

## Penalization Case Study

**Client Industry:** Credit Counseling

**Length of Campaign:** 2 years

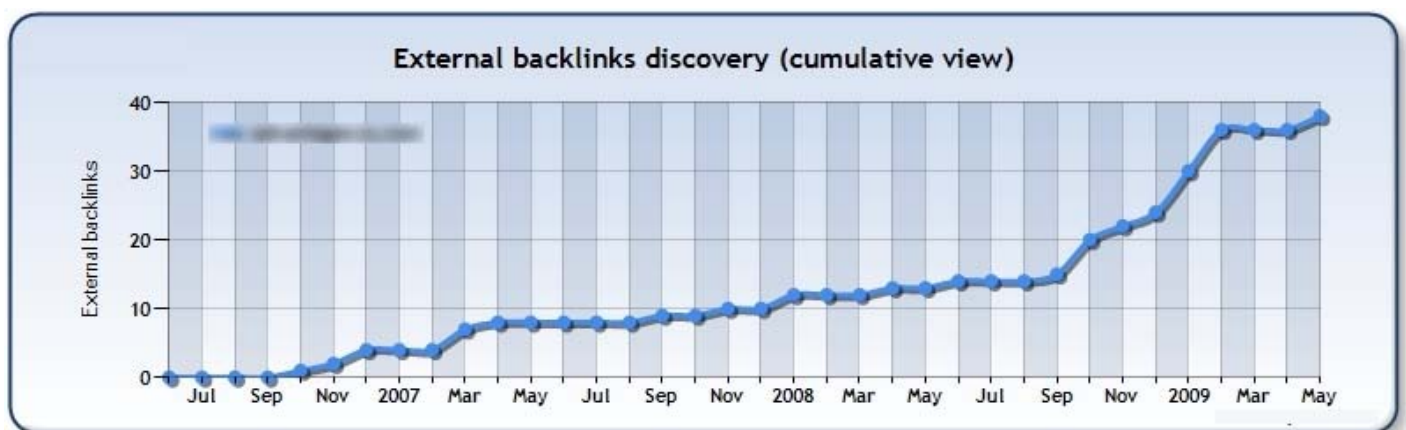
**Challenges:** Site was being penalized by Google, had a high percentage of pages in Google's supplemental index, suffered from low search engine traffic, poorly written web pages

**Goals:** Reverse Google's penalization, raise keyword rankings, increase traffic and conversions

**Results:** They are no longer being penalized, and because of this they are receiving much more traffic. Their keyword rankings have increased across all major search engines. They have a greater number of inbound links to their site, and a higher number of pages in Google's Primary Index.

## Penalized Site

When we began doing work for this client, they were being penalized by Google. Apparently a less than honest SEO firm had done a lot of unethical and obvious keyword stuffing. Our first goal was naturally to reverse the penalty. To do this, we rewrote most of the copy and built a significant amount of links to internal pages. The result was that Google re-indexed the site and dropped the penalty. The chart below indicates the increase in inbound links to the website:



Google views links as a sign of trust, so increasing the number of links to internal pages helped them to start ranking again.

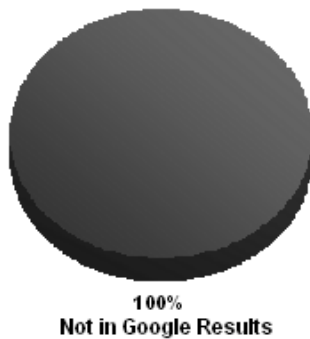
## More indexed pages

After Google lifted its penalty, and due to building links to internal pages, we saw an increase in the number of pages indexed. At the beginning of the campaign, only 307 pages were indexed. Now, there are over 427 pages in Google's main index. This means that more pages were accessible from the SERPs and could bring traffic into the website.

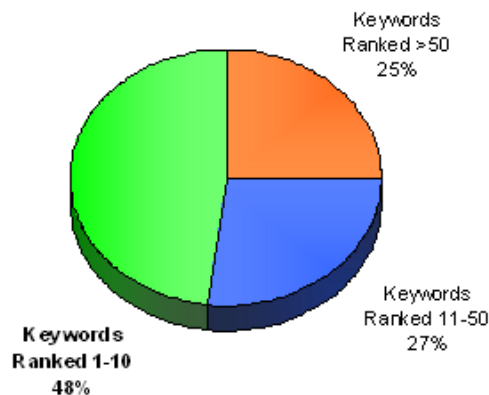
## Higher Rankings

Creating keyword rich inbound links also helped raise keyword rankings significantly, thus raising the visibility of the whole website in the Search Engines. Below are graphs comparing Google rankings from the beginning of the campaign to 6 months and 12 months into the campaign. Because it was being penalized by Google, the site started without rankings for any keywords. As time went on, we were able to reverse the penalization, and increase the keyword rankings significantly.

Beginning of Campaign



After 6 months

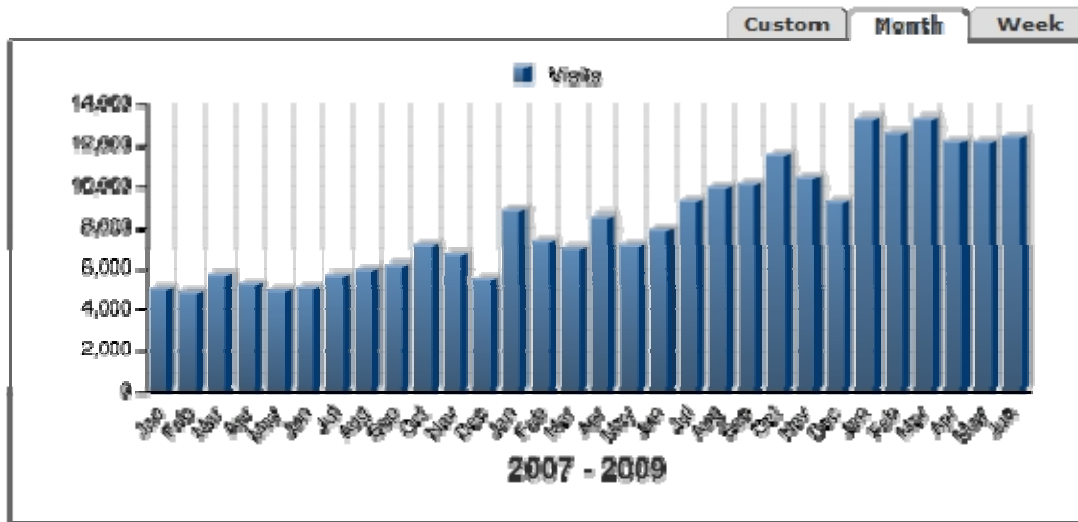


After 12 months



## Increased Organic Search Engine Traffic

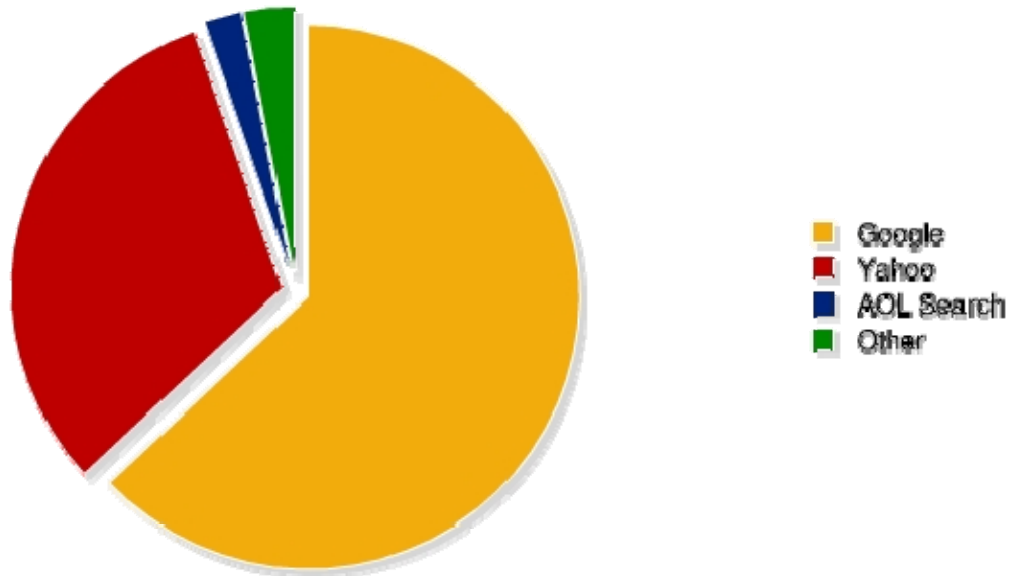
The higher visibility in the SERPs prompted a steady rise in traffic over the past two years:



The keywords bringing traffic into the website were on a national level and extremely competitive. One keyword phrase that the site ranked in the top 10 for was searched for 135,000 times a month. These rankings brought in targeted, interested traffic. In order to increase conversion rates, we retooled the website in order to make it easier to convert. Usability and SEO typically go hand in hand, and this retooling also made it easier for the search engines to access interior pages.

## Traffic Sources

When we started with this client, they were getting very little traffic from organic search through the major search engines. Now, most of their traffic comes from Google.



## Conclusion

This particular client is thrilled with their website performance. Coming back from a penalization can take months or sometimes even years, but a successful SEO campaign can get it done much quicker. The website now has a steadily increasing traffic flow, more and more inbound links every month and increased authority and trust.