the same analysis I use for plugin usage above. The bottom line is, you want to avoid the sad situation of essentially slapping a "uniform" on your PBN which makes for easier identification and banning by Google. And that's precisely what you're doing if you're using the exact same themes, whether free or not, for your whole network.

Also, if you get a custom theme done, and you use it on your PBN, this will mark your network as suspect. Don't make Google's job easier enough than it already is. Keep Google guessing. It's really important to mix things up as much as possible.

I need to make it clear that while using free generic themes are fine, don't get them from the same source. It just doesn't look natural when you use one particular source's generic theme for all your blogs. Try to get your generic themes from as many different sources as possible. The key here is to make your blog network look like it was made by different people at different points in time with different agendas.



CHAPTER 7

LINKING PATTERNS

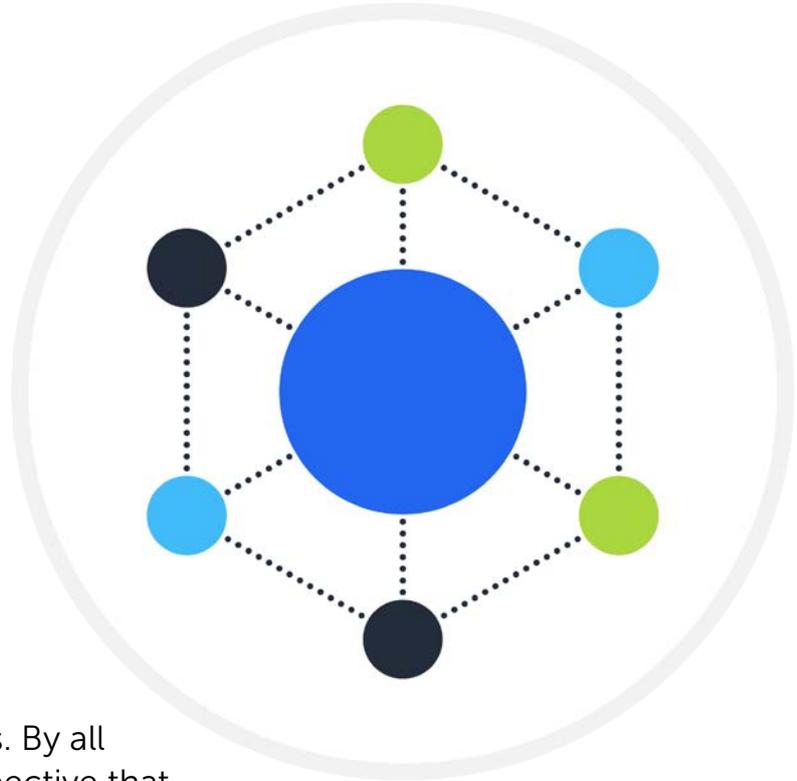
There are lots of Private Blog Network guides out there. A great deal of them tend to focus on linking patterns as the primary way you can essentially notify Google that you're running a Private Blog Network. I don't think this is the case.

Linking patterns form just one part of a wide range of blog elements that you need to mix up. I'm not saying that you should not mix up your linking patterns. By all means, you should. But keep it in perspective that you should focus on linking patterns in addition to focusing on all the other elements I mentioned previously, and the elements that I will mention after this chapter.

Don't just fixate on linking patterns and call it a day. You are definitely leaving your backdoor open as far as Google banning goes by turning a blind eye to the other elements mentioned in this book. Keep the following framework in mind. Note that this is just a framework, you need to customize it based on your particular situation. This is the reason you need to mix things up to make your blog network look as "natural" as possible.

Don't Just Link to your Target "Money" Site

This should be fairly straightforward, in fact, it should be quite obvious. While it's true that the main reason why you put up a Private Blog Network is to source link equity and link power from the existing backlink footprint of your expired domains, you shouldn't be obvious about it.





The most obvious way to do this, of course, is to set up the PBN and have them all linked to one site. Talk about a dead giveaway. You have to remember that Google creates a live map of link relationships on the internet. If your network is obviously just linking to one site and one site alone, that is a very telling sign. You have just given Google a smoking gun. It's really important to make sure that your link outs look as natural as possible. Here's how you do it.

Make it a point to link to non-competing small niche sites

There are lots of quality non-competitive small niche sites out there. Find them and figure out how to link to them naturally. Maybe you could use a naked link comprised only of a URL, or maybe you could use an anchor keyword that doesn't compete with your target keywords. However way you choose to do it, make sure it looks natural.

This not only throws Google off as far as linking patterns go, this also provides "context" for your blogs. Since you're linking to non-competitive but niche-related websites, they can help put context to each blog that you're linking out from. The more contextual your blog network gets, the more powerful its link juice.

It's also a good idea to make it a point to link to non-competing AUTHORITY sites. Again, the reason why you're doing this is that natural and real blogs do this. Real blogs don't just link to one unknown site that they're trying to promote. Real blogs link to very big names on the internet. They link to YouTube, Google, Yahoo, The Huffington Post, and a wide range of websites.

It's really important to look for authority sites. These sites are so big and so well-known that it doesn't look unnatural at all for your website to link to them. This can go a long way in making your website look spontaneous and natural because this is precisely the kind of linking pattern real blogs run by amateur bloggers possess.

Personally speaking, news sites are great candidates for this. Not only do you link to a high authority website but if you pick the right news items, you might also be able to establish quite a bit of niche context. For example, if you run a men's sports footwear blog and you link to sports footwear news items on CNN, you are linking to an authority blog. You are also creating a tremendous amount of niche context.



The most obvious advise: Don't interlink

You probably don't need me to say this because it should be obvious. Still, I feel I need to lay this out: Do not interlink your PBN sites.

Think of it this way, you pour in all this time, effort, and energy. You've gone through all sorts of hassles to put up your PBN. Don't flush it all down the toilet by interlinking them with each other. While there is some debate whether link wheels still work, what is indisputable is that you should not turn your PBN into a link wheel. Don't interlink them with each other.



CHAPTER 8

WATCH YOUR SOCIAL SIGNALS

Usually, when people think about dead giveaways as far as PBNs go, social signals are not even on the radar. They think that social signals don't count. Well, in terms of pure SEO, they would be absolutely correct.

Social signals in and of themselves, do not boost a website's ranking as far as Google search results are concerned. However, social signals do provide circumstantial evidence regarding the overall quality and niche ranking or niche quality perception of a particular website. If paired with other factors, social signals can actually help enhance your search rankings.

Again, this is all through circumstantial effects. For example, a website that gets a lot of social signals, like retweets on Twitter or Facebook group shares, also tend to get the attention of bloggers within their niche. If these websites get enough attention, eventually some of these bloggers would blog about these websites and link to them. It's the actual link that drives the search ranking of that particular page. But there is some relationship between the social buzz generated by the content and its eventual link-generating power.

Do you see how this works out? So, again to recap, it's not the social signal in and of itself that drove the ranking, instead it's what the social signal indicates as far as perceived niche content value goes. Eventually, it's still primarily about backlinks.





With that out of the way, it's really important not to interlink your social signals. How is this possible? Well, if you have PBN that has dozens, if not hundreds of blogs but they are all linked to, or mentioned by the same social accounts on Twitter and Facebook, that can be a telltale sign. Obviously, there's something going on when these backlinks from Tumblr, Twitter, and public pages on Facebook keep mentioning the same set of blogs. Even though Twitter links are "NoFollow," it doesn't matter. Your link is still shown. It's still a citation. This can lead to your PBN sticking out like a sore thumb.

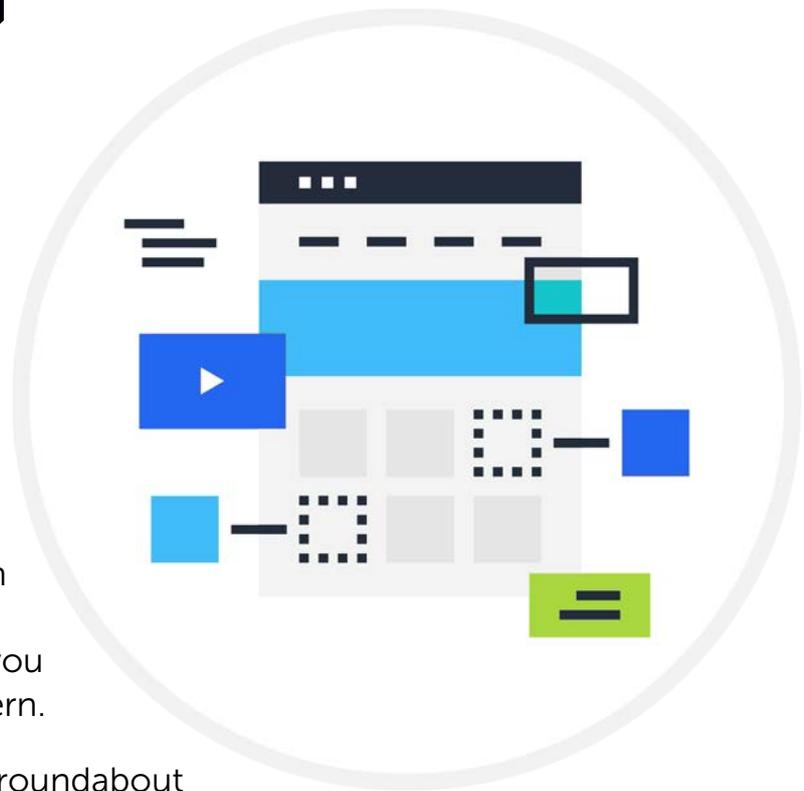
The good news is that this is a fairly easy problem to resolve. You can quickly mix things up by hiring a virtual assistant to create many different social media accounts for different parts of your PBN. By mixing things up and also by using these social accounts to feature content from authority sites in your niche, or even neutral well-known sites, you can throw Google off your scent.



CHAPTER 9

THE HARD STUFF

The material containing the previous chapters of this book is actually fairly simple and straightforward. This chapter on the other hand requires you to make hard calls, this is why I chose the title I did. A lot of this stuff is going to be quite hard to decide. In many cases, a lot of your monetization options are simply going to be left off the table entirely or partially because you don't want to create a suspicious pattern.



In many cases, you might have to use roundabout methods or multiple accounts just to avoid creating a suspicious pattern. Keep in mind that this is just a framework. Depending on your comfort level, you may be able to use all of these, some of it or none of them. Still you have to remember that you are running quite a big risk if you choose to ignore the tips below entirely.

Avoid putting AdSense and other common advertising codes on your PBN

I know this is going to be a bitter pill to swallow. A lot of people can see this as leaving a lot of money on the table. Let's face it; expired domains can have quite a bit of traffic in addition to a substantial back link footprint. This is especially true for premium expired domains. These are niche-specific that have a lot of link equity and has a proven content track record.

It would seem like an outright waste to opt not to monetize on these existing traffic footprint. Unfortunately, if you want to be sure that Google cannot detect your PBN, you would be better off leaving AdSense or other advertising codes off your network. I know that seems like a harsh call to make.



This is a particularly hard decision. I know that since you spent thousands if not tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars building up your PBN, one item that is high on your priority list is to recoup your investment. I totally get that.

Adding ads on your network can definitely go a long way in helping you get your investment capital back. The problem is, when you put the same code on part or on all of your network, this is a dead giveaway. The code doesn't have to be AdSense; it can be a simple ad network featuring CPA programs. Whatever the case may be, by simply putting the same code on all your PBN blogs, this can be easily detected and this can lead to the banning of your complete network.

Avoid using the same central Google Webmaster tools account for your network

Hands down, when it comes to traffic tracking and statistics, Google Webmaster tools should be your main option. With that said, there is a smart way to do this. You cannot be lazy and use the same central Google Web Master tools account. Again, just like AdSense or advertising codes, this is too easy to spot. It's too easy for Google to quickly conclude that all these seemingly natural websites that share the same content but are linked a certain are actually related to each other. You don't want to run that risk.

The good news is, unlike the AdSense or Advertising code dilemma outlined above, this is fairly easy to solve. Whether you are using Google Webmaster tools or Stat Counter or any other kind of statistics package, the solution is the same. You just need to create different accounts. Now this can be quite a bit tedious. The good news is there is workaround for this as well. You can hire virtual assistants from places like India, the Philippines, Bangladesh or any other country with millions of people who speak English as a second language to create your accounts for you.

The secret here is to create as many different accounts. As much as possible, try to create small clusters of blogs managed by these accounts. Example, if your blog network has 300 blogs in it, it's probably a good idea to have your virtual assistant to create 100 Google Webmaster tools accounts and parcel out the total number of blogs among these accounts. So in this situation, each account will manage 3 blogs - of course, the smaller the clusters, the better. It's also a good idea to change your IP addresses when you are accessing Google Webmaster tools.



This is extremely important because Google Webmaster tools are obviously still part of Google. Whatever you do with Google Webmaster tools and those associated Google accounts, Google can have access to your log and this can give away your PBN. I know that I may sound paranoid at this point because it will assume that I am attributing all these amazing abilities to Google. Unfortunately, Google has become sneakier and much faster and harsher every quarter. You don't want to find out in the worst way possible that Google is actually spying on you.

Do yourself a favor, I know it's quite inconvenient, I know it can be quite a hassle but you need to change your IP addresses when accessing Google Webmaster tools when managing our PBN blogs. The good news is that the hardest part, which is the set up, has been handled by your virtual assistant. You only have to pay that person a few dollars and you can save yourself the boredom and mind-numbing tediousness of creating all those accounts manually.

Still, you need to be very careful regarding how you manage your accounts. Strive to change your IP addresses, don't leave any access footprints. You have to understand that there are two kinds of footprint as far as private blog networks go: passive or site-based footprints and active footprints. Passive or site-based footprints are the footprints that I've outlined during the rest of this book. We are talking about your domain registration, hosting, footprints, content, links and all those other factors. Your active footprint on the other hand, is just as important.

Your active footprint is the actual actions you take on Google's properties when accessing or working with your private blog network. If you're sloppy or careless in anyway, you can be leaving a suspicious footprint pattern that can lead to your blog network getting banned.



CONCLUSION



PBNs are extremely powerful when it comes to SEO. This is not in dispute. The reason why you read about people complaining about PBNs on a fill-it marketing form is the fact that they either set it up from or they got sloppy. Either way, they got burned and now they are trying to convince everybody else that PBNs are “so yesterday.” Make no mistake about it, PBNs still work and will probably continue to work long into the future.

You just need to know how to set them up and manage them properly. This book steps you to the process of setting up and managing your PBN network the smart way. Not only is this the easy way, but this also leads to a very durable network. If you are thinking of building an SEO asset that will continue to pay dividends long into the future, definitely pay attention to the information I shared here. Use the tools and the workarounds that I explored. They go a long way in helping you save time, effort and energy. I wish you nothing but the best with your PBN network.