FREE GUIDE · LINK BUILDING

Free Backlinks for Life, Straight From Your Competitors

The sites that already link to your competitors are your easiest link wins. Find them with Ahrefs Link Intersect, clean the list with Claude or ChatGPT, send a short email, and skip anyone who asks for money.

5	₹0	6
steps	per link (skip the paid ones)	ready email templates & prompts

Screens in this guide are illustrations to show you where to click. Real screens may look slightly different.

Growth by CC
Organic growth, explained simply

THE IDEA

Your competitors already did the hard work

If a website links to **two or three** of your competitors, it clearly links to businesses like yours. It just hasn't heard of you yet. That's a warm lead, not a cold one.



1 · Ahrefs Link Intersect: your site + competitors

↓

2 · Filter: referring domains, dofollow → sites that link to them, not you

↓

3 · Export → Claude/ChatGPT removes spam

↓

4 · Email each site: “You linked to them, here’s why we fit too”

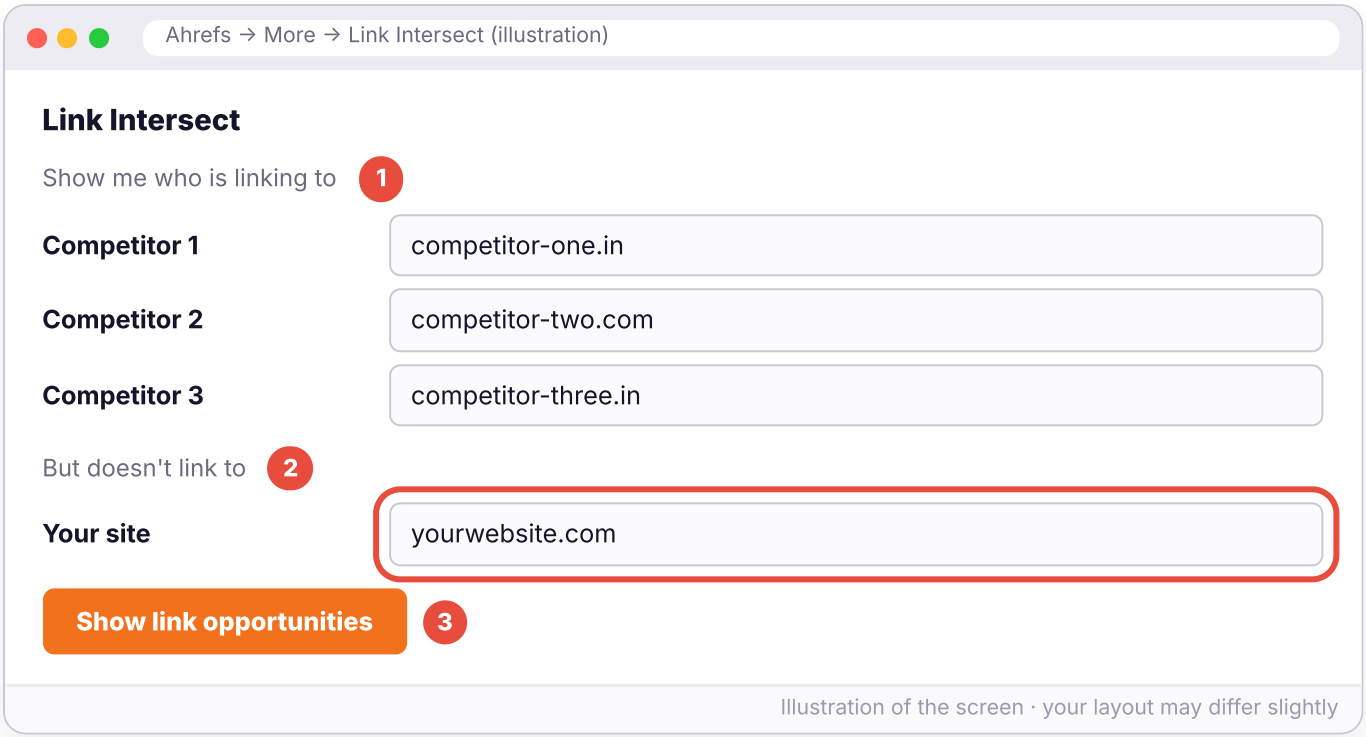
↓

5 · Asked for money? Skip. Take the free ones ✅

STEP 1 OF 5

1 Open Link Intersect and add your competitors

In Ahrefs, go to **More → Link Intersect** (it's under the competitive-analysis tools). It needs a paid Ahrefs plan. Free alternatives are on page 9.



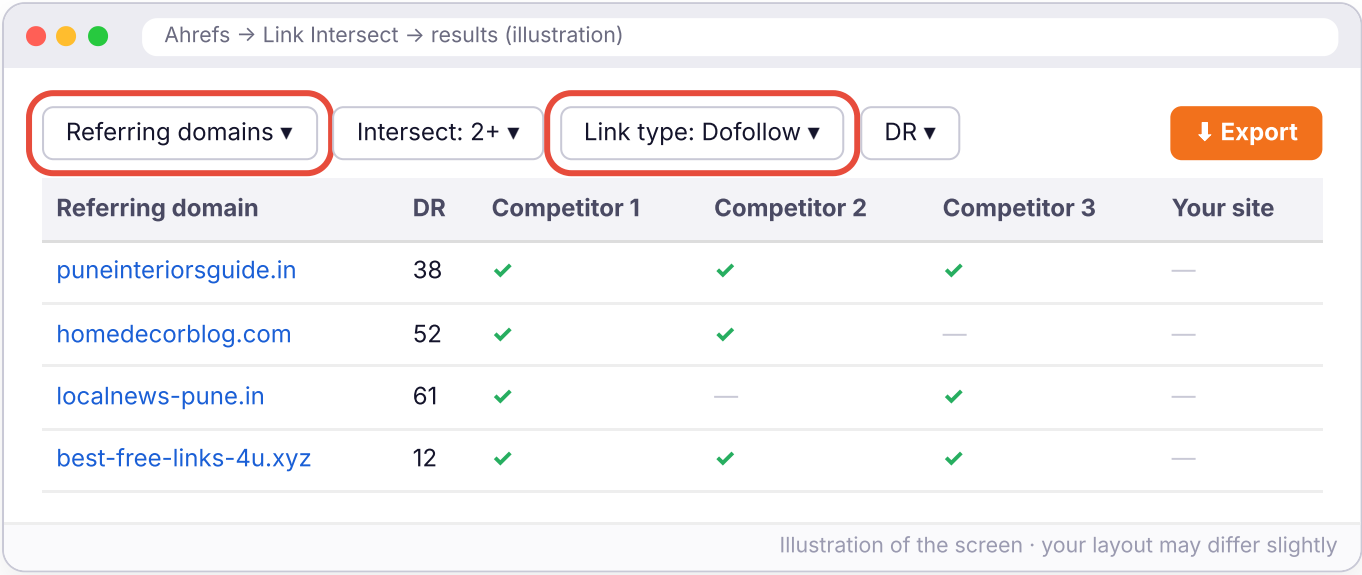
1. **Top boxes ("who is linking to"):** add 3–5 direct competitors. Pick ones in your city or niche that rank above you on Google.
2. **Bottom box ("doesn't link to"):** your own domain, so sites already linking to you are hidden.
3. Click **Show link opportunities**.

💡 **Picking competitors:** Google your main keyword (e.g. "interior designer in Pune") and use the top 3–5 business websites. Skip directories and marketplaces like Justdial or Amazon. They're not like-for-like competitors.

STEP 2 OF 5

2 Filter: referring domains + dofollow

Now narrow the results to sites worth contacting.



1. Stay on the **Referring domains** view (one row per website, not per link).
2. Set link type to **Dofollow**. These pass ranking value.
3. Filter **intersect to 2+**: sites linking to at least two competitors are the warmest leads.
4. Click **Export** → CSV.

👀 Notice the last row: links to all three competitors, but it looks like a spam site. That's why step 3 exists.

STEP 3 OF 5

3 Let Claude or ChatGPT remove the spam

Upload the CSV and let AI do the first sort. Then check the shortlist yourself.

📎 link_intersect_export.csv
Here's a list of websites that link to my competitors. My business is [interior design studio in Pune]. Remove spam and low-quality sites (link farms, gibberish or foreign-language spam, casino/adult/pharma, "write for us / guest post" sellers, PBN-looking domains). Then group the rest by type: local news, blogs, directories, resource pages, associations, suppliers/partners. For each, tell me why they probably linked to my competitors.

✅ Removed 63 spam domains (list attached).
Kept 41 sites:
- **Local news (4):** localnews-pune.in → featured competitors in "Top interior studios 2026"
- **Blogs (17):** homedecorblog.com → quoted competitor in a modular-kitchen article...
- **Directories/associations (9)** · **Resource pages (6)** · **Suppliers (5)**

Then do a 30-second human check on each kept site

Keep if...	Drop if...
Real content, real people, updated recently	Every post is a "sponsored" or "guest post"
Relevant to your niche or city	Has a price list for links
Competitor link sits naturally inside an article or list	Thousands of outbound links, no real audience

📇 **Finding the contact:** check the site's Contact/About page or the author's byline on the article that links to your competitor. Ask Claude: *"Find the editor or author contact page for these 10 URLs."*

STEP 4 OF 5

4 Email every site (personal, short, useful)

The pitch: **“You linked to them. Here's why we'd be useful to your readers too.”** Match the email to *why* they linked to your competitor.

To: editor@homedecorblog.com · Subject: Addition to your modular kitchen guide?

Hi [Name], I enjoyed your article “[title]”, especially the part on [specific point]. I noticed you mention [Competitor]. We're [Business], a [what you do] in [city], and we've just published [a genuinely useful page: price guide / photos / checklist]. If you ever update the article, it might be a helpful addition for your readers: [URL]. Thanks either way! – [Name], [Business]

To: listings@puneinteriorsguide.in · Subject: Listing for [Business]

Hi, I saw [Competitor] in your list of [category] in [city]. We're [Business], operating since [year] in [area], with [one proof point: reviews / projects / award]. Could we be considered for the list? Happy to share any details you need. – [Name], [phone]

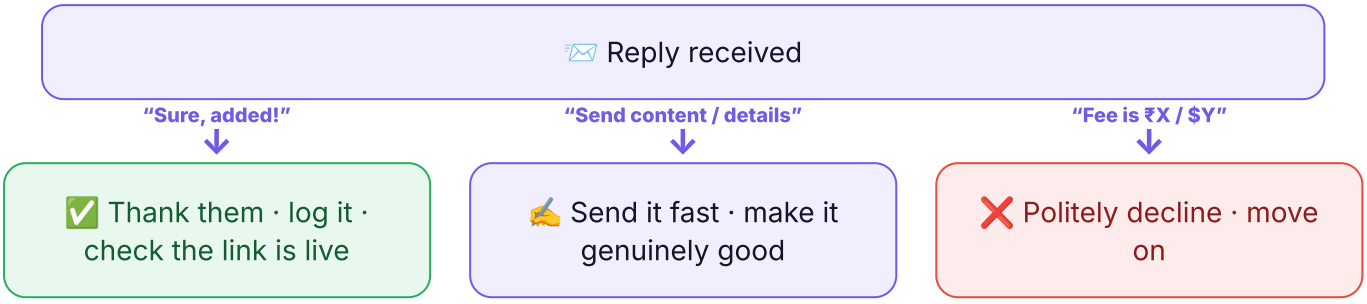
To: news@localnews-pune.in · Subject: Story idea / expert quote on [topic]

Hi [Name], you covered [Competitor] in “[article]”. If you're doing more stories on [topic], I'd be glad to share an expert quote or data from our [X] projects this year, e.g. [one interesting stat]. – [Name], [title], [Business]

✍️ Ask Claude: *“Write a 90-word personalised email for this site using the article that links to my competitor: [URL]. Mention one specific detail from the article. No flattery, no pressure.”* Send in small batches; follow up once after 5–7 days.

STEP 5 OF 5

5 Sort the replies: free yes, paid no



Why skip paid links? Google's spam policies treat buying links for ranking as link spam, unless the paid link is marked `rel="sponsored"` or `nofollow`. Those then don't pass ranking value, so you'd be paying for nothing SEO-wise. Free editorial links are both safer and stronger.

Polite decline

Thanks for getting back to me! We don't pay for links, but if you ever want a free expert quote or data for an article, I'm happy to help. – [Name]

Track everything

Site	Type	Contact	Sent	Follow-up	Status	Link URL
homedecorblog.com	Blog	editor@...	12 Oct	19 Oct	✅ Live	/modular-kitchen...
localnews-pune.in	News	news@...	12 Oct	19 Oct	⏳ Waiting	—
xyz-links.com	Blog	admin@...	12 Oct	—	❌ Paid, skip	—

EXPECTATIONS

What results look like

Typical outreach gets replies from a small share of sites, often under 10%. That's normal. Out of **40 clean sites**, landing **3–5 free links** from relevant, real websites is a good result, and those links keep working for years.

Raise your hit rate

- Contact sites that link to **3 competitors** first: they're the warmest
- Have one genuinely useful page to point to: a price guide, checklist, photo gallery, local data
- Mention the exact article and why your link helps **their readers**
- Local first: city news, associations, suppliers and event pages say yes more often
- One polite follow-up only. Never spam

Re-run it every quarter

Competitors keep earning new links. Run Link Intersect again every 3 months and contact only the new sites. That's the “for life” part.

🛡️ Keep emails personal, send from your own business address, and stop if someone asks you not to contact them.

NO PAID AHREFS?

Free and cheaper alternatives

Option	How
Ahrefs free Backlink Checker	Check each competitor separately (shows top links). Paste the lists into Claude: *"Which domains appear in 2+ of these lists?"*
Semrush Backlink Gap	Similar tool; the free account allows a limited number of checks per day
Ahrefs Webmaster Tools (free)	Shows **your own** backlinks, useful to confirm new links went live
Manual Google search	Search `"competitor name" -site:competitor.com` to find pages mentioning them

Checklist

- ☐ Picked 3–5 real competitors ranking above me
- ☐ Referring domains · Dofollow · intersect 2+
- ☐ Claude/ChatGPT removed spam + grouped by type
- ☐ Personal email matched to why they linked
- ☐ Declined every paid offer
- ☐ Link Intersect: competitors in, my site excluded
- ☐ Exported CSV
- ☐ 30-second human check on each kept site
- ☐ One follow-up after 5–7 days
- ☐ Tracked status + checked links are live

Growth by CC · Organic growth tactics, explained simply. Follow on Instagram for more.

Screens are illustrations; menu names may differ in your Ahrefs version. Link Intersect is part of Ahrefs' paid plans. Google treats paid links for ranking as link spam unless they are marked sponsored/nofollow.