02

PR Link Building Campaigns

A campaign planning deliverable the outreach team now runs on every account.

THE PROBLEM

uSERP had no company-wide process for coming up with link campaign ideas.

Every account manager worked it out on their own, which meant the quality of the pitch depended on who happened to be holding the account.

I built the process and the deliverable	A documented workflow plus a Link Sourcing Verticals doc, produced the same way on every account.
The outreach team runs it now	It tells them which site types to source links from and what to pitch into them.

HOW THE IDEAS GET GENERATED

I use Claude to crawl the client site for what is actually pitchable.

Angles written from a brief fail. Crawling first means every angle is built on something the client genuinely has.

Unique features	What the product does that competitors do not.
Topics the site can speak to	The subjects an editor will accept a pitch about.
Selling points and proof	Certifications, funding, integrations, named customers, awards.
Brand history	Renames, acquisitions, old entity names still in the footer.

A CHANGE TO HOW OUTREACH IS SENT

I recommended pitching from a client email address. Response rates doubled.

A pitch from an agency address reads as an agency pitch. The same message from the company's own domain reads as the company, and editors answer it.

One address per client	Created on the client's own domain and used only for link outreach.
Two to three times the response rate	Same target lists, same angles, same senders. The sending address was the change.
No extra cost and no new tooling	It is a mailbox and a signature, so it ships the week you decide to do it.

PR AND MEDIA RELATIONS

Eight years of media relations on a national congressional campaign.

The campaign was polling 30 points behind and won by 18 nine months later. Link outreach is the same work with a different deliverable: find the angle an editor will run and get it to them before the moment passes.

Tracked the issues daily	What was moving that week decided what we pitched and when.
Set the PR and social strategy	Which issues to speak on, through which channel, in what order.
Wrote the talking points and the content	What the candidate said publicly, and what went out under their name.
Ran and trained the team	Organized a large press team and brought junior staff up to standard.

LOCAL LINK BUILDING · THE FOUNDATION

Most local links come from things the practice is already doing.

Sponsorships, donations and referral relationships already happen. Nobody asks for the link, so the mention sits there unlinked.

Unlinked mentions first	Go back to every organization the practice sponsored and ask them to link it.
Partnerships with nearby practices	General dentists, pediatricians, oral surgeons. Referral relationships made visible on both sites.
Sponsorships with a sponsor page	Youth sports, school programs, community events. Ask for a linked logo, not a banner.
Donated treatment as a story	The charity publishes it, and local press picks up the ones with a real before and after.

LOCAL LINK BUILDING · WHAT SCALES

The strongest local links come from journalists, and they cost nothing.

A practice holds expertise a local reporter needs on deadline. Pitch the orthodontist as the source on a news-tied angle and the link arrives with the coverage.

Expertise tied to the news	Back-to-school, mouthguard season, a health story needing a clinician quoted.
Build the relationship first	Share and credit what local reporters write, so the name is familiar before the ask.
Chamber and trade associations	Member directories, contributed articles, event listings.
Nofollow counts from a good source	My view: a mention on a page people actually read carries weight, followed or not.

LOCAL LINK BUILDING

I build directory listings out like landing pages.

A half-filled listing is a link that carries nothing. I run citations through BrightLocal and complete every field on each one.

Managed through BrightLocal	One place to push listings across the directory network and watch them stay live.
Every field completed	Description, service list, categories, images and video on each listing.
Interlinked with the site	The listings, the Google Business Profile and the service pages all point at each other.
What that produced	A clinic took top map rankings in all three target zip codes within three months of launch.

OWNED CHANNELS

YouTube, social and Google Business Profile posts, all pointing at service pages.

Scheduled posts on channels the client already owns, each one written on the subject of the page it links to. Link building that needs nobody’s permission.

SEO-optimized YouTube videos	Title, description and tags built around the service page the video supports.
Topical social posts	Written on the subject of the page they link to, rather than general brand posts.
Scheduled Business Profile posts	Each one on a service the practice offers, linking to that service page.
Several properties, one topic	The same subject reinforced from the site, the profile, the video and the posts.

LINK MAGNETS

Link magnet creation: I helped turned a client's own transaction data into research publishers can cite.

Bulk Office Supply had a decade of purchase data and nothing a publisher had reason to link to. Original research gives an editor a figure to quote and a name to credit.

Data nobody else holds	48,060 purchase line items across 5,254 K-12 school organizations.
One question worth answering	What school districts lose by ordering piecemeal instead of by the case.
Built to be cited by name	A statistic needs a source. An opinion piece does not.
Publishing after the migration	So the links land on the final URL, not one about to move.

WHAT THE DELIVERABLE CONTAINS

Eight to ten verticals, each mapped to the target page it feeds.

A vertical is an audience segment someone can prospect against, not a topic. Two approval gates before the build, then a red team pass of 18 checks.

Nine ways to derive one	Bullseye category, adjacent technical, upstream discipline, buyer lifecycle, differentiator, decision-maker and three more.
Four example sites each	Reachable publications, not the best-known mastheads.
Content angles per target page	Written for one specific page, with the headline and the pitch.

WHAT MAKES AN ANGLE EARN A LINK

Every angle names the moment a link to the client belongs in the article.

The hook is the reason a writer reaches for that page mid-sentence. Rewrite the angle for a different page or a competitor and it should stop making sense.

Data	the piece cites a figure that page holds
Destination	the piece explains a category and the reader needs somewhere to go
Definition	the piece uses a term that needs explaining first
Example	the piece needs one concrete instance

VETTING THE TARGET LIST

Every publication gets checked for a live, followed link before anyone pitches it.

The check reads the link on a recently published contributed article. On one account 32 were checked and 9 passed. A famous masthead that nofollows returns nothing.

No door	A subscription newsroom, or no contributor path at all.
Invite only	The guidelines rule out unsolicited pitches.
A link worth nothing	The bio points at LinkedIn, or the content is blanket nofollow.
Paid only	A rate card, a membership or a sponsored slot.

Link-context & data-hook (“link magnet”) angles

I engineer the editorial moment a backlink sits in, so the link belongs.

The problem: A pitch can name a great site but give the editor no reason the link belongs on the page — so it never places, or places without value.

- I match the hook to the page type so linking to the client is the natural thing for an editor to do.
- I build data-hook “link-magnet” angles from an asset or figure only the client has — something genuinely citable.
- A red-team step verifies the causal claim the angle asserts and whose statistic it really is, before outreach ever pitches it.
- **Deliverable: The angle and hook engine built into the Link Campaign Ideas doc.**