

PBN

in

2018



Do Private
Blogging
Networks still
work in 2018?

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Introduction - Do PBN Sites still work in 2018?



Cem Arel, Wordapp.io

No. Traditional PBN networks are completely useless in 2018.

Just building a PBN Network to create backlinks to your money sites is futile - Google has become way too good at recognizing shallow satellite sites.

What will work however, is to create **satellite money sites**.

Bear with me for a minute.

Think of your website, your money site and your main source of online income.

You spend time on finding a great domain. You make sure the hosting is fast. You create content that is valuable for your visitors. You run on-page SEO, technical SEO and off-page SEO. You work on your money site regularly. You share your content on social media. You track visitors and conversion several times a day and on the weekends.

Anyone visiting your site, whether it's a visitor, a bot or a reviewer from Google, sees you take care of your site.

You are not afraid of getting penalties from Google for your money site. You are not afraid that all your hard work could be gone when you get in the office tomorrow morning.

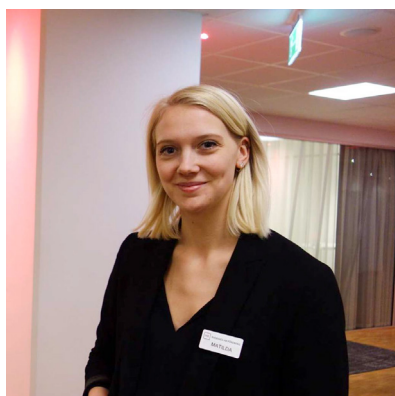
If you want to invest in a PBN Network, you should treat your PBN sites like little satellite money sites. Be proud of your sites, take care of them.

Not only will you receive fantastic backlinks to your money site, you will also start generating genuine traffic to your site.

Setting up a PBN Network is not the quick hack it used to be, but all the advantages of having a PBN Network are still 100% valid in 2018.

OK, I hear you thinking, "this is going to cost me a ton of time and money".

Again, no. The Return of Investment (ROI) of owning and operating a PBN network is still fantastic. It's about preparing, a sound strategy, like you have for your money site, to set up a proper PBN Network. Let's dig in.



Matilda Säf, Wordapp.io



Mattias Kaneteg, Miss Hosting

"Setting up a PBN Network is not the quick hack it used to be, but all the advantages of having a PBN Network are still 100% valid in 2018 if you treat them as Satellite Money Sites"

Just What Is A PBN Network?

A Private Blogging Network is a collection of high-authority websites used to build backlinks to your money site(s). Receiving backlinks from authoritative sites is a strong ranking signal to Google and other search engines that your site matters (giving it more ranking power in the SERP). It's especially strong because you control the content on the sites, and therefore how and when you introduce links.

PBNs And Backlinks

Are having backlinks important? Google thinks so, as it gives more credence and higher rankings to those sites with quality backlinks. Emphasis on quality. On a PBN Network you control all the elements. Therefore selection of SEO relevant backlinks is made so much easier and more importantly, successful. The higher the relevance of the links back to your site the more credit Google gives to them.

Is it against Google's guidelines?

Yes, it is.

The only time Google will tell you exactly how to rank your site is when you are using Google Adwords. When talking about organic ranking, Google is the worst source of information. Ever. And why wouldn't they be? If you make billions (with a 'b') in ad revenue, you don't want to share how you can rank organically.

Ranking organically has been a game from the very start. Using on-page SEO, technical SEO, backlink strategies - it is all designed to influence the way Google values your site and ranks it organically.

Are PBNs still worth it in 2018?

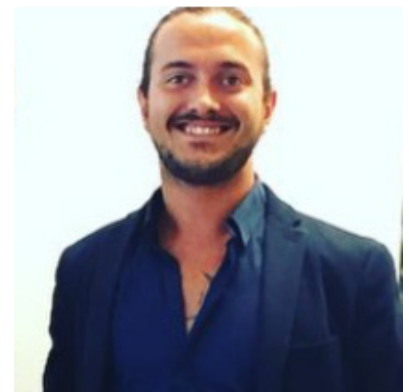
They are. 100%. It's not the quick hack it used to be, and like any good SEO strategy it takes both the investment of time and money. Combined with a solid on-page SEO strategy, "regular" backlinks and strong technical SEO a PBN Network is a very strong asset in building your search visibility.



Jorn Elferink, [Wordapp.io](https://wordapp.io)



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Terminology

Backlinks - Number of Links to this domain from other websites.

Referral Domains - Number of unique domains linking to this domain.

Referral IP's - Number of unique IP's linking to this domain.

Trust Flow - The trust flow of a domain is decided on the number of trust that the links to your website have, the higher trust flow links the domain have the higher the trust flow will be.

PBN Domains - How to select the right domains for your PBN?

What To Consider Buying A PBN Domain

The domains you are looking at will be fairly specific to your needs but among the thousands out there, how do you find the ones that will fit into your network? A bit of preparation work will make the process so much easier.

Niche Domains

Initially, you need to identify domains of a similar niche to present an authoritative site; you also want the domain to have backlinks from other acceptable sites within your niche. These backlinks need checking to authenticate where they are coming from. This can be done using a Majestic Matrix, to review the Topical Trust Flow category for the domain. To identify what backlinks the domain you are considering has, use Majestic, Moz or Ahrefs.

While you can buy domains from different niches as well, with a proper content twist, using domains in the same niche as your money site(s) will make the content strategy easier.

Appropriate Backlinks

You need to be sure the domain's backlinks are not corrupted or spammy nor have they been used previously in a PBN Network. While metrics are very useful, a manual check is essential to do before you purchase. Look for anything out of the ordinary. For example, foreign language content in the domain's history is a no go, any suspicion it had a previous PBN existence then leave it well alone. Also look out for over heavy anchor text, big brand names associated with fake goods or sites with adult content.

Using Web Archive (web.archive.org), a time machine that allows you to go back and see the previous content on a domain, is very useful tool to determine whether a domain is appropriate or not.

Is the Domain Indexed?

Finally, you need to check if the site is indexed. Run a Google search for "site:domain.com", if nothing shows then the site is not indexed. Why do you need to know this? If the site is not indexed then it is more than likely it has been removed from the Google index. And if it is either pending delete or has expired, it most probably has been penalized - none of which is good for your PBN.

The main thing to remember when buying this domain is that they bring no regrettable elements with them. Taking the time to ensure they are suitable is both a time and cost saver. Of course, you can do all this yourself, but using a specialist domain broker to do all this "essential preparatory work" for you makes the whole process a lot faster.

"A bit of preparation will make the process so much easier"



What Metrics Should I Look For?


Google's algorithms always change, but the core of its algorithm will always stay the same. Google wants to provide the right information to the right search query. Like in the "real" world, peer recognition is important - if Jamie Oliver likes your cooking, you're probably a good cook; if Jamie Oliver writes on his website that you are a good cook and links back to you, Google will think you are a good cook.

The 4 Main Metrics:

- Domain Authority or DA, Moz.com looks at the domains links and based on what it finds, it will measure the authoritative nature of the complete domain. Look for a DA -18+.
- Page Authority or PA- Moz.com yet again measures the authoritative nature of a page, by looking at that pages links - is also influenced by the DA of a domain. Look for PA - 13+
- Citation Flow or CF by Majestic (majestic.com) - this measure just how powerful the links actually are. Look for CF - 15+
- Trust Flow by Majestic (majestic.com) - from this you can garner information on how trustworthy and how much authority the website links have.

The Moz logo consists of the word "MOZ" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.The Majestic logo features a stylized 'M' composed of two overlapping shapes: a red one on the left and a dark blue one on the right. Below the 'M' is the word "Majestic" in a dark blue, sans-serif font.

These need to be used alongside manually checking all the backlinks - there is no real shortcut to doing this. The metrics are a trusty aide, but these third party algorithms are indicators not absolutes. Test domains before 1) adding them to your PBN network and 2) introducing backlinks.

A portrait of a man with short dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark suit jacket over a dark shirt. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

"At Miss Hosting, the first thing we look at when buying a PBN Domain for a client is the history data, we withdraw the data from different databases. What we look at is the history of the domain and what website used to be hosted. We also run it through different databases to gather information such as Backlinks, referral Domains, referral IP's & something called Trust Flow to see the trust on Google."

- Fredrik, Miss Hosting

PBN Hosting - How to minimize the risk of penalties and deindexing

How to minimize your footprint with the right SEO host

What you want to do to ensure that your PBN stays under the radar is to spread the websites over as many IP's as possible. Before you had to have a lot of different hosting providers to get many IP's. Today all you need is PBN Hosting, which means that you will have a server with a lot of IP's in order to spread your websites out over different C-Class IP's. Now you have two major advantages:

- You will be under Google's radar for blacklisting since your links comes from different IP domains, and you won't have a clear footprint to follow.
- You will gain a higher value in Google's ranking since you push links from different IP's.

Don't block Crawlers (using robots.txt or other means)

When you lock up a room, all you do is make a burglar curious. Nobody looks in the trash can for diamonds.

This is why you don't want to block crawlers like Majestic, Moz or Ahref. Google first investigates sites blocking these crawlers - something you don't want if you're building a PBN network.

You want Google to index your sites and see the natural links coming from those sites to your money sites.

Don't use Cloudflare to hide their IP

People may think that using CloudFlare is a super clever idea to hide the IP, but it really isn't. Using a Cloudflare IP means Google sees all links coming from sites on CloudFlare - not giving it as high trust as a site on a unique IP linking to your main site.

“Especially when building a PBN Network, you want the basis to be correct - don't be creative with Cloudflare or by blocking crawlers”

Don't use the same Google Analytics or Google Search Console account

It's important to track how your site is doing, you want to build your PBN sites like any other money site including Google Analytics to check traffic. Make sure you install fresh versions of Google analytics with unique tracking id's. If you have a lot of sites, we highly advise you to use clicky.com.

“Especially when building a PBN Network, you want the basis to be correct - don't be creative with Cloudflare or by blocking crawlers”



PBN Content - How to get the most ROI from your PBN

How to keep the existing power of your PBN site?

When you buy an expired domain, the content in it will be gone. However, you can reach the old version of the site using Web Archive. It will give you an idea of what the site is about. You will see what the menu sections are, the pages on the site and a range of other useful information. Since the site has existing backlinks and traffic, you can use this advantage by using the theme and topics as discussion points and content creation ideas.

You also need to use matching keywords; this means that any keywords that you are going to use to rank this content will need to be in line with what was already on the site. At times you will have to be creative in the way you use these keywords to link back to your money site, and at other times there will be an easy link and connection. In the PBN planning section, we talk about this in more detail.

There is no denying it, content creation is a slow game, but an effective one.

1. Firstly understand what the site was about. What content was already published on the site? Note: You can reuse this content again as original content because the site has been retired and the content is therefore no longer available online.
2. Once you understand the theme of the site find the keywords that have been previously used and plan out new keywords that are in line with them. You can do this using tools such as [Keywordtool.io](https://keywordtool.io) and Google Keyword Planner.
3. Create a calendar of content that you would like to produce for this PBN. In order to keep a site fresh, you will want to post at least once a month, using quality content and SEO keywords.

Using Web Archive (web.archive.org)

With Web Archive you can look back in time to see what used to be on a domain, because all texts links and images are indexed. If you are rebuilding a snapped site, you want to check the structure of the site and what content used to be there.

1. Go to web.archive.org
2. Fill out the domain name
3. Browse back through history to find the nearest "live" copy of your domain
4. Decide whether or not you can work with the old content (in original form or twist) to link back to your money site(s)
5. If yes, when rebuilding your site try to mimic the old structure of the site



Keyword Research

So, you have created a network of private blogs, and now you want to link them to your “money site” in order to produce a higher page ranking and conversion rate, but what’s next?

The only reason we utilize PBN’s is to ensure that our “money site” ranks well. To do this, the content that you have on the PBN has to be relevant with targeted and specific keywords.

“Keyword research is an essential step in any content creation that you undertake.”

Keyword research is an essential step in any content creation that you undertake. The best way to conduct this research is through a keyword tool, like keywordtool.io or Google Keyword Planner. High ranking keywords allow you to see what your target market is searching for in Google. These keywords will help your content rank organically since they target the specific searches that your clients are typing into search engines.

Google ranks pages based on the amount of links flowing back to them. Over time you will build these links organically as people will come to recognize your product or service as one of authority. However, until that happens organically, as part of your marketing plan you can help the process by creating your own links and allowing your money site to rank higher in SERPS.

When you are ready to start doing your keyword research that will scaffold your content for your PBN there are several steps that you need to take:

1. Use Google to search for the product or service that you are offering and see what automatically appears in the search box. This will give you a good understanding of what people are searching for, as this is a predictive algorithm that Google uses to make searches easier.
2. Browse the top ranking websites that Google finds and look at the content they have used as well as the keywords they have implemented.
3. Once you have a good idea of the content that is ranking highly in your category you are ready to start an in-depth keyword research. You do this using a specific tool. We recommend tools like keywordtool.io and Google Keyword Planner.
4. Create a list of Keywords that are relevant to your product or service and group them together to use in your content creation.



Using keywordtool.io to find long tail keywords

1. Create an account at keywordtool.io you will need the paid version to see search traffic data for all keywords
2. Use the “find keywords” section to search for one of the keywords you want to rank on your money site
3. Make sure you set the Google locale and language settings correctly
4. In the search results area, after you have started your search, filter for keywords having 20-50 searches a month (these are easy to rank for)

Introducing Links: When to start backlinking from your PBN site

What is backlinking? I hear you ask. Simply put it is a hyperlink that takes you from a webpage to your money site. Backlinks can often be referred to as inbound links. Links should be incorporated naturally into any content that you write.

You can start linking back to your money site(s) when your PBN site is up and running (i.e. is ranking in the SERP and has organic traffic coming to it). Make sure that in the original content you introduce, you link out to other authoritative sites like newspapers. This ensures that you don't only have links going to your money site.

Some backlinking rules:

1. Create a new blog post or page for each outgoing link
2. No more than 2 links per money site in one PBN site (every link should be accompanied by about 9 other "regular" posts with links going to other sites)
3. Use different anchor texts when linking back and check your backlink profile
4. Do not link to more than 8 money sites



“Links should be incorporated naturally into any content that you write”

Keeping Your PBN Network Viable

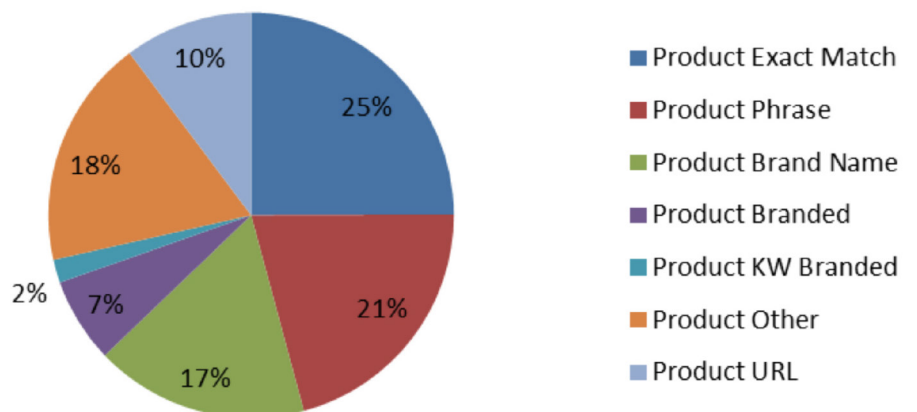
Keep your PBN sites active, even after you have introduced links to your money site(s).

“A content strategy is essential”

Without regular unique content, the site’s backlinks will become invalid. It is essential that the content that links back to your site is of the top quality. Plus the content has to look legitimate to the Google bots. If it is old or out of date that is a huge negative indicator to the legitimacy of the site.

The blogs need to look and read authentically. So a content strategy is essential. Decide on the authors of the blogs; provide the definition and character of the blogs that will separate them out from others on the network. This gives consistency to the posts, but also segregates them from each other.

Product Anchor Distribution



PBN Planning - How to get started with a new PBN

How many PBN links (=sites) you need to rank

No one will be able to really tell you how many links you need to start ranking your money site. It comes down to building a couple of sites and tracking the results. The main factors in this are how competitive your niche is (and the keywords you try to rank for), how good your on-page SEO is and the domain authority of your PBN sites.

The number of sites you want to build depends on how many keywords you want to rank for. Keep in mind, you don't want to introduce more than two backlinks for every 20 pages of link building content (not including static content like the "about us" page).

As a rule of thumb, for a medium competition keyword to start ranking you need about 10 PBN links. That means that if you want your money site to rank for 20 keywords, you need about 200 sites.

Building PBN sites in 2018 is not at all about just generating link juice anymore of course, you can also generate real traffic to your site from a PBN site. You want to make sure your site is built like a proper money site by itself, including social presence and actual ranking content.



“Building PBN sites in 2018 is not at all about just generating link juice anymore”

Plan for the cost of a PBN

Like any profitable traffic generating strategy, it costs money to build and maintain a PBN network. There are three major costs:

1. The cost of the domains you are buying
2. The costs of hosting
3. The costs of the content

The most value will come from the domain you are buying, the better the backlinks to the PBN site the more expensive the domain will be. Generally, domains from Miss Domain will cost you between \$50 to \$500, but good domains can go for way more.

Hosting is an ongoing cost, and you want to make sure you select a good host for your PBN sites that understands the importance of leaving a minimal footprint. Too many PBN networks went belly up because hosting was not set up properly. At Miss Hosting, you will pay between \$270 to get a website with the 5 pages of content relevant to the old domain, including images and metas.

With Wordapp, you should save on average 50% on your internal and external costs of producing content. And with the Wordapp's Wordpress plugin, you don't have to upload content manually and with the crowd prices are low.

For building 10 PBN sites, it should cost you about:

- Buying 10 domains with initial content
- Yearly hosting
- Backlinking package
- Follow up package
- Total cost of 10 domains: x \$ one time and x \$ per year ongoing

When you start making money, you will probably add more expensive domains with better metrics to your PBN network.

*“With Wordapp,
you should save
on average 50% on
your internal and
external costs of
producing content”*



Decide the way you will structure your network

Again, here we have three different scenarios, depending on whether you are promoting:

1. A single money site
2. Multiple money sites in the same niche
3. Multiple money sites in multiple niches

If you are promoting a single money site or multiple money sites in the same niche, you can set up all your domains in one network and the sites will operate completely independently of each other.

If you work as an agency, promoting multiple money sites in multiple niches, you want to set up individual Master Networks for each niche. For example, a niche related to Casino, and a niche related to Finance. Using a Master Network has several benefits:

1. It is easier to manage backlinks to each money site
2. If one network is found in a manual review, your other networks are still protected
3. You can share links between networks (for example by using a "review" section on a site, a guy reviewing a restaurant can work and backlink to a casino site).

Set up your PBN sites like money sites

If you're reading this then there is one thing you are afraid of: manual reviews. Google, and other search engines have teams of people who manually review sites to decide whether or not they are legitimate websites.

Is this something you should be afraid of? Not if you set up your PBN site like a money site. A "pretty" site will rank better, get more backlinks, get actual traffic, etc.

Three things you want to do here:

- Set up a theme
- Fix the structure of the site
- Create social proof for your PBN sites



Using [Themeforest.net](https://themeforest.net) to find a theme for your site

While using one of the many free Wordpress themes is not at all bad, it is better to use a multi-functional theme from Themeforest. It gives your satellite money site a way better look.

- Head over to themeforest.net and create a free account
- Check for multi-purpose sites, preferably with a ton of demos
- Buy one of the themes (~60 USD) and use each of the demos to create a new PBN site.



The structure of your site boils down:

- Logo
- The navigation bar
- The sidebar

It's simple to create a unique logo, use one of the many available tools online or get creative with Photoshop. A site without a logo is not a site (and no, text logos don't do well).

Creating a logo with logojoy.com

1. Sign up for an account, previewing your logos is free and there is a one time fee to start downloading unlimited logos
2. Use the logo builder to select a fitting logo - best is to use something generic, but unique for each site
3. With the text editor, add the site name to the logo
4. It is best if you create a squared logo, since this will work for social media pages like Facebook and Pinterest as well



Make sure the navigation bar clearly shows the pages that relate to the old content of the site (ideally the pages that have backlinks to them). If appropriate, include an "about us" section, or other pages that resemble the old structure of the site.

The sidebar is key in showing if a site is alive or not. In a manual review, it gives the reviewer a good idea of the last posts that were uploaded (include some dates), and also if a site has a Facebook page associated with it. Creating social proof for your PBN sites is simple, fast and does wonders for a manual review. Setting up a Facebook page, linking your blog feed with a content automation tool like Zapier will start generating likes soon.

Syncing your blog and social media accounts with Zapier

1. Zapier is a very powerful automation tool, which is directly integrated with Wordapp
2. Sign up for a free account at zapier.com
3. Create a new zap
4. Use Wordapp as the trigger for your zap
5. Add Facebook, Pinterest, and all your other social media accounts in the work flow so that texts are published automatically
6. Use the Zapier builder to match your templates with the information from the Wordapp template



Create a content plan

First things first, your newly acquired PBN site has backlinks (which makes it powerful). You want to make sure you don't deviate too much from the original content. There are two main user cases here:

1. Keep the niche of the site
2. Re-theme your site

If you buy "writing.tips" and you run a content processing platform, you can just continue where the old owner of the site left off. Both the existing backlinks and the content are similar to the new purpose of the site. You can use Wayback Machine to see what the old site was about exactly, because it's an online directory that saves copies of the site over time allowing you to time travel to when the site was still with its original owner.

If you however buy sites that are in a different niche, you have to re-theme your site. Example? You buy insurance.com, a site that used to be about insurances but you want to twist it into a casino niche. Your new site can be about how to insure against losses in online casinos with good strategies.

After this, you want to create some pages on your site. This static content ideally fits with the original content. Use a tool like Open Site Explorer from Moz to see where backlinks of your PBN site are directed to. Create those pages from scratch with similar content, or redirect them to a new page that is relevant.

"If you buy sites that are in a different niche, you have to re-theme your site"



Using Open Site Explorer from Moz to see backlinks

1. Head over to moz.com/researchtools/ose/
2. Create a 30-day free trial account to start using the tool
3. Fill out the domain name you have bought
4. Check to which pages you are getting (strong) links
5. Recreate the pages on your site and decide whether to fill them with relevant content again (advised) or to redirect the pages to another page on your new PBN site

Pages that are good for a PBN site, especially in a manual review, depending on the original content are:

- About us page
- Contact us page
- Events/workshops
- Advertising
- Why we created ABC
- FAQ
- Resources
- Privacy Policy / T&C

Generally, you should have five pages of static content, totalling 1750 words all with images and metas. Split up the word count differently over the five pages to keep your footprint low.

When this content is set, you can start introducing new posts to your page. With the Wordapp content packages for PBN, you will get the right content to:

1. Start generating traffic to your PBN site
2. Make it look like a real site
3. Get the most of your link juice

“Generally, you should have five pages of static content, totaling 1750 words all with images and metas - then you can start adding blog posts to introduce links”

Plan for drip feeding links to your money sites

Probably the most often asked question is, "When do I start backlinking to my money site from my PBN site?"

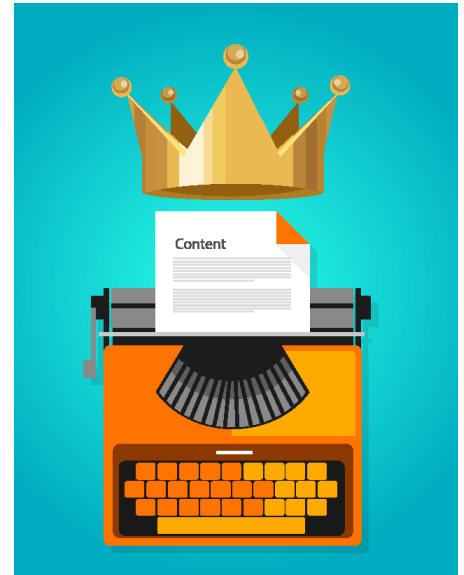
The answer to this is simple. You only start ranking when it is natural to rank. As mentioned previously, you want to make sure your PBN site actually starts ranking for some keywords and has traffic on it. Also, you want to make sure that your money site already has some backlinks from genuine sources.

PBN links are the most valuable links you can get, because you control the context and the anchor text. This means you want to place these links strategically.

Start linking to some other sites (like some news sites) so that in a manual review it doesn't look weird that there are outgoing links from your PBN site. Don't make these links NOfollow, because your money sites link won't be either. After that, check the incoming links you have on your money site and make sure you mix up the anchor texts.

If you are trying to rank for "online casino" and 15% of your links are already like this, you probably want to start linking back with another anchor text to keep it natural and get the full power.

Don't forget to link out to other sites as well, too many PBN owners forget this and it will become extremely obvious in a manual review that this is a PBN site for the purpose of link building.



Plan for managing things efficiently

Building a brand new PBN network can be a very time-consuming process - time you should be spending on other things. Working with Miss Hosting and Wordapp can save you tons of time.

Final word

Google is evil. They are. Making billions in ad revenue each year and sharing how to rank organically is out of the question for them. It's an incredibly fun game to play though, and essential if you want to build a strong site.

A PBN Network, as part of your SEO strategy, is a key tool to give you the backlink power your sites need. Remember, don't build a traditional PBN. But instead build a Satellite Money Site Network.

Get started today, or improve and expand your current network.

WORDappTM

 **Miss Hosting**
Part of Miss Group



In a nutshell - The 2018 PBN Checklist

		What not to do:	What to do:
PBN	1.1	Built a PBN Network	Built a Satellite Money Site Network
Domains	2.1	Don't buy a new domain without any history	Buy a domain with history
	2.2	Don't buy a domain with bad Trustflow	Buy a domain with Good Trustflow
	2.3	Don't buy a domain with a small number of backlinks	Buy a domain with a good number of backlinks
	2.4	Be aware of spam links on domains, just because the number of links are high doesn't mean that the links are good.	Go through the backlinks of the domains, check for good natural links going to the domain.
	2.5	Check for spam blogs, don't buy a domain that has been used as a bad spam site before, it's a high risk that Google has banned it and that's why it has not been renewed.	Check the earlier website of the domain using Web. Archive to see that it has had a real website earlier.
Hosting	3.1	Use shared hosting	Use SEO hosting with a wide range of IP addresses on one server and fantastic uptime that has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple SOA records • Different MX records • Different A records
	3.2	Don't tell everyone you're using a PBN Network	Don't block crawlers, it's not natural. Don't be vocal about using a PBN network, but don't hide it away. Make sure the sites add value to the visitor.
	3.3	Don't add the sites to the same Google Analytics + Google Webmaster Tools	Add the websites to different accounts to spread the risks of getting noticed
Content	4.1	Poor content quality (spun content)	Treat the content on your PBN domains the same as your money sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant content based on the previous content • High quality texts that provide value to the reader
	4.2	Introducing backlinks too early	The right time to introduce backlinks is when your site starts ranking and getting some real organic traffic.
	4.3	Not linking out to other useful websites	You want your PBN sites to add value to readers and you don't want your backlinks to look spammy.
	4.4	Not mixing up Anchor texts in links from PBN	Using the same anchor texts from all PBN sites is a footprint you don't want.
	4.5	Not updating the site	Treat your PBN site like a money site and add regular content (even if it's just 50 words with an image).