

How to Disavow Backlinks



What are BackLinks?

Sometimes called “inbound links” or “incoming links”, these are links from other websites that are pointing to a page on your website. The more backlinks you have, the higher Google and other search engines tend to trust you and rank you. Think of backlinks as letters of recommendations for your website from others. Much like letters of recommendation though, not all backlinks are created equal. Backlinks coming from websites with poor authority that are considered ‘untrustworthy’ will not have the same weight as backlinks from authoritative websites, just like a letter of recommendation from your mom won’t be as helpful in a job interview as one from your previous boss.

WHY DO I NEED TO DISAVOW BACKLINKS?

Just because one of your backlinks comes from a low authority website, that doesn’t mean you have to discard it. However, some backlinks that come from unknown, highly questionable or unrelated industries could bring more harm than good to your search engine optimization strategy. We recommend you disavow a backlink if it has low authority, you do not know the source, and is not related to your industry, business, or services.

HOW DO I RECOGNIZE A BACKLINK I SHOULD DISAVOW?

Recognizing a poor backlink is not an easy task because you have to make sure not to get rid of those that are positively impacting your authority. According to Google, no action is necessary from your business since the search engine can recognize most links that are not not trustworthy. However, Google also recommends that you disavow backlinks that you identify as spammy, artificial, or of low quality.

Here are tips to recognize “bad” backlinks:

- The backlink is not relevant for your website or users.
- The backlink lacks potential to bring business to your site.
- The backlink was created to manipulate Google results.
- The backlink comes from a hacked site.



*You can ask your SBDC consultant for an excel file with your full backlink list.

"Think of backlinks as letters of recommendation for your website."

How to disavow Backlinks

1. List the pages and domains you want to disavow on a .txt file encoded in UTF-8 or 7-bit ASCII (for Windows users, use Notepad and for Mac, use TextEdit).
 - a. Type one URL per line in the following structure, depending if you are disavowing a page or a domain:
 - i. Disavow a given page: `http://disavow.example.com/spam/comments.html`
 - ii. Disavow a given domain: `domain:exampleofspammylinktobedisavowed.com`
 - iii. You can insert comments on the .txt file by typing “#” before the comment: `#comment` regarding the domain to be disavowed.
 2. Upload your list on Google's disavow links tool page
 - a. Go to: [Google Search Console](#)
 - b. Select your website, click in disavow links, then choose your file from a directory and submit it.
- *Google states that it can take a few weeks for them to process the information submitted.

For more information visit: [Disavow backlinks - Search Console Help](#) and [Your Start-to-Finish Guide to Using Google's Disavow Tool](#).