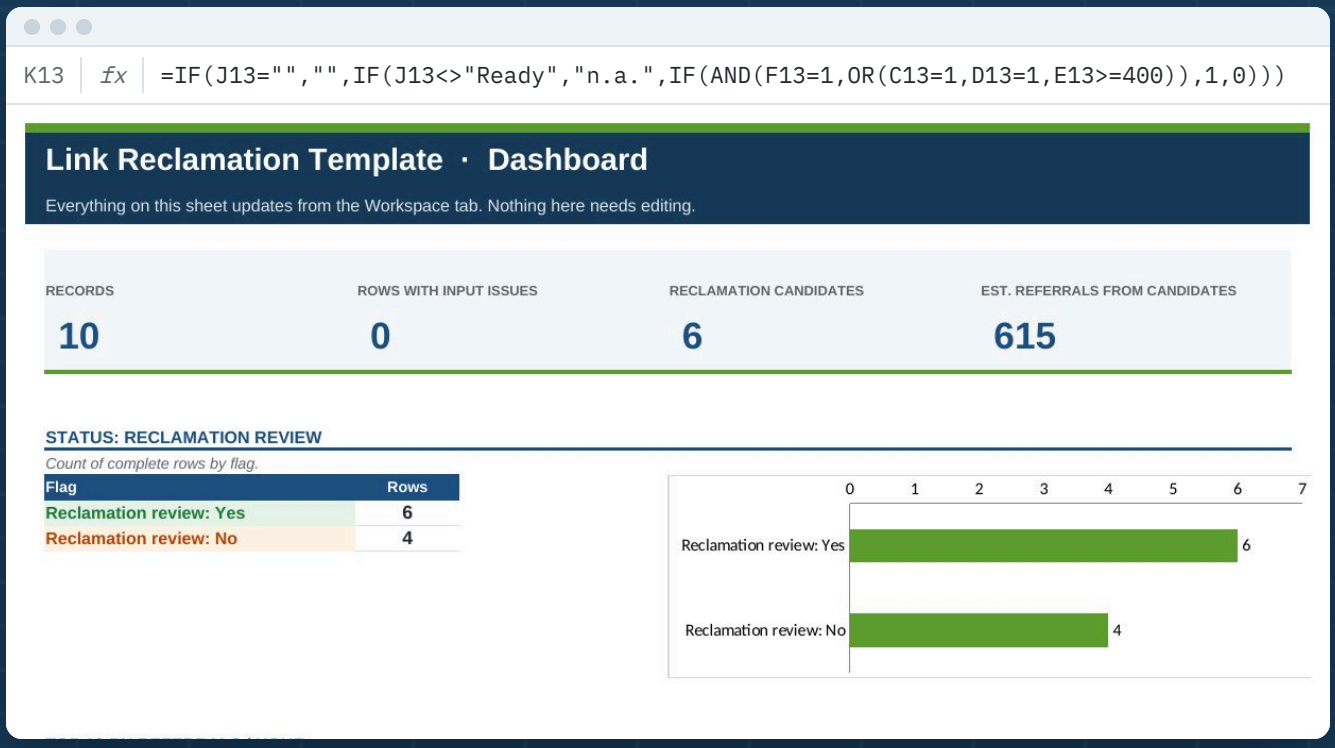
OptimizationTheory.com

SEO Business & Delivery Toolkit, resource 34

Link Reclamation Template

Find lost and broken backlinks worth fixing and rank them by expected referrals per hour of outreach.

Built for the DataForSEO API: Backlinks API



Jourdan Rombough, optimizationtheory.com

What this template decides

Which lost or broken backlinks are worth reclaiming, and which to tackle first by expected referrals per hour.

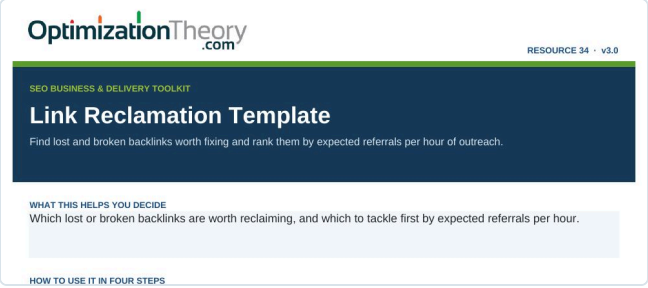
The easiest links to build are the ones you already earned. Backlinks break when you change URLs, delete pages or migrate, and they get lost when publishers update articles. Reclaiming them is usually faster than earning new ones.

This link reclamation template records each linking page, its target on your site, whether the link is lost or broken, the target's status, whether the link is relevant, estimated referrals and effort. Relevant links that are lost, broken or pointing at an error page become reclamation candidates, ranked by referrals per hour.

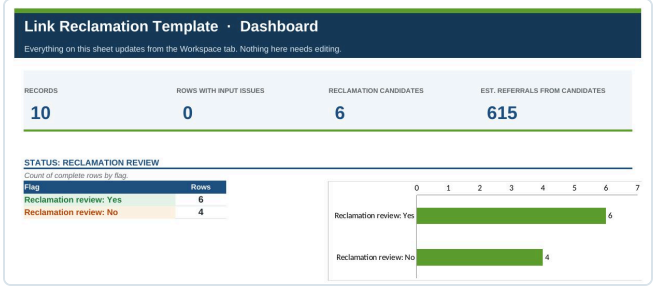
Who it's for

- SEOs running link building or digital PR
- Teams cleaning up after a migration or URL change
- Ecommerce sites with discontinued product URLs
- Agencies looking for quick link wins

What's in the workbook



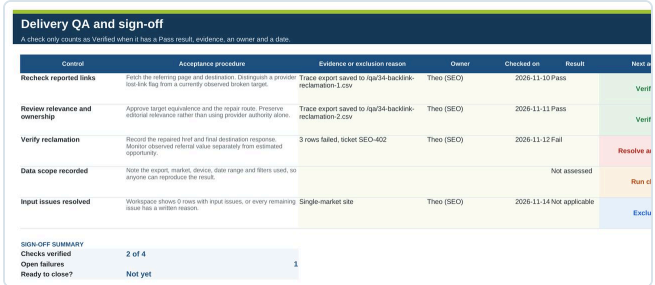
Start Here. Purpose, four-step setup and colour key.



Dashboard. KPIs, charts, Top 10 and an automatic action list.



Workspace. The working table, room for 1,000 rows.



Delivery QA. Evidence, owner and date for each validation step.

How the calculation works

Reclamation candidate = 1 when the link is relevant and lost, broken, or points at a target returning 400 or above. Referrals per hour = estimated referrals ÷ effort for candidates, otherwise 0.

The key formula, as written in the workbook

```
=IF(J13="","",IF(J13<>"Ready","n.a.",IF(AND(F13=1,OR(C13=1,D13=1,E13>=400)),1,0)))
```

Result column	Plain-English formula	What it tells you
Reclamation review	IF(AND(Human relevance verified=1,OR(Provider reports lost=1,Provider reports broken=1,Target HTTP status ≥ 400)),1,0)	Flags relevant relationships needing a manual repair review.
Planned referrals / hour	IF(Reclamation review=1,Expected referrals ÷ month ÷ Work hours,0)	Expected referral opportunity per repair hour.

How to use it, step by step

1

Export lost and broken links

From your backlink tool, export lost links and links pointing at 4xx or 5xx URLs on your site.

2

Check the target status

Record the current status of each target URL.

3

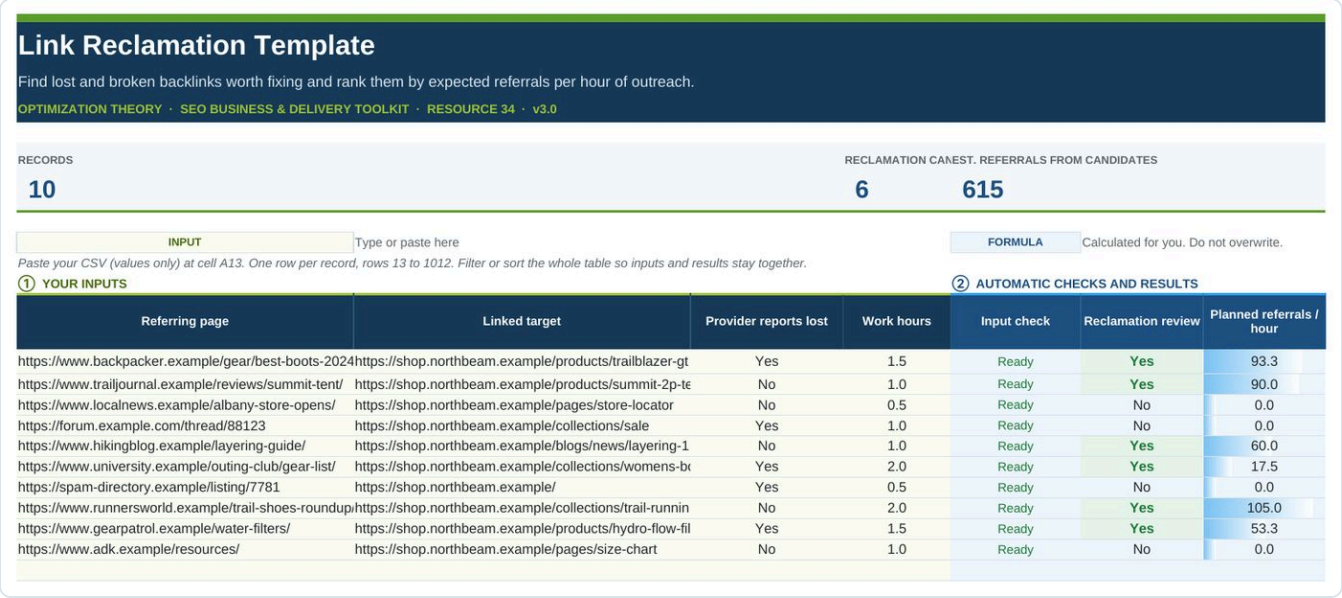
Judge relevance

Mark relevant = 1 only for genuine sites in your space. Skip spam directories.

4

Fix or reach out

Redirect broken targets yourself (fastest), then contact publishers for lost links in ranked order.



Link Reclamation Template

Find lost and broken backlinks worth fixing and rank them by expected referrals per hour of outreach.

OPTIMIZATION THEORY · SEO BUSINESS & DELIVERY TOOLKIT · RESOURCE 34 · v3.0

RECORDS 10

RECLAMATION CANEST. REFERRALS FROM CANDIDATES 6 615

INPUT Type or paste here

FORMULA Calculated for you. Do not overwrite.

Paste your CSV (values only) at cell A13. One row per record, rows 13 to 1012. Filter or sort the whole table so inputs and results stay together.

① YOUR INPUTS

② AUTOMATIC CHECKS AND RESULTS

Referring page	Linked target	Provider reports lost	Work hours	Input check	Reclamation review	Planned referrals / hour
https://www.backpacker.example/gear/best-boots-2024	https://shop.northbeam.example/products/trailblazer-gt	Yes	1.5	Ready	Yes	93.3
https://www.trailjournal.example/reviews/summit-tent/	https://shop.northbeam.example/products/summit-2p-te	No	1.0	Ready	Yes	90.0
https://www.localnews.example/albany-store-opens/	https://shop.northbeam.example/pages/store-locator	No	0.5	Ready	No	0.0
https://forum.example.com/thread/88123	https://shop.northbeam.example/collections/sale	Yes	1.0	Ready	No	0.0
https://www.hikingblog.example/layering-guide/	https://shop.northbeam.example/blogs/news/layering-1	No	1.0	Ready	Yes	60.0
https://www.university.example/outing-club/gear-list/	https://shop.northbeam.example/collections/womens-b	Yes	2.0	Ready	Yes	17.5
https://spam-directory.example/listing/7781	https://shop.northbeam.example/	Yes	0.5	Ready	No	0.0
https://www.runnersworld.example/trail-shoes-roundup	https://shop.northbeam.example/collections/trail-runnin	No	2.0	Ready	Yes	105.0
https://www.gearpatrol.example/water-filters/	https://shop.northbeam.example/products/hydro-flow-fil	Yes	1.5	Ready	Yes	53.3
https://www.adk.example/resources/	https://shop.northbeam.example/pages/size-chart	No	1.0	Ready	No	0.0

The Workspace tab with the worked example. Lime cells are inputs; blue cells are formulas.

Fill it with DataForSEO

This template is built to run on **DataForSEO Backlinks API**: live and lost backlinks with their source, target, broken and status flags.

Most of the data columns fill automatically. Add the business inputs listed below, then paste.

1. Request the data

```
POST https://api.dataforseo.com/v3/backlinks/backlinks/live
[
  {
    "target": "yourdomain.com",
    "mode": "as_is",
    "backlinks_status_type": "all",
    "limit": 1000
  }
]
```

2. Save the full JSON response

Save the complete response, not just the task ID, next to the template folder.

3. Convert it to the input CSV

The script in the Automation folder runs offline: no API call, no credentials.

```
python3 Automation/dataforseo_import.py import --template 34 --input response.json --output my-inputs.csv
```

Fills automatically	You add
Referring page, Linked target, Provider reports lost, Provider reports broken, Target HTTP status	Human relevance verified, Expected referrals / month, Work hours

Source reference fills automatically with the task ID, endpoint, location, language, device and snapshot time, so every row is traceable. Paste the finished CSV at Workspace cell A13. Estimate the cost first with the DataForSEO Cost Calculator (template 38).

Input dictionary

Keep the CSV columns in this order and paste values at Workspace cell A13. A missing observation stays blank; use 0 only for a measured zero or a verified No.

CSV field	Column	Meaning and rule	Typical source
source_url	Referring page	Page containing or formerly containing the link.	DataForSEO: url_from
target_url	Linked target	Exact linked destination.	DataForSEO: url_to
is_lost	Provider reports lost	Loss flag from the current backlinks response. 1 = Yes, 0 = No.	DataForSEO: is_lost
is_broken	Provider reports broken	Broken flag from the response. Verify independently. 1 = Yes, 0 = No.	DataForSEO: is_broken
target_status	Target HTTP status	Current observed status of the linked target.	DataForSEO: url_to_status_code
relevant	Human relevance verified	1 when restoring the relationship benefits users and the destination is equivalent. 1 = Yes, 0 = No.	Your records or manual review
estimated_referrals	Expected referrals / month	Explicit traffic hypothesis based on actual referral history or a documented assumption.	Your records or manual review
effort_hours	Work hours	Estimated implementation hours, greater than zero.	Your records or manual review
source_ref	Source reference	Task ID, export filename and observation scope. Retain the untouched source response separately. Optional.	DataForSEO: source_ref

The worked example

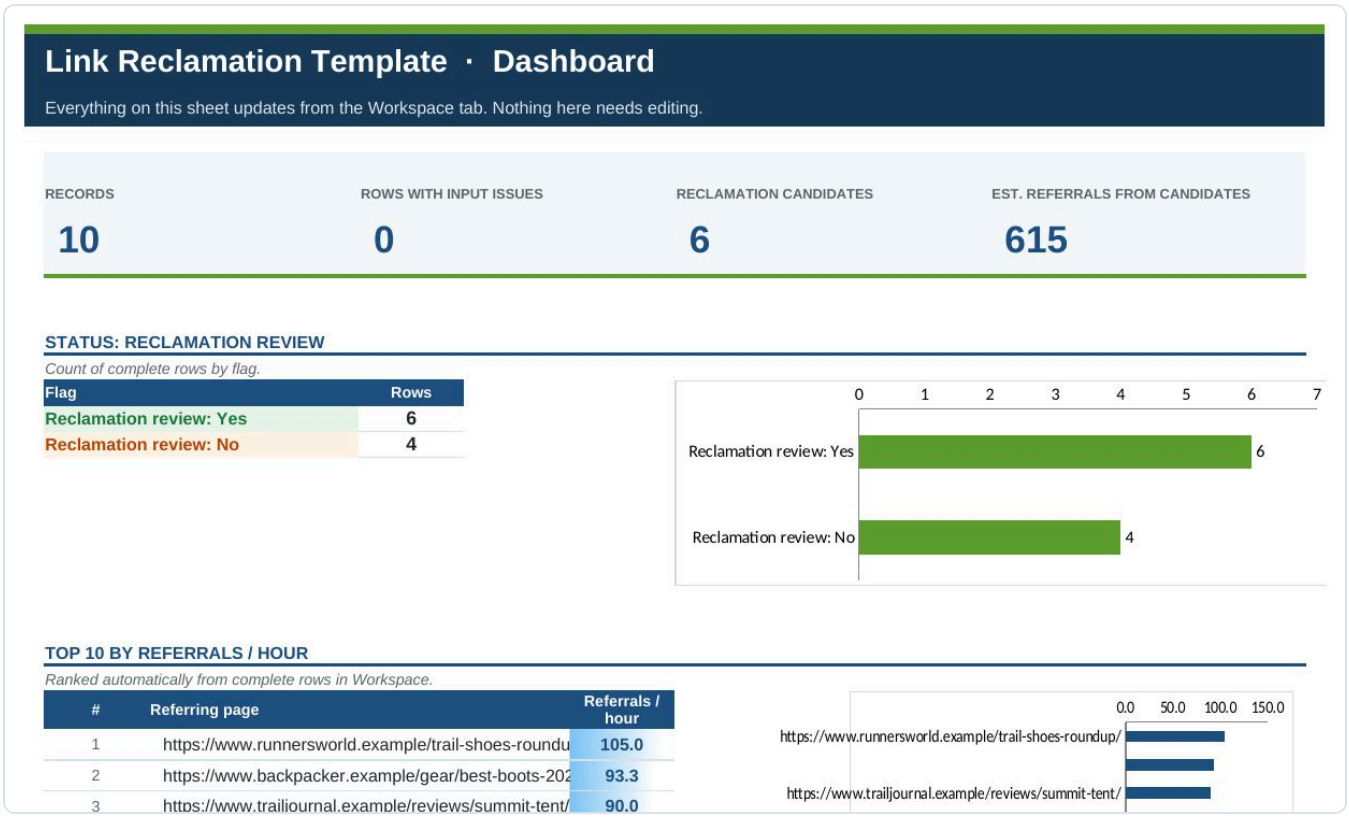
Every workbook ships filled with data from Northbeam Outdoor, a fictional outdoor-gear retailer. This one has 10 example rows.

10	0	6	615
Records	Rows with input issues	Reclamation candidates	Est. referrals from candidates

Six example links are worth reclaiming. The top three point at old product and collection URLs that 404, so a redirect on Northbeam's side fixes them without any outreach.

Top 10 by referrals / hour

#	Referring page	Referrals / hour
1	https://www.runnersworld.example/trail-shoes-roundup/	105.0
2	https://www.backpacker.example/gear/best-boots-2024/	93.3
3	https://www.trailjournal.example/reviews/summit-tent/	90.0
4	https://www.hikingblog.example/layering-guide/	60.0
5	https://www.gearpatrol.example/water-filters/	53.3



The Dashboard updates automatically from the Workspace tab.

Reading the result honestly

Provider link metrics describe observations. They are not a guaranteed amount of transferable ranking value.

Limits. A lost flag can be temporary. Review evidence before contacting a publisher or changing a redirect.

Mistakes to avoid

Chasing spam links. Not every lost link is worth recovering. Relevance first.

Emailing before redirecting. If the target 404s, a redirect fixes it instantly. Outreach is for links that were removed.

Ignoring link value after migrations. Most broken backlinks appear after URL changes. Run this after every migration.

Tips from the field

Use the redirect mapping template to fix broken targets in bulk.

Prioritize links that send real referral traffic, not just authority metrics.

Check for unlinked brand mentions too; they're the next-easiest win.

Questions people ask

What is link reclamation?

Recovering backlinks you've lost or that point to broken URLs on your site, by redirecting targets or asking publishers to update links.

How do I find broken backlinks?

Use a backlink tool's broken backlinks report or filter your backlink export for targets returning 4xx or 5xx status codes.

Should I redirect broken backlinks?

Yes, to the most relevant live page. It recovers the link's value without outreach.

Are lost backlinks a problem?

Some loss is normal. Reclaim the relevant, valuable ones and let low-quality links go.

Templates that work well with this one

Redirect Mapping Template

Map every old URL to its new home and verify each redirect: one permanent hop, a 200 page, no noindex, matching canonical.

Site Migration URL Inventory Template

Inventory every legacy URL with its traffic, profit and links, assign a destination and catch risky retirements.

Internal Linking Opportunity Template

Score each source-to-target internal link by expected visits and contribution per hour, then verify it went live.

Technical SEO Prioritization Template

Turn a technical SEO audit into a ranked fix queue by recovered clicks, profit and profit per hour of dev time.

Brand Entity Consistency Audit

Compare your official brand facts with Wikidata, LinkedIn, GBP, Yelp and more, and log every correction request.

SEO Roadmap Template

Sequence 90 days of SEO and GEO work by weighted opportunity per hour, dependencies and acceptance criteria.

Read the full tutorial online: **optimizationtheory.com/download-view/link-reclamation-template/**
Get all six templates in the **SEO Business & Delivery Toolkit**, or all 40 in the **Complete SEO & GEO Toolkit**.