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LINK AUDITING, REMOVAL & RECOVERY

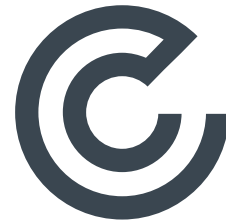
A simple guide to recovering from
Google's manual penalties
& algorithmic updates

eBook

4



LINK AUDITING, REMOVAL & RECOVERY



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100%



SUCCESS RATE IN RECOVERING PENALISED WEBSITES

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1// Introduction

Over the years, we've seen a surge in enquiries from clients seeking assistance in recovering from Google-imposed penalties on their websites.

We understand the detrimental impact that the search engine giant's manual penalties and algorithmic modifications have on your business and the amount of work required to overcome them. That's why we've written this definitive eBook, which guides you through the process of link auditing, removal and recovery.

With a 100% success rate in recovering penalised websites and our digital marketing expertise spanning over ten years, we're confident that the information we share within this comprehensive eBook will help you to overcome a penalty, safeguard your site against algorithmic updates and drive your website up to a strong, profitable position in Google's search engine rankings. Furthermore, this eBook assists website owners who may not have been penalised, but would like to learn how to conduct regular link audits to maintain a healthy backlink profile and avoid a potential penalty in the future.

If you require further assistance with any element of the link auditing, removal and recovery process or you have any questions, you can call us on 0845 205 0292, send us an email at hello@click.co.uk, request a call-back by filling out our [contact form](#) or take advantage of our [free link audit](#) to get started on the road to rebuilding your website's credibility.

If you're unsure about any of the digital terms referred to within this guide or in the online marketing world in general, please refer to our comprehensive glossary at the back of this eBook.





2 // The history of linking

There used to be no such thing as a bad backlink; website owners would employ automated tools to spam the web with links and super-charge their way up to the coveted top spots on Google's SERPs. It worked. Concurrently, users' searches would be littered with irrelevant, low-quality website pages.

With SERPs being Google's most precious asset, the search engine set out to eliminate unnatural linking techniques as part of their perpetual mission "to help searchers find sites that provide a great user experience and fulfil their information needs", says Google's chief spam-fighting resource, Matt Cutts. And what Google says, goes.

Indeed, on April 24th 2012, Google introduced its Penguin algorithm, which unveiled and devalued websites with unethical backlink profiles. Two years on, Penguin hasn't let Google down; it has changed the linking landscape forever. Indeed, the algorithm has continued to demote sites that employ unnatural – and unhelpful – linking schemes such as excessive link exchanges, high volumes of optimised anchor text and paid backlinks.

As well as eliminating spam from search results with Penguin, Google takes manual action on sites that employ unethical linking techniques by demoting them in search rankings or, in serious cases, removing them from search results altogether. Working in unison, manual action penalties and Google's algorithmic updates have eradicated the low-quality, irrelevant websites that once dominated page one of SERPs. Google's users now continue to receive high-quality, relevant answers to their search queries.

While the search engine's users have undoubtedly benefited from increasingly relevant search results, online businesses have been suffering. Indeed, as Google have released various algorithm updates and continued to issue manual penalties, an increasing number of webmasters have found themselves caught in the search engine giant's net and their companies have been struggling as a result. Luckily, there are strategies that can be implemented to identify, remove and recover from unnatural backlink initiatives.

The latest update of Penguin (Penguin 4.0) should help businesses rather than hinder them and will give a fair reflection of the link quality with which a site operates. The two main features of the latest algorithm are:

Penguin is now real-time: – While previously we would have to await a Penguin 'refresh' before we could expect to see the results of changes, Google now expects changes to be visible much faster – following a recrawl or reindex of a page.

Penguin is now more granular: – The algorithm will now devalue spam by adjusting rankings following a calculation of 'spam signals' rather than simply affecting the ranking of the whole site.





3// What are backlinks?

Backlinks refer to incoming links to your website from other domains; they indicate to search engines that your site is valued by users. Indeed, each time you receive a backlink, Google perceives this as a 'vote' for your site as it suggests that a user has found your content valuable enough to share with others. Google's ranking algorithm will analyse the quality of your recently acquired backlink the next time its search engine robots, also known as 'spiders', crawl your page.

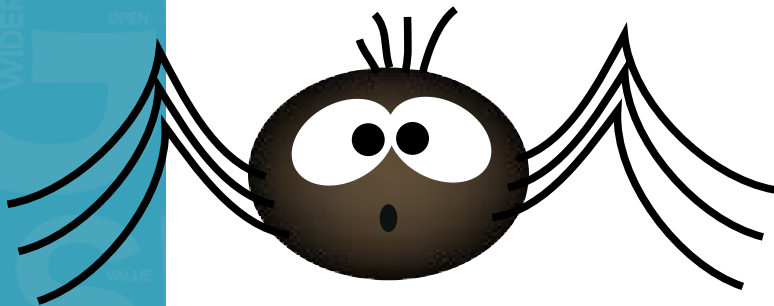
To detect the quality and relevance of a backlink, Google's spiders analyse a number of factors, such as:

- The authority of the linking site
- Whether or not the link looks natural
- The relevance of the link's anchor text
- The subject matter that appears on the linking page

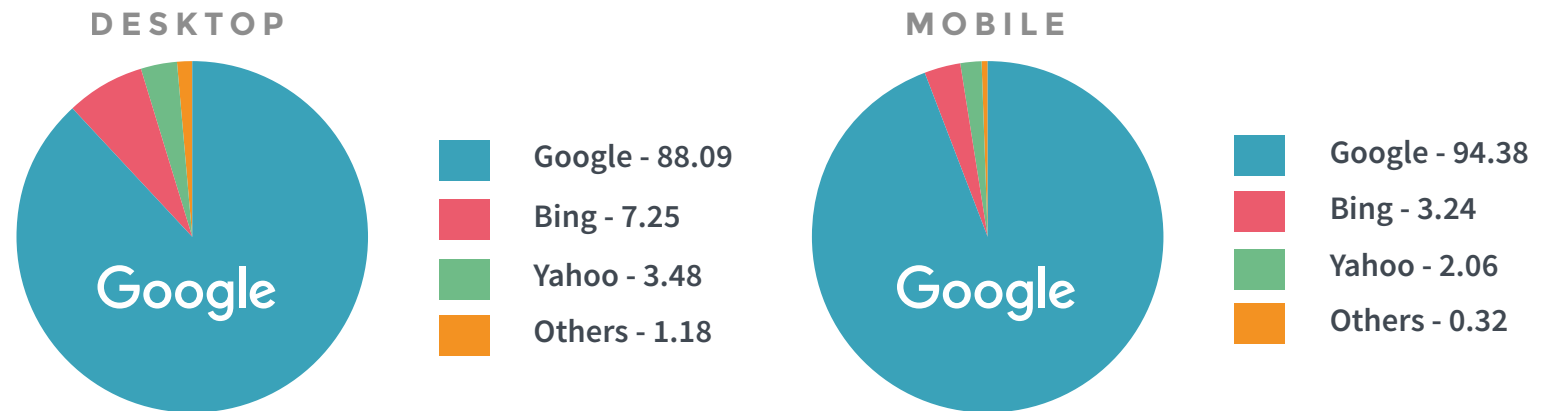
The theory behind this element of the search engine's ranking algorithm is that the more high quality backlinks a website possesses, the more valuable that site is deemed to be. In turn, valuable websites are likely to be positioned higher up on SERPs, where they tend to draw in more traffic than those appearing lower down on SERPs.

Indeed, Google is on an uncompromising mission to provide users with accurate, well-written and relevant answers to their search queries. Websites that have a healthy backlink profile are likely to be valued by users and it's probable that they will ultimately be favoured in SERPs by Google, too.

While a healthy backlink profile is a vital ingredient in conveying to Google how authoritative your site is, it is worth noting that Google's algorithms consider a multitude of other factors when determining your site's position in SERPs, such as the quality of the content on its pages and how easily your site can be navigated.



UK SEARCH ENGINE MARKET SHARE (NOVEMBER 2016)



4// Why are backlinks important?

Google tops the UK's search engine market share by 88.09% (figure 1), a recent study by the world's largest statistics portal, Statista has revealed. It is therefore particularly important that your website conforms to Google's ethical linking rules. Indeed, with such a high percentage of internet users conducting searches on Google, appearing on page one of the search engine's results pages for industry-relevant keywords and phrases can drive a vast amount of relevant visitors to your site and grow your revenue exponentially.



5// What is a Google penalty?

In its simplest form, a Google penalty refers to a restriction placed upon a site which prevents it from ranking highly in SERPs or, in serious cases results in the site being removed from SERPs altogether. In terms of linking, this usually occurs when a website owner has employed unethical linking techniques to dupe Google.

Subsequently, the offending site will be issued with a manual penalty or, next time Google's spiders crawl it, the site may automatically be demoted in SERPs by Penguin. This is commonly referred to as an "algorithmic penalty". Therefore, if your site's analytics report displays a sudden drop in traffic, it's likely that you will have been issued with a manual or algorithmic penalty.

To avoid confusion, it's perhaps worth highlighting at this stage that an 'algorithmic penalty' is not a penalty as such, though it is commonplace for this umbrella term to be used loosely when referring to the negative impact on a website's rankings as a result of an algorithmic update.

While Google's various algorithmic refreshes do effectively penalise sites that break the guidelines, this can happen naturally to any website at any time; it is not a formal penalty that has been issued directly from Google. Throughout this guide, we use the word 'penalty' to describe the impact of algorithmic updates as well as manual penalties.

As touched upon above, manual and algorithmic penalties are characterised by a severe drop in website traffic and rankings on SERPs. The severity of the decrease depends upon the form of penalty your site has been affected by, as well as the variation of digital marketing tactics you have in place. For example, if you rely solely on results pages to drive traffic to your website, the dip in visitors is likely to be more intense after a penalty compared to sites that utilise other forms of advertising, such as pay per click (PPC) initiatives and television advertisements. Regardless of the form of penalty your website has received though, even a small dip in traffic is bad news for companies operating within the competitive online sphere.



Manual Penalty

As suggested in the name, a manual penalty is issued manually by Google; it places restrictions upon individual websites that violate [Google's Webmaster Guidelines](#). If you have been issued with this form of penalty, you may notice that one of your website's pages – or a number of them – have stopped appearing in SERPs. This indicates that your site has been issued with a partial-match manual penalty.

If your website has been eliminated from SERPs altogether, this suggests that you have been issued with a site-wide manual penalty. The severity of a manual penalty depends upon how badly your website was breaking the guidelines.



Algorithmic penalty

Unlike a manual penalty, an algorithmic penalty occurs naturally when Google's spiders crawl a website and discover recent unnatural linking strategies. Google has released various algorithms that unveil and penalise different forms of spam; in terms of linking, it's Penguin's rules that websites must conform to. If your website displays any unethical linking patterns that Penguin disapproves of, it's highly likely that your site's place in SERPs will be compromised when Google's spiders next crawl it.

6// What are partial-match and site-wide manual penalties?

While there is only one form of algorithmic penalty, manual penalties fall into one of two categories: partial-match or site-wide.

Partial Match

A partial-match penalty means that some elements of your site have been penalised, such as specific pages, sections or links. You are likely to see a drop in traffic as a result of a partial-match penalty, but not as drastically as you would if you had been issued with a site-wide penalty. This is because your site may still receive some traffic that has been driven from any elements of your site that are still visible in search results.

Site-wide

A site-wide penalty is applied to your website for serious breaches of Google's Webmaster Guidelines; it means that your website has been de-indexed from SERPs entirely. If you rely solely on search results for your traffic, it's likely that your analytics report will illustrate a more extreme drop in traffic than if you were issued with a partial-match penalty. This is because your site won't be appearing anywhere in search results; the only people who can access it at this stage are those who already know the URL, or who have clicked through from a link or advertisement.



7// How could you get a penalty?

Any links that have been created to manipulate a website's place in SERPs may be considered part of a link scheme, which violates Google's Webmaster Guidelines and could result in your site being demoted in search results, or extricated altogether. Indeed, Google isn't concerned solely with the quantity of links pointing to your website; it's more about the quality. To quote Matt Cutts "the objective is not to 'make your links appear natural'; the objective is that your links are natural."

Over the page are some examples of unnatural link schemes that are likely to negatively impact your site's position in search results.



Bad Neighbourhoods

A bad neighbourhood refers to a collection of interlinked websites or link directories that have been penalised in the past. Sharing your server with a large neighbourhood of websites that have a penalty history could put your site in jeopardy of being demoted, no matter how ethical your links are. Similarly, backlinks that point to your website from a bad neighbourhood can harm your site's authority



Bought Links

Buying links to manipulate your site's position in SERPs includes exchanging goods or services for links and trading money for links. Such actions are classed as a defilement of Google's Guidelines, which is likely to result in a penalty



Link Networks

The phrase 'link networks' refers to multiple websites that operate with the sole intention of increasing the ranking of websites in SERPs. The content found on link networks is rarely high quality as, by their very nature, most link networks are built purposely to dupe Google



Over-Optimised Anchor Text

While most SEOs have understood the importance of natural anchor text for years now, Penguin has recently underscored how imperative it is to avoid over-optimising anchor text. When used excessively or irrelevantly, anchor text indicates to Google that you are attempting to manipulate your place in search rankings.

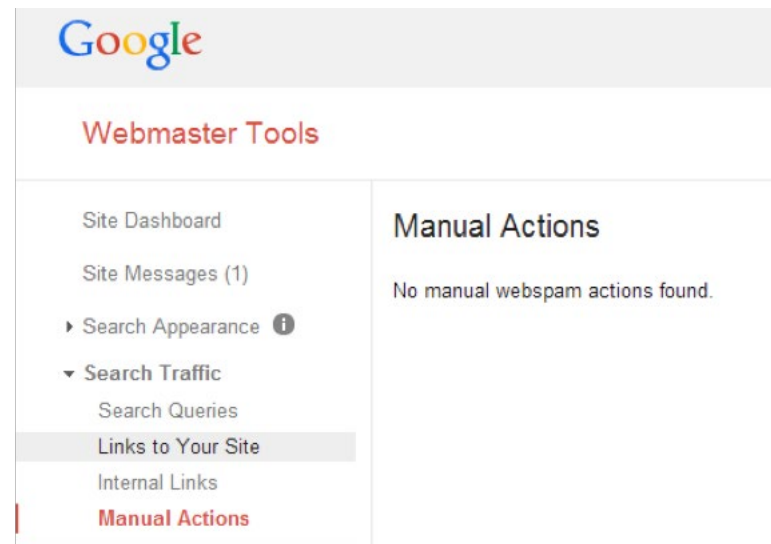
8// How to identify a manual penalty

If your traffic suddenly nosedives, the first step to recovery is identifying what form of penalty your website has been affected by. If you have been issued with a manual penalty, you will be notified within your Google Webmaster Tools account, under the 'Manual Actions' tab.

How to view your Manual Actions page

1. Go to your Webmaster Tools dashboard and select the website you're concerned about
2. Select 'Search Traffic'
3. Click 'Manual Actions'

You should see a page that looks similar to this:



Under this section, you will see one of three messages, informing you that you have no manual webspam actions, a partial-match penalty or a site-wide penalty. In our example above, you can see that “no manual webspam actions were found”. In other words, we haven’t been issued with a manual penalty.

Manual penalty messages

Below is a list of three potential messages you may see within this section and what each means.

No manual webspam actions This means that you’re in the clear; no action is required

Partial match penalty message This indicates that Google has applied a penalty to your site. A partial-match penalty usually refers to a penalty that has been applied to a specific page on your site or to specific search terms. Your site will not rank for that page or those search terms in Google’s SERPs until the penalty has been annulled by Google.

Site-wide penalty message This is the worst form of penalty and means that Google does not regard your website highly. A site-wide penalty is normally applied when a webmaster has violated the Google guidelines in multiple ways and it means that the whole website has been penalised. Your site will not rank until you have cleaned up its backlinks, submitted a reconsideration request, and the penalty has been revoked by Google.

WARNING

WARNING – RESTRICTED ACCESS

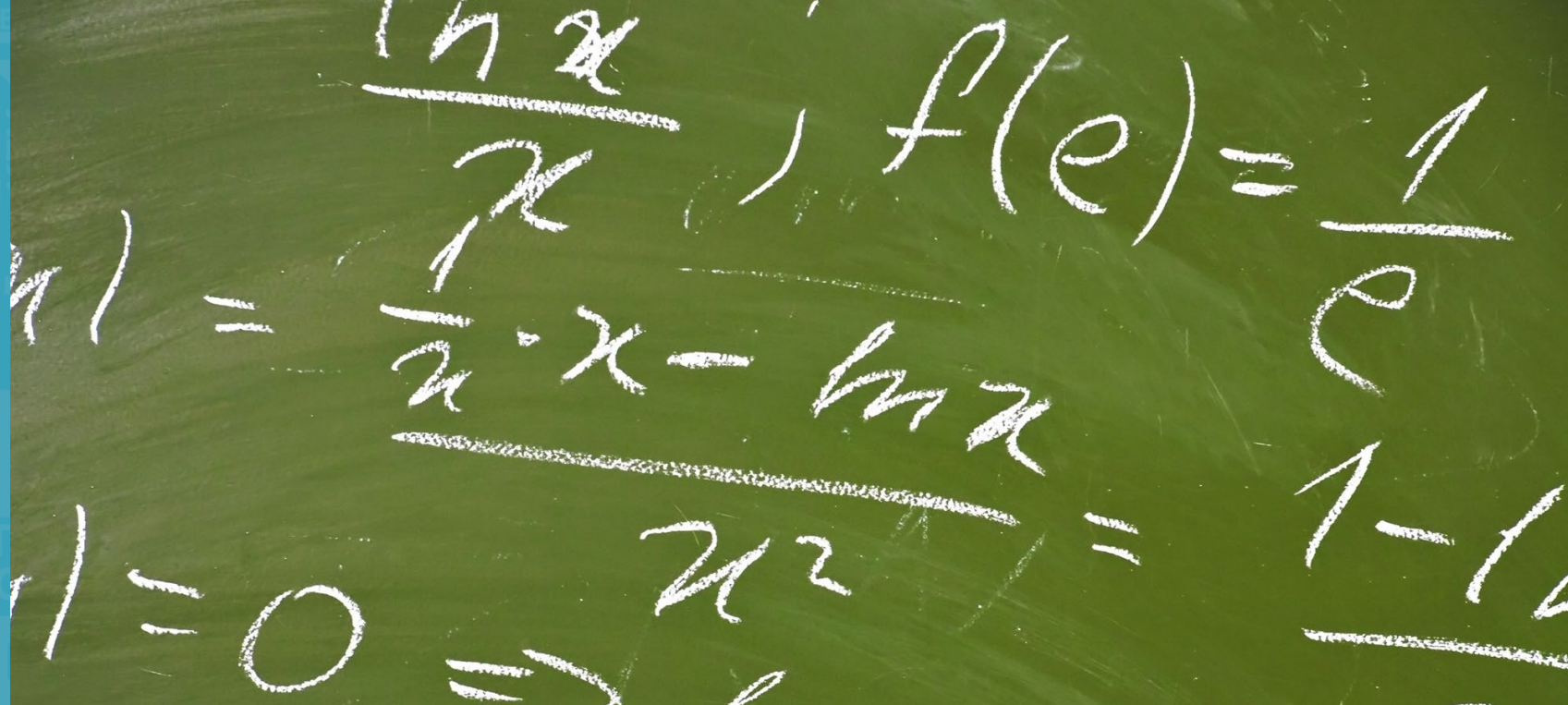
WARNING – RESTRICTED ACCESS

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WARNING – RESTRICTED ACCESS



9// How to identify an algorithmic penalty

Unlike manual penalties, you don't receive a notification if your website has been demoted because of an algorithmic update. However, an easy way to identify if one of Google's algorithmic updates has affected your website is to look at its performance in Google Analytics. Do you notice a severe drop in organic search traffic that coincides with the date of one of Google's algorithm updates? If so, it's highly likely that your website has been affected by Penguin.

To add a little more context to the Penguin update and outline how it can affect your website, we've summarised the main stages of the algorithm's evolution on the next page...



The Evolution of Penguin

Penguin 1.0 April 24, 2012

After a great deal of speculation surrounding a potential over-optimisation penalty in Google's mysterious pipeline, April 24th 2012 saw the arrival of the official "Webspam Update", which we know today as Penguin. As detailed in the introduction, this algorithm penalised websites that employed linking schemes to artificially increase their rankings in SERPs. This preliminary update impacted around 3.1% of English searches.

Penguin 1.1 May 25, 2012

In a tweet, Matt Cutts described Penguin 1.1 as a mere "data refresh" that impacted less than 0.1% of English searches. "Minor weather report: We pushed 1st Penguin algo data refresh an hour ago. Affects <0.1% of English searches", he wrote on the micro-blogging site.

Penguin 1.2 Oct 5, 2012

Amidst rumours that the next Penguin update would be a major one, Google put webmasters' minds at ease by releasing another minor Penguin data refresh, which impacted 0.3% of English searches.

Penguin 2.0 May 22, 2013

Although the details surrounding algorithm updates are renowned for being kept strictly under wraps, Cutts did reveal that Penguin 2.0 was rolled out to drill deeper into the architecture of websites to unveil unethical links. Rather than solely analysing homepages, Penguin 2.0 also scoured internal pages for spammy link patterns. "This was actually a pretty interesting revelation," noted Jason DeMers from Search Engine Watch, "because it wasn't previously known to the SEO community that Penguin 1.0 only analysed inbound link profiles of domain homepages."

Penguin 2.1 Oct 4, 2013

Penguin 2.1 was another minor data refresh, which Cutts stated would affect around 1% of searches "to a notable degree." Little official information is known about what changed between Penguin 2.0 and Penguin 2.1, but many digital experts believe that 2.1 drills down even deeper into the architecture of websites, to crawl and analyse deeper-level pages and unveil unethical linking strategies.

Penguin 3.0 Oct 17, 2014

Over a year after the announcement of 2.1, Google launched Penguin 3.0. This was a refresh that was smaller than expected with less than 1% of US/English queries affected. Google claimed that the update was rolled out over a number of weeks, so a definitive launch date is yet to be clearly defined.

Penguin 4.0 Sept 23, 2016

After almost two years of waiting, Google finally announced a major Penguin update on 23 sept 2016. They suggested the new Penguin is now real-time and ingrained into the "core" algorithm. Initial impact assessments were small, but it was later revealed that the Penguin 4.0 rollout was unusually long and multi-phase.

Phase one devalues bad links instead of penalising sites. The second phase of Penguin 4.0 was the reversal of all previous Penguin penalties. This seemed to happen after the new code rolled out, and may have taken as long as two weeks.



10// Link Auditing

Removing a Google-imposed penalty is rarely an easy process and, if the link auditing and removal process is conducted incorrectly, it's likely that Google won't revoke the penalty. Remember, you can always [contact us](#) if you need a hand with any element of this process.

If you suspect that your website has been hit with a manual or algorithmic penalty as a result of unnatural links, you should conduct a link audit. This will allow you to identify unnatural backlinks that point to your site from websites that break the rules set out in Google's Guidelines.

How to conduct a Link Audit

Identifying unnatural backlinks To optimise the probability of identifying all unnatural links that point to your site, utilise a number of backlink identification tools, including Webmaster Tools. It's important to use various tools for the backlink identification stage as one may discover an unnatural link that another misses, and vice versa. Create a document that lists the amalgamated backlinks produced by each tool and delete any duplicates. You are now ready for the link analysis stage.

Backlink analysis While a link analysis can be executed manually, this is a time-consuming process. We recommend streamlining the link analysis procedure by utilising a trusted link analysis and cleansing tool. Link analysis tools use a series of metrics to determine the health of each backlink. You can then manually analyse each link and determine a list of unnatural ones that need to be removed. Choose a link analysis tool and proceed to step one.

How to analyse backlinks using a link analysis tool

1. Upload your list of amalgamated backlinks to your chosen link tool. The tool's algorithm should automatically segment the backlinks into healthy and unnatural categories. Download the backlink data and delete any duplicates.
2. Manually analyse the links to ensure that each one has been categorised correctly.

You should now have a finalised list of unnatural backlinks that need to be removed and you're ready to begin the removal process.





11// Link Removal

The backlink removal process involves contacting the owner of each site on your finalised list of URLs that need to be removed and asking for the links to be deleted. The most effective link removal procedures take a few weeks as each website owner should be contacted numerous times over a period of weeks to optimise the possibility of getting the links removed.

Remember, if you have been issued with a manual penalty, you will need to submit a reconsideration request to Google; it is therefore vital that you document your link removal efforts so you can prove to Google that you put a reasonable amount of work into cleaning your backlink profile. Simply disavowing your links (see step four) without attempting to get them removed will probably result in your reconsideration request (see step five) being rejected. Decide upon how often you will contact each webmaster to provide you with the best chance of getting the links removed.



Manual and algorithmic penalties: How to get the links removed

- Work through the list of URLs you compiled during the link audit process, contacting each webmaster to request removal of the offending backlinks. As noted above, you should contact each webmaster numerous times until they (hopefully) remove the link. Some webmasters may not be contactable; keep a note of these
- Once you have requested link removal from each website a reasonable number of times, create a document listing the websites that did not remove the links
- Compile a separate list of websites that have honoured your link removal requests. You can submit this with your reconsideration request to Google, to illustrate your link removal efforts



Manual and algorithmic penalties: Disavowing links

If you utilise all forms of communication and fail to make contact with the webmasters of certain sites or you can't locate contact details for them at all, you can use Google's Disavow Links tool to disassociate your site from the offending links. Please note though, this tool should be used with caution; using it too often indicates to Google that you haven't made an effort to get the links removed and this may harm your site's future performance.



Manual and algorithmic penalties: How to use Google's Disavow Links tool

1. On the Webmaster Tools homepage, select the site you'd like to manage
2. Click 'DISAVOW LINKS'
3. Upload the list of links you could not get removed

By disavowing the unnatural backlinks that you couldn't get removed, you are effectively asking Google not to take them into consideration next time its robots crawl your site. If your site has been affected by an algorithmic penalty rather than a manual penalty, the link removal process is now complete for you.



Manual penalties: Reconsideration request

Once the unethical links have been removed by each webmaster and/or you have submitted a list of URLs to the Disavow Links tool, you can then submit your site to Google for reconsideration. A reconsideration request involves detailing your link removal efforts and pledging to Google that you will not purposely build backlinks that break the Webmaster Guidelines in the future.



Manual penalties: How to write a reconsideration request

Include information about your company's founders Google are likely to take your reconsideration request more seriously if you can prove that your website is a reliable, authoritative source of information. You can do this by providing details on the founders of your company and illustrating why they are experts in your industry. Provide links to the founder's LinkedIn page where applicable.

Explain why your site is valuable Include a detailed explanation of what your site offers and how it provides value to visitors.

Provide supporting statistics from Google Analytics Backup your assertions that your website is valuable by providing historical data from Google Analytics. Outline details such as your bounce rate, average time on site and volume of returning visitors.

Provide a detailed description of your link removal efforts Explain your link removal efforts in detail, providing a link to the spreadsheet you created during the link removal process to support your assertions. The spreadsheet should include information on the links you could get removed and those you were not successful in getting removed.

Where possible, include:

- the name of the domain hosting the link
- the anchor text used within the link
- the contact details for the hosting domain
- when the link was established
- the dates that you contacted the website owner to request removal.

Provide as much relevant detail as possible for your best chance of convincing Google that the penalty should be revoked. Once you have finalised your reconsideration request, you're ready to submit it to Google.



Manual penalties: How to submit a reconsideration request

1. Login to your Webmaster Tools dashboard using your Google account.
2. Under 'Search Traffic' click on 'Manual Actions'.
3. Click 'REQUEST A REVIEW'.

Manual Actions

Site-wide matches None

Partial matches Some manual actions apply to specific pages, sections, or links

Reason	Affects
Unnatural links to your site—impacts links Google has detected a pattern of unnatural artificial, deceptive, or manipulative links pointing to pages on this site. Some links may be outside of the webmaster's control, so for this incident we are taking targeted action on the unnatural links instead of on the site's ranking as a whole. Learn more.	Some incoming links

REQUEST A REVIEW

Request a review

Tell us how you have addressed the specific issues we have listed, including all relevant information.

☐ I acknowledge that my site does not violate Google's Webmaster Guidelines.

Request a review **Cancel**

Clicking this button should prompt a “Request a review” pop-up, with an area for you to write your reconsideration request in.

1. Write your reconsideration request in the box provided. This is your opportunity to showcase how proactive you have been in cleaning up your website's backlink profile.
2. Tick the box to acknowledge that your site does not violate Google's Webmaster Guidelines.
3. Once you're happy with your reconsideration request, click 'Request a review'.

Once submitted, the reconsideration process is out of your hands.



12// What to expect after removal of links

Once the manual or algorithmic penalty link removal procedure has been fully executed, it's likely to take some time before you will start to see your website's traffic improve.

Manual penalty: What to expect after link removal

It can take up to 30 days for Google to review your reconsideration request and decide whether or not to revoke the manual penalty. If you have removed all unnatural backlinks from your site and detailed your link removal efforts within your reconsideration request, the probability of Google revoking the penalty is high. Alternatively, if you have not removed all offending backlinks and not proven to Google that you have worked hard to get the links removed, your reconsideration request will probably be refused.



What to do if your manual penalty is not revoked

If your reconsideration request is unsuccessful, Google typically lists a number of links that still violate their guidelines so that further efforts can be made by you to remove them. At this stage, you should conduct the link audit and removal process again, ensuring that you fully analyse all backlinks pointing to your site and oversee the removal of any remaining unnatural ones.

Manual action penalty revoked: Next steps

If your reconsideration request is successful, you will receive a message in Google Webmaster Tools informing you that the penalty has been revoked. After a manual penalty has been removed, it is unlikely that your website's place in SERPs will drastically improve and that you will see a sudden rise in traffic, although this is a common expectation amongst webmasters who have had a penalty revoked.



Algorithmic penalty: What to expect after link removal

Once you have removed the unnatural backlinks, the next step of the process is out of your hands; you simply need to wait for Google's spiders to re-crawl your site and see that the unnatural links have been removed before it can begin to rank highly again.

In the meantime, you should strengthen your site's backlink profile using various forms of content marketing and outreach strategies, as outlined in section 13. If your website traffic remains consistently low after you have implemented the above initiatives and waited for a number of weeks, you may consider conducting the link auditing and removal process again to detect further unnatural backlinks that may still be hindering your site's performance.

Reasons why your traffic may not have improved

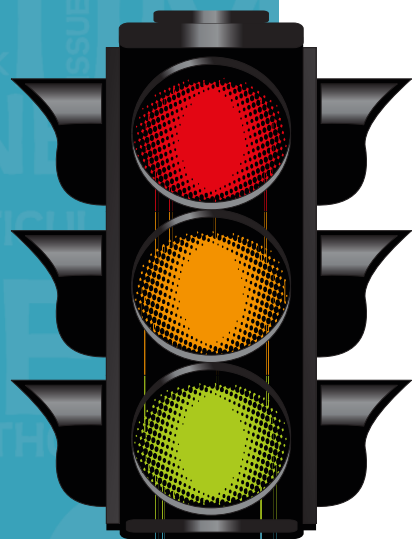
Below is a summary of why your website traffic may have dropped or remained consistently low after you've had a penalty removed.

No improvement in SERPs and traffic It is possible that you will see no improvement in website traffic once you have had a penalty removed. This happens because the links that once pushed you to the top of SERPs have been removed and you need to re-build your authority by earning ethical backlinks.

A slight improvement in SERPs and traffic This usually happens if you were penalised for certain keywords. Once the penalty has been lifted, you may start to rank again for those keywords, which should lead to a steady increase in traffic.

No immediate recovery, but steady improvement after Penguin refresh Some websites see little or no improvement after a penalty is lifted, but then start to see a steady improvement the next time your site is crawled. This usually happens if your website was affected by an algorithmic penalty, you have cleaned up your link profile, and Google has re-crawled your site.

After a penalty has been lifted, it's imperative that you work on building ethical links through best-practice organic search strategies that should help to redeem your site's credibility.





13// Recovery... climbing SERPS the ethical way

Once you have been successful in getting a manual penalty revoked and/or removed any offending links that may have led to your site being penalised by Penguin, it's important to rebuild your site's authority and regain the trust of Google by building ethical backlinks.

As mentioned throughout this eBook, Google is on a never-ending mission to provide its users with relevant, useful and high-quality answers to their queries. Prove to Google that you can provide this content and your site is likely to outrank those of your competitors in SERPs.

To begin the process of rebuilding your website's credibility, you may find it beneficial to optimise it using powerful and most importantly, ethical link building techniques. Enter **content marketing** and **outreach**.



“Content is king” – it’s become an overused cliché in the digital sphere, but it still rings as true as ever. Indeed, content marketing allows you to build your brand’s identity while simultaneously offering solutions to customer’s problems. In turn, this will attract prospects and repeat customers to your products and/or services. Furthermore, alongside its status as an excellent customer acquisition tool, high quality content will help to generate relevant backlinks to your site as interested users are likely to share it with others. If an authoritative site within your industry shares a link to your content, this can be extremely valuable for your backlink profile.

Below are a number of content marketing methods that may be instrumental in helping to earn quality backlinks to your site. Of course, the forms of content that work best for your site will depend upon your target audience and the industry you operate within.

- Blogs
- Infographics
- Whitepapers
- eBooks
- Case studies
- Interviews
- Press releases
- How-to guides and tutorials
- Product reviews
- Industry news articles



Blogger Outreach

Outreach refers to the process of offering great content to the owners of blogs, websites and social media pages operating within your industry, which can be shared by them to generate ethical backlinks to your site. Here at Click Consult, we use cutting-edge technology to identify, rate and reach out to publishers with whom we would like to share content, ensuring that it's our clients' content that appears in front of the relevant audience. For more information on developing an effective outreach strategy to build ethical backlinks to your website, download our free eBook, [Link Building Through Outreach](#).



Online PR

Online PR refers to the acquisition and maintenance of a positive public image. No matter how large or small your business is, maintaining a favourable reputation for your brand is vital to the success of your company. An effective PR strategy will build positive relationships between your brand and the public. Some of the common methods used to achieve this include:

- Initiating relationships with industry-relevant bloggers and websites
- Responding to and diffusing negative situations surrounding your brand
- Monitoring what others are saying about your brand and reacting accordingly
- Publishing relevant, interesting press releases

Gaining publicity for your business within mainstream media can be hugely beneficial in building ethical backlinks. Any backlinks you receive from large media companies that publish your news are likely to be considered as authoritative links by Google, meaning you're likely to rank higher in SERPs as a result. You can gain a substantial amount of coverage from having a story published about your brand in mainstream media.



Social engagement

Creating a holistic online experience for your customers and prospects is integral to the overall success of your inbound marketing campaign. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are valuable components for achieving a holistic experience online as well as providing an excellent platform for sharing your content with a wide audience and creating a buzz around your brand. Social media marketing plays an instrumental role in connecting with your customers, answering questions about products and services and enhancing the overall user experience on your website. A great user experience and excellent communications encourage prospects to engage with your brand and recommend your products or services to others. Three of the core social media platforms are Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.





Facebook

Facebook allows your company to engage with customers and prospects on a fairly informal, personal level. Because your posts are targeted to the people who have 'liked' your page on the social networking site, they're more likely to engage with your posts because they have already shown an interest. As a result, this is a great way of converting leads into loyal customers. The transparent nature of this relaxed social platform lends itself to building relationships with your customers and prospects. What's more, Facebook allows you to gain feedback through polls; display clear calls-to-action (CTAs) through paid advertising across the network; and measure the popularity of specific topics to identify the forms of content that work best. This will help to inform your future content planning.



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional network with over 200 million global users. As well as being a great platform for identifying potential candidates for specific roles and for professionals to showcase their skills online, you can leverage LinkedIn to promote your products and services, proactively connect with prospective customers and regularly post relevant content to targeted audiences. Furthermore, LinkedIn offers over 12 different types of premium membership, which can be utilised to maximise the success of your specific business goals.



Twitter

Twitter is characterised by hashtags and the concept of sending a message in 140 characters. Hashtags allow users to search the entirety of Twitter for online conversations that contain specific keywords so they can discover the latest news and engage in conversations that interest them. This succinct, 140-character method of communication makes it easy for users to read and respond to updates quickly, perhaps accounting for the popularity of the micro-blogging site.

After some skepticism about the tweet limits, the popularity of Twitter in the marketing world is now on the rise again - especially after the latest update, which means @names in replies, media attachments (like photos, GIFs, videos, and polls) and quoted Tweets don't count towards the 140 characters. This allows you to get a little deeper with your message and share more information quickly.

By creating a Twitter page for your business, you can follow people who are likely to be interested in your business and in return, gain relevant followers who will be genuinely interested in your brand. As these followers begin to engage with your tweets, your following should continue to expand and your tweets will reach more users. Even for brands who don't have many followers yet, as tweets are fully searchable, prospects could stumble upon your page while browsing conversations they're interested in.

Similarly to Facebook, Twitter allows you to advertise your brand, promote your most important tweets and measure the volume of engagement on each tweet. This will help you to identify the genres of content that work best so you can factor more into your content calendar.



14// Inbound marketing

Inbound marketing is another effective method of building relevant backlinks and magnetising your brand to attract a targeted audience who are likely to perceive your website as a trusted source of information. The more people who find your brand useful, the more natural 'votes' you are likely to earn as websites link to your content.

The significance of inbound marketing

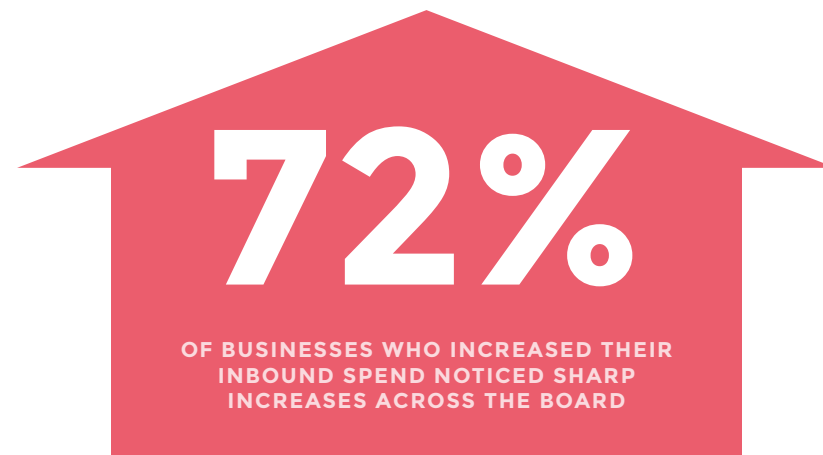
Alongside the rise of technology, your customers and prospects have an ever-increasing ability to evaluate numerous options before making a purchasing decision. Outbound marketing strategies such as cold calling, trade shows and telemarketing are simultaneously becoming less effective methods of customer acquisition.

While searching for the best products or services, the modern buyer takes information into account from across various online channels, allowing them to cherry-pick the best products and/or services to meet their needs.

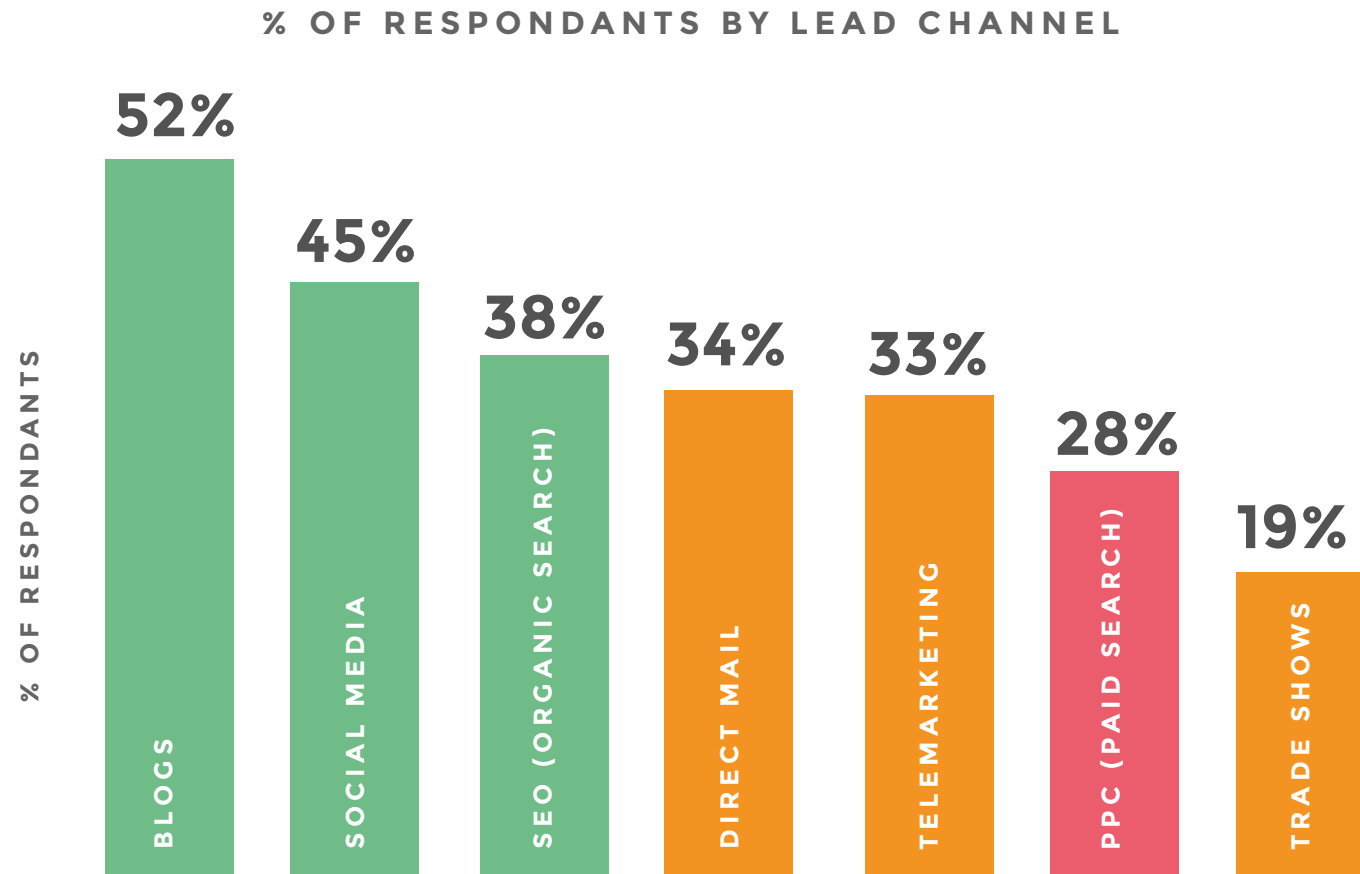
Inbound marketing involves implementing a strategic plan to ensure your products and/or services appear in front of the relevant customers at the right time. This way, you can solve their problems and meet their needs during each stage of the sales funnel and ultimately, entice them into purchasing from you when they're ready.

In response to this trend, Hubspot has revealed in its 2016 State of Inbound report, that businesses with an effective marketing strategy had increased their inbound marketing spend by 72% in comparison to the previous year.

58% of survey respondents reported who hadn't increased their spend saw parity across the board where as 45% of those who decreased their budget in this area noticed a drop off in performance. This highlights the significance of inbound marketing for most brands.



Alongside the effectiveness of inbound marketing, such initiatives cost approximately 60% less than outbound customer acquisition methods (Hubspot). Indeed, as represented on the graph below, blogs, social media and organic search lead generation techniques have been identified as incurring a lower cost per lead than traditional outbound techniques, such as direct mail and telemarketing.





15// Case study

Now that we have outlined the process of link auditing, removal and recovery, the following case study outlines how our link removal experts executed the process on one of our clients' websites. To protect our client's privacy, we refer to their site as 'website x' throughout this case study.

On 19th May 2012, website x received a notice from Google within Google Webmaster Tools. The notice highlighted that the site had used unnatural links to manipulate its position in search rankings, which violated the search engine's quality guidelines. The message encouraged the webmaster to "make changes" (ie, remove the unnatural links) before submitting the site for reconsideration.

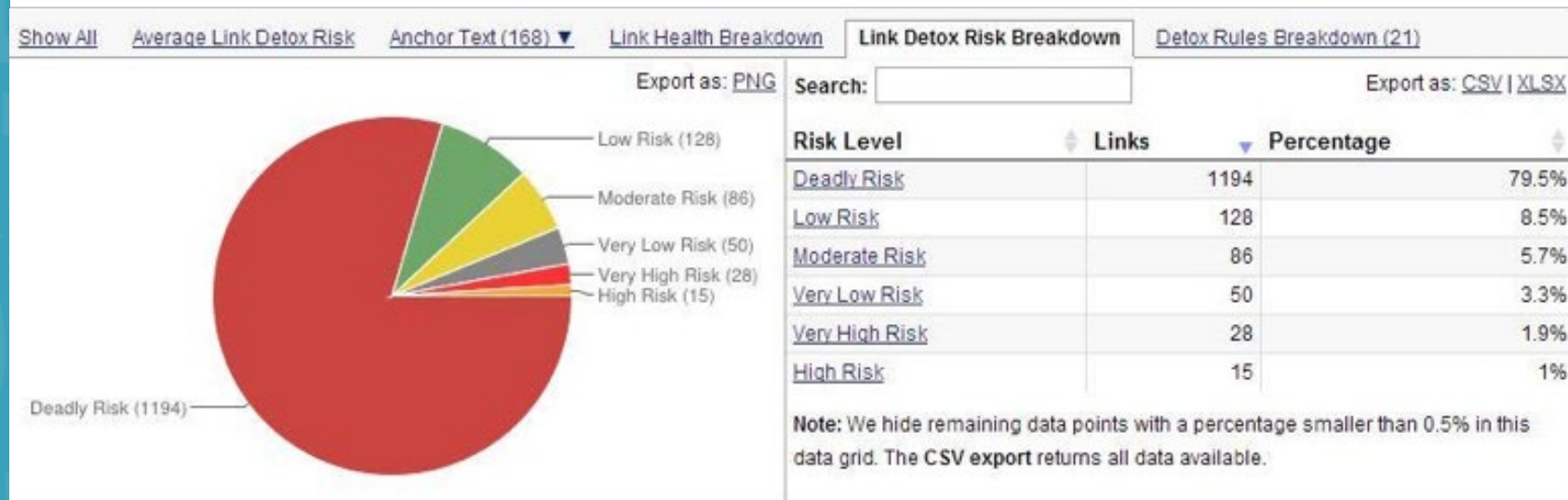
We utilised an industry-leading search engine optimisation tool to analyse the website's visibility within search results and gain an idea of how drastically the site's presence in search results had plummeted. The graph below displays paid search and search engine optimisation (SEO) visibility for website x in search results.

The blue line indicates the organic search visibility for website x, which correlates with the site's visibility in search engine rankings. As represented by the sudden dip of this line on the graph, there was a significant drop in traffic when website x was issued with a manual penalty on 19th May 2012.



Link audit

We utilised a number of backlink identification tools including Google's Webmaster Tools platform, to create an amalgamated list of backlinks that needed to be removed. We then used a link analysis tool to determine the health of each backlink. The pie chart below indicates the percentage of unnatural links that pointed to the site. As you can see, there were a large volume of links that presented a deadly risk to the website, while the others were low risk, moderate risk, very low risk or high risk. In other words, this was not a healthy backlink profile and serious efforts needed to be made to remove the penalty and re-gain Google's trust.



The link cleansing tool that we utilised, uses an algorithm to organise backlinks into three categories: toxic, healthy and suspicious, though we always analyse each of these links manually to ensure that no mistakes are made. Any links that have been categorised erroneously could thwart the link removal process, resulting in Google not revoking the penalty. As presented in the chart below, 78% of website x's backlinks were deemed as toxic, 19% suspicious and 3% were identified as being healthy. After manually analysing each of these links, we collated a definitive list of URLs that we had identified as being unnatural and required removal.

	Description	
	78% (1,168) of your backlinks are Toxic links, you should remove them.	Show me these links! 
	19% (283) of your backlinks look suspicious, you should check them.	Show me these links! 
	3% (50) of your backlinks are Healthy links.	Show me these links! 

Link removal

We used social media networks, 'Contact Us' forms, domain name information databases and various other channels to locate the contact details for as many of the website owners on our list of unnatural backlinks as possible. We made a note of the webmasters who we could not source contact details for, which we later submitted to Google's Disavow Links tool.

Using the contact details we had managed to locate, we contacted each webmaster three times over a three week period. After the three week removal request period was over, we created a list of websites that had not honoured our link removal requests and added these URLs to the list of webmasters who were not contactable. Ultimately, a total of 300 links were removed during this process.

Disavowing remaining unnatural backlinks

After finalising the list of the remaining 146 unnatural URLs that required removal, we uploaded it to Google's Disavow Links tool in csv format. In brief, this tool asks Google not to take the remaining links into consideration when the search engine's spiders next crawl website x's backlink profile.

Reconsideration request

Next, we wrote up a reconsideration request. This contained a link to a spreadsheet, which detailed our link removal efforts and documented all actions undertaken during the link removal phase, including all links that were successfully removed and all the ones that weren't. Below is a sample of the reconsideration request we submitted for website x.

"Dear Google Webspam Team Member,

Thank you for reading this reconsideration request. Our website, [website x] is under a partial-match manual penalty for unnatural organic links in Webmaster Tools. Upon completion of a link audit, we realised that we had been manipulative in our link building approach.

In response, we have undergone a rigorous process of removing the unnatural links that were pointing to our site. This has involved directly contacting the webmaster of each domain we found using every email address or contact form available. We also attempted to contact webmasters using information sourced from whois.com where possible. There were links we could not remove due to being ignored or webmasters requiring payment. We have uploaded a disavow file that includes the domains of these linking sites.

Please see the list of sites that we have tried to contact with no success; the owners of these sites have either ignored our request or the webmasters have asked for money in order for us to have links removed. Details regarding the link removal process and responses we have received can be viewed in the following Google spreadsheet:

[Link to Google spreadsheet detailing all efforts undertaken during the link removal process]

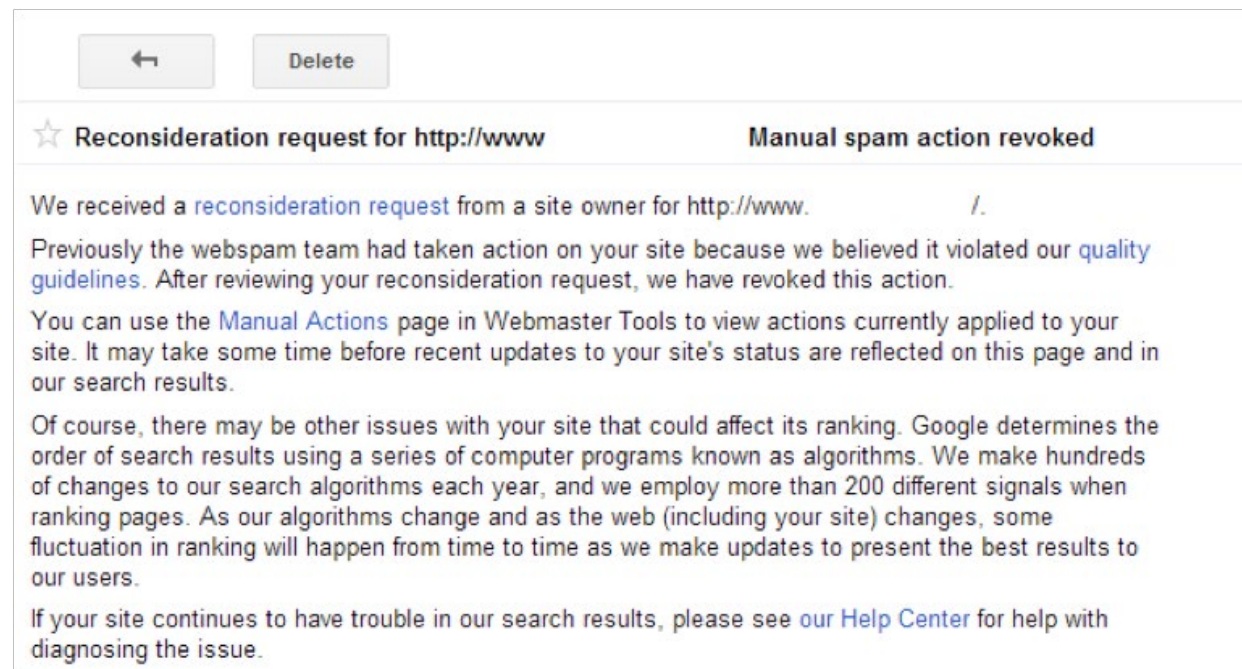
We are no longer using link building practices that violate Google's quality guidelines and believe we have cleaned up the links pointing to our site as much as possible. We understand that sticking to the guidelines benefits everyone and our team is now trained to follow the guidelines. We look forward to building our business and continuing to provide the best service we can.

Kind Regards,

[insert name]"

We submitted the reconsideration request to Google via the 'Manual Actions' page under the 'Search Traffic' tab in Webmaster Tools and awaited a response from Google's Webspam team.

Within one week, website x received a message, highlighting that the partial-match penalty had been revoked...



Recovery

As anticipated, once the manual penalty had been revoked by Google, the visibility of website x in SERPs was not as prominent as it once was. We therefore needed to create a strong, healthy backlink profile for our client's site to rebuild its credibility and help push it to a stronger position in SERPs. We implemented an organic content marketing and outreach strategy to help re-build a healthy, Google-approved backlink profile. Further to this, we suggested that the company repeat the link audit process on a regular basis going forward. This has enabled our client to identify and remove any unnatural backlinks as soon as possible to maintain a healthy backlink profile and decrease their chance of receiving another penalty.

We have already started to see improvements in the organic visibility of website x. The table below displays the improvement in rankings of a selection of keywords since the penalty was revoked and our client implemented an organic content marketing and outreach strategy.

Keywords	Before	After	Difference
excepted quantity label	101	27	+74
dangerous goods regulations	101	40	+61
dangerous goods by air training	101	68	+33
carriage of dangerous goods	101	76	+25
dangerous goods by road	101	78	+23
transport of dangerous goods	101	80	+21
protective packaging	101	86	+15
4gv	19	6	+13
500ml glass bottles	101	88	+13
dangerous goods international	101	90	+11
hazardous goods labels	46	37	+9
shipping boxes	42	37	+5
temperature controlled packaging	21	16	+5
4gv boxes	5	3	+2
battery packaging	11	9	+2
cold chain packaging	101	99	+2
un certified packaging for dangerous goods	7	5	+2
un packaging	11	9	+2
dangerous goods supplies	2	1	+1
hazardous goods packaging	6	5	+1
un approved containers	3	2	+1
un certified packaging	7	6	+1

Website x slowly began to reclaim Google's SERPs and now occupies a strong position on results pages. The website continues to attract a high volume of relevant, quality leads and has increased our client's revenue exponentially.

16// Our Link Removal Process

As part of its uncompromising mission to stamp out spam from search results, Google's Penguin algorithm used to automatically demote sites that used unnatural linking schemes to supercharge their way up SERPs. Now, thanks to the latest update - Penguin 4.0 - only the spam is targeted and as such gives sites a fairer chance at sorting out SEO problems before they notice sharp decline.

Additionally, the search engine giant issues manual penalties to individual sites that violate the linking rules set out in Google's quality guidelines. An increasing number of sites are getting caught in Google's net; if this includes your website, you should conduct a link audit, removal and recovery procedure.

LINK AUDITING



LINK REMOVAL

1

Once you have identified the unnatural links, locate the contact details for each webmaster

2

Begin contacting each webmaster via contact forms, email and telephone to request link removal

4

Compile a list of websites that did and did not remove links. Also collate a list of domains that you couldn't locate contact details for

5

Upload the list of domains that you were unable to get removed to Google's Disavow Links tool

3

Contact each webmaster numerous times to maximise the potential of getting each link removed

If you have been issued with a manual penalty, you will need to submit a reconsideration request to Google at this stage

**DANGER
TOXIC**



**DIRTY LINKS
BAD NEIGHBOURHOODS
LINK NETWORKS**

RECOVERY

Redeem your website's credibility
by building organic, ethical
backlinks. To do so, focus on...

Inbound
marketing

Outreach

Content
Marketing

Online PR

Social
Engagement





17// Our final thought

Within the ever-changing world of search, there remains one constant: the internet continues to evolve at a rapid pace. For as long as users continue to utilise various online platforms to meet their research, social and entertainment needs, search engines will continue to move the goal posts and redefine what constitutes the exemplary website.

At Click Consult, our team of search marketing experts stay ahead of the digital curve on your behalf, so you can focus on running your business. Remember, if you need assistance with any of your search marketing efforts, the experts at **Click Consult are here to help.**

Contact our team of search marketing experts today.

Think your website may have been affected by a Google penalty? Want to make sure you have a clean backlink profile?

Contact our team of search marketing experts today...

Our [Click Consult website](#) features an [online resources section](#), full of useful how-to guides. We also write a [blog](#), where you can find an abundance of digital marketing tips. If you're feeling social, get in touch on [Google+](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#). Alternatively, if you'd like to speak to us over the phone, you can give us a call on **0845 205 0292**.

As always, we'd like to wish you the best of luck with all your digital marketing efforts.



The team at Click Consult



18// Glossary of digital terms

301 Redirect – a permanent redirected link, used when a page no longer exists and a website owner wants to direct the user to a new page. Search engines will follow these redirects

302 Redirect – a temporary redirect. Search engines will not follow these redirects

A/B split testing – the practice of comparing two versions of a similar webpage to find out which performs better

Above the Fold – the portion of a web page that is visible on screen once the page has loaded, without the need to scroll down

AdWords – Google's Pay Per Click advertising programme. Advertisers pay each time their advertisement is clicked on

Affiliate – affiliate sites refer visitors to other websites in exchange for commission based on those referrals

Algorithm – a complex program used to interpret data and determine an outcome. Google and other search engines use these to determine the ranking of a web page in their search results

Alt Text – part of the code behind an image in HTML, which describes the image. It isn't shown to the user except when an image is broken and is used for those with accessibility issues. Search engines use this attribute as part of their algorithm so they can understand what the image is

Analytics – a program that compiles and analyses data about a website's visitors, allowing easy reporting for the user to interpret. Google Analytics is a popular free analytical package used by millions of websites

Anchor Text – the text part of a link that is visible to users. This should also be clickable. Search engines use anchor text to help them to determine the relevancy of the sites they link to

Avatar – a graphical image that represents a person online

Audience – the people who visit a particular website or are reached by a particular online advert

Authority – also known as “link juice”, this refers to the amount of trust that a site is given by search engines and is calculated by relevant inbound links from another trusted website

Authorship – a tool developed by Google, which allows users to link the content they publish to their own Google+ profiles

Backlink (or inbound link) – a link that points from one website to another

Banner Ad (or Leaderboard Ad) – a type of online advert that usually appears at the top or bottom of a page and is designed to drive traffic to a website by linking to the website of the advertiser

Black Hat – a search engine optimisation tactic frowned upon by search engines and people within the industry. It is a practice that attempts to trick the search engine algorithms into ranking a site higher, using techniques considered dishonourable. They are often caught quickly and the offending site penalised

Blog – a content section which displays posts in chronological order, and is often used for business, company or personal news

Bot – see “Search Engine Robots”

Bounce Rate – the percentage or number of users that enter and then leave a website without navigating to another page

Breadcrumbs – a navigation bar (usually horizontal) that allows you to jump to any step you have visited on your way to that page in the format of the site structure

Broken Link Building (or Link Reclamation) – the practice of finding resources on relevant sites containing broken links to external sources, contacting the site owner to inform them of the broken link, and suggesting an alternative source

Canonical Issue – refers to duplicate content caused by a page existing under more than one URL. The same page existing under more than one URL can be overcome with 301 redirects or the canonical meta tag

Cloaking – a technique used to hide content from users but show it to search engines. This is a black hat technique and is frowned upon. Cloaking can lead to your site getting penalised

CMS – stands for “content management system”. CMS software such as Wordpress, Joomla and Magento are used by webmasters to manage websites and content without having extensive knowledge of HTML or other coding skills

Comment Spam – posting a comment for the sole purpose of gaining a link to a website. This is the main reason sites moderate comments or do not allow links altogether

Competition outreach – the practice of reaching out to bloggers within a particular vertical with the offer of running a competition on their blogs. This involves providing a prize for the blogger to offer to their readers

Content – the text and images on a website that entice users to visit that particular site

Content Curation – collecting relevant content from various sources to create fresh, interesting and useful content on a particular website. Value is added by commentary or simply by the usefulness of a single information source. Aggregating related content in a single location can help to highlight a connection, chronology or humorous point

Content Marketing – the process of producing informative and engaging content on a regular basis to drive engagement and sales or leads

Contextual Advertising – an advertisement that is related to content on the page

Competitive Linking – the practice of identifying and obtaining links to competitors’ websites. This can be done by downloading competitors’ backlink profiles from various tools and then contacting the sites on their backlink profiles with the aim of getting a backlink to your own site

Conversion – also known as a “goal”. The achievement of passing a set of pre-defined rules. A conversion could be someone submitting a contact form, downloading a white paper or completing a purchase, for example

Conversion Rate – the percentage or number of people achieving a conversion compared to the number of visitors to the site

Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO) – making changes to a website to improve the ratio of site visitors to customers. As part of this process, user interaction with a website is analysed and ideas for how to increase engagement and conversion rate are developed through various tests and changes

Cookie – a small text file unique to a web browser downloaded to a user's computer when a user browses a website for the first time. If the user revisits the website, the data contained in the cookie is sent back to the site. Cookies are used to track advertising statistics and to provide a personalised website experience

CPC – stands for “cost per click”. This is the rate paid to the advertiser for each click made on an advertisement in a paid search campaign

Crawler – see “Search Engine Robots”

Creative Blog – Lighthearted, non-promotional blogs which usually include images and often take the form of a list

Directory – a website that categorically lists other websites for easy searching

Display Advertising – paid ads that appear on web pages. They can take the form of banners, text and video

Duplicate Content – used to describe similar or an exact copy of content that exists on another website or page. A site may see a drop in rankings if they duplicate content from another website

E-commerce Site – a website that sells products

External Links (or Outbound Links) – a link on your website directing users to a third-party site

Feed – commonly refers to an RSS Feed, which is a specialised file that can be interpreted by news reader software. This is commonly used to collect content from various sites and display in in one place for easy reading

Frames – a page that is set up to display one or more separate pages in a split screen setup

Generic optimised blog – generic industry relevant blogs which are not promotional or ‘salesy’ in tone. Usually no more than 500 words and contain at least one target keyword

Guest Blog Outreach – the practice of approaching individual bloggers to ask if they would be interested in hosting content that is relevant to their audience. This form of content is created exclusively for use on the targeted blogger's site

Hit – describes the action of loading a web page, document, image, etc. One page view can generate many hits

HTML – stands for “hyper text mark-up language” and is the code that makes up a website

Hummingbird – a Google algorithm update designed to return better search results by paying more attention to every word in a search query and better understanding ‘conversational’ speech. First released in September 2013

Impression – when a page is returned to a user in search engine results page (SERPs)

Industry news blog – a blog on a specific piece of industry-relevant news. Word count depends on the subject matter

Inbound link (or backlinks) – a link on a third-party website that links to a page on your website

Inbound marketing – the process of helping potential clients find a company by using various forms of pull marketing such as blogs, white papers, guides, ebooks, podcasts, webinars, events, SEO and social media

Indexed Pages – pages on a website that have been added to the list of pages a search engine has seen and stored

Keyword – a word (or phrase) that a user wants to search the internet for. Alternatively, keywords may be used by digital marketers to sum up what their content is about

Keyword Density – the percentage or number of times a keyword has been mentioned on a page

Keyword Research – the practice used by search marketing professionals to identify actual search terms that people enter into search engines

Keyword Stuffing – also known as keyword spam. The act of using a keyword a huge number of times on a web page and hoping that the search engines notice and associate the content on the page with that keyword. Keyword stuffing can get a page or site penalised

Landing Page – a page that the user will load when they click on a link in the search engine results

Link Bait – a page that has been designed with the sole purpose of attracting backlinks. These pages are often highly useful or fun and tend to go viral through social media sharing

Link Building – the act of gaining links to a website or web page

Link Exchange – a scheme designed so that webmasters link to each other (reciprocal linking). These types of links are often considered to be unnatural by search engines

Live Blogging – updating a blog or microblog to report on an event as it takes place

Local Search – the process of driving geographically-relevant traffic to your website through specifically targeted local pages

Long Tail – a more specific search query. These are generally targeted less often than shorter search queries. For example you might search for “hat” which is very broad, but “blue hat with a ribbon” is more specific and is a long tail search query

Marketing Automation – the use of software platforms to automate repetitive marketing tasks, such as customer segmentation, lead scoring and campaign management

Meta Tags – lines of code within the header of a website that tell crawlers information about the page. These include the title, description and the (unused by most crawlers) keywords. It’s important to have this information so the search engines can use it to help them determine what the page is about

Multivariate Testing – the practice of testing multiple variables of a website or webpage (such as icons, images, colours) with live traffic to analyse which combination of the website will perform best

Nofollow – a command that prevents search engines from following a link or an entire page, depending on how it has been used

Noindex – a command that prevents search engines from indexing a page

Non Reciprocal Link – a link that points to one site but that site does not link back. This is a non reciprocal link and tends to have more value to search engines than a reciprocal link

Off-page Optimisation – factors that may improve a web asset’s visibility on search engine results pages and can be controlled off the website. Examples include link building, social networking and blogger outreach

Online Reputation Management – promoting positive comments and assisting with the movement of negative comments on Google and other search engines that directly relate to a business and website

On-page Optimisation – factors that affect a web asset in organic search engine results pages that can be controlled on the pages of a website by the website owner. Examples include HTML code, content, meta tags and keyword density

Opt-In List – in email marketing, this refers to a database of subscribers who have chosen to receive bulk emails

Organic Search (SEO) – the process of achieving, improving and maintaining the visibility of a web asset (e.g. a website, Facebook page or YouTube video) within the organic or algorithmically determined search results of popular search engines

Organic Search Results – search engine results which are not paid-for advertisements. Paid advertisements generally appear in a (sometimes only slightly) different coloured box at the top, bottom or right hand side of the search results

Outbound Links (or External Links) – a link on your website directing users to a third-party site

Outreach (also known as blogger outreach and social outreach) – the process of building relationships with real people who are considered influential online within the same industry or specialism as a brand

Paid Search – the process of driving targeted and relevant traffic to a website for a fee from search engine results pages (SERPs). Site owners pay to have ads visible on SERPs when users search for keywords related to the ad

Page Rank – also known as “link juice,” page rank analyses various factors of your site and determines where it should rank

Page View – the act of loading a web page will trigger a single page view. Refreshing the page will trigger another page view

Pay Per Click (PPC) – an advertisement scheme where a cost is incurred by a company whenever someone clicks on one of its ads

Panda – a Google algorithm update designed to prevent poor quality content. First released in February 2011

Penguin – a Google algorithm update designed to prevent websites that have been optimised using unethical linking techniques - such as link farming, paid links and link exchanges - from appearing in Google's top search results. First released in April 2012.

PPC Remarketing (also known as Retargeting) – the process of targeting users who have previously interacted with your website with ads as they browse the web. Remarketing ads are effective because they are displayed across the web to people who have already engaged with your brand

Reciprocal Link – an exchange of links where two sites link to each other. These types of links are not generally seen as high value by search engines

Redirect – a method of sending a user from one page to another. These are often used when a page is moved or deleted

Robots.txt – a file in the root of a website that tells search engines what they can and cannot crawl and index

Search Engine Robots – a piece of software that collects information from websites, including their links, then follows links to other websites and repeats the process. This software is how search engines are able to show you results when you make a search

SEO – stands for “search engine optimisation” which is the process of optimising web pages and link building to increase page rank and overall traffic in and from search engines

SERP – stands for “search engine results page”, which is the page you see after you have searched for your query

Sitemap – a page on a website that links to each top level (and sometimes all) pages on a website. These help to improve site access for search engine crawlers and help users who have got lost in the site structure

SMM – stands for “social media marketing”, which is the process of promoting a website through social media

Social Bookmark – a bookmark to a website or page that has been found to be useful and has been posted on social media websites

Social Media – sharing information, opinions and news on blogs, forums and social sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and rating sites such as Reddit

Social Media Advertising – paid ads that appear on social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube etc

Spam – the practice of distributing unsolicited bulk messages indiscriminately online

Spammer – someone who posts lots of useless information to unrelated places in the hope of reaching their goal or to simply annoy other web users

Spider – see “Search Engine Robots”

Technical (niche industry) expert blog – a detailed blog on a topic that is relevant to a niche or technical industry written by an expert/specialist with a high level of knowledge of the industry and the ability to provide an editorial slant

Time on Page – the amount of time a user spends on a page before moving to another

Toolbar Page Rank – a value between 0 and 10 that has been assigned by Google to primarily describe page importance/trust. This is calculated based on varying factors including link relevancy. The higher this number, the more trust the page is said to have and is normally updated every few months

URL – stands for “uniform resource locator”. It is simply the web address used to view a website

UGC – stands for “user generated content”. Forums, blog comments, reviews and wikis are all examples of user generated content where anybody on the web can make a contribution

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