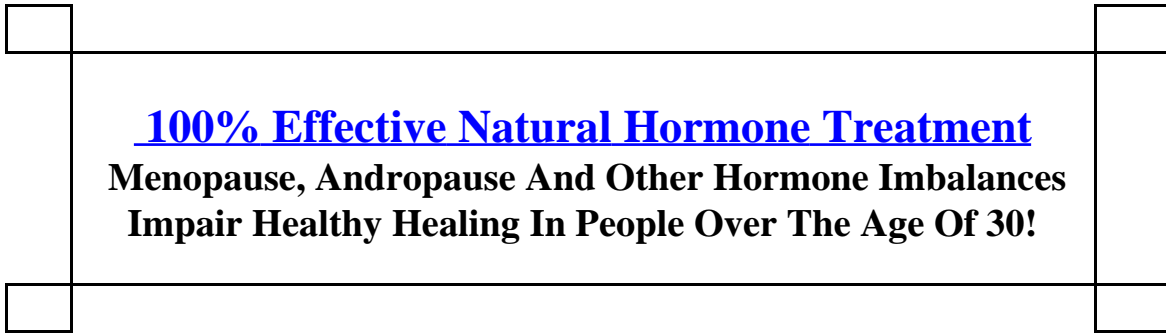


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**Complementary Relational Linking and How It Could Save Your Internet Business**

**By Francisco Aloy**

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The concept of linking is that sites with common interests should link to drive more traffic to each other's businesses and to increase their "popularity." Search engines, such as Google, give much higher ranking to sites with high popularity. They feel that when many sites are linking to yours, it's a sign of ranking value.

The standard linking philosophy of most websites is to have a "links page" that piles all the link partners into one common pool, without any indexing. That type of link will only help you with SE ranking but not sales.

Next up the ladder is the links page that's indexed, making your website easier to find. A much better solution if you must have a links page.

Of course, the best link in the world is when your partner puts you on his home page. I tell you, it's enough to make any Net Marketer go into involuntary spasms! However, the chances of that scenario are slim to none!

That's not to say there isn't a middle ground between the above strategies. There is a better option: complementary/relational linking! As an example: Let's say your website sells only pencils and you link up with a partner that sells paper; that's complementary!

## Complementary Relational Linking and How It Could Save Your Internet Business

Relational linking then assigns a merit value to all the linking proposals, using these facts:

Page ranking: Is it more or less equal?

Search Engine Ranking: Do both partners have good positions?

Traffic: Is the traffic swap equal?

As can be seen, some of the above quantities are interchangeable but shouldn't get in the way of judging the merit value of each offer. Depending on each circumstance, the varied partners will have a merit value that will give

them more or less prominence on your website.

The ideal circumstance is when you find a linking partner with the complementary/relational approach built into his sales program and the layout structure of his website.

Meaning: Location, location, location!

Without the above approach, many possibilities to garner extra income from your Net venture will not take flight! The above paragraph should have even more meaning when you consider the fast-approaching age of general broadband use. It is coming sooner than what anybody imagines; spelling out the end of many text only websites.

For all good reasons you should strive to create complementary/relational linking with as many partners as merited. Build your website to give them as much exposure as you can. All the bells and whistles! Provide ample space and graphics for them, trade full page articles and resources! Very important: Have them do the same for your business!

In closing I will exhort you to embrace multimedia and the broadband revolution as a principle of self preservation. The folks that take all their resources and put them in a text only links page will suffer the twists and turns of the not-so-kind near future!

=====  
by Francisco Aloy

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Agreement reminder, not part of the article:  
Please include my working hyperlink in the  
resource box. Remove paragraph before posting.

## **WHO ARE YOUR VISITORS, REALLY?**

**By Bob McElwain**

### **WHO ARE YOUR VISITORS, REALLY? by Bob McElwain**

Marketers and others are fond of categorizing people into subsets of the general population. If you know the type of person your potential customer is, you have a better notion of how to make your sales presentation.

In theory, if your target is an engineer type, you provide all possible information about how your gizmo works. He or she will decide whether or not it will work well. And if your target is the impulsive type, load your copy with words that grab emotionally, that trigger the impulse to buy.

#### People Don't Fit Nicely Into Categories

The difficulty with categorizations is that no matter how carefully drawn, people don't obligingly fit into a single category without some serious squeezing. The most devoted engineer type may buy after only a glance, thus behaving impulsively. Yet one who tends to grab the first thing that "looks good," may surprisingly want to study every detail about your gizmo before even considering purchase.

I've studied dozens of categorizations constructed by really bright people. I've never seen one that worked worth a hoot in practice. In designing a website I continue to recommend providing whatever any visitor may need to make the buy decision. That is, ignore types and seek to meet the needs of all.

Having said this, here is ...

#### A Categorization Scheme That Works

Roy H. Williams in a recent

"Monday Morning Memo" (a brief free must-read newsletter) pointed out that potential customers can be divided into two types: Transactional and Relational. He quoted Bill Bergh as follows.

"Shoppers tend to be either transactional or relational. Transactional shoppers are focused only on today's transaction. They're willing to deal with a supplier they don't trust because

they've spent a lot of time investigating the product and consider themselves the expert.... Transactional shoppers enjoy negotiating and are looking for the lowest-cost provider.

"Relational shoppers ... consider today's transaction to be one in a series of many. Relational shoppers don't enjoy comparison shopping or negotiating. They are looking for a supplier who is an expert they can trust.... Consequently, relational shoppers are far more likely to be repeat customers."

### A Practical View

This view of web shoppers jolted me. It's so obviously true, I remain surprised I have overlooked it for so long. Further, this categorization does work.

Sure, most people looking for a good mechanic will be relational in their approach. And many looking for an expensive new television set, take a transactional approach. Gather the facts, then shop to save a hundred bucks or more. So as in all categorizations, there is overlap. But these definitions hold better than any I have seen.

### Who Is Buying On The Web?

There's simply no question; the vast majority of web buyers are transactional. (Or behaving in this way.) The evidence is only indirect, but inarguable.

Go look for a digicam. You'll find a thumb nail which links to a larger view which includes the key features of a particular model. You'll find absolutely no information that helps you evaluate the benefit of a given feature. Information needed by anyone new to digicams, simply isn't available.

Such sites are only interested in transactional shoppers,

people who already know what they want, and are shopping for price.

Unless you have an extensive marketing and sales background, it is unlikely you can succeed on the Web targeting transactional shoppers.

### Your Best Bet

Apart from the categorizations, the key point to be derived from the above quote is that *\*only\** relational shoppers become repeat customers. Exactly what every small business needs. Once a fellow buys the digicam, he won't be back. Thus if you

seek repeat business, ignore transactional types and target relational shoppers.

This means demonstrating all manner of service and support. Cover the spectrum. And by all means be expert in your narrow niche. You want people to come to trust you, your knowledge, and support.

### The Real Challenge

That few online shoppers are relational, goes a long way toward explaining why small businesses seeking to grow a base of repeat customers struggle so. The number of relational shoppers will increase as more of the sorts of businesses and services they need become available online. However this growth won't happen quickly.

If your web-based business depends upon repeat customers, and thus relational shoppers, be patient with yourself. This will take time.



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