

Help center SEO: get your articles found

Help center best practices

Many people start with a search engine, not your website. When your help center shows up for their question, customers get an answer without contacting you, and people who don't know your product yet discover it. Here's how to help your articles get found.

Write titles that match what people search

Search engines match pages to the words people type, so use those words.

- Use the reader's vocabulary: "Cancel your subscription", not "Subscription termination".
- Write how-to titles as tasks ("Export your invoices") and troubleshooting titles as the symptom ("Card payment declined").
- Include your product's name where people would type it, for example in an article about connecting it to another tool.
- Give each article one topic, so its title can be specific.

To find the words people use, read your support tickets and your help center's search log, and look at the suggestions a search engine offers as you type your topic.

Write a search title and description for key articles

Search results show a title and a short description for each page. For your most important articles, write both yourself:

- **Search title:** under about 60 characters, with the most important words first.
- **Description:** about 160 characters that say what the reader will learn or be able to do.

A clear description helps people decide that your result is the one to click.

Structure articles with clear headings

Break longer articles into sections with headings that describe what's in them, phrased the way people ask. Search engines and AI tools use headings to understand what each part of a page covers, and readers use them to jump to the part they need.

Link your articles together

Links help search engines find your articles and understand how they relate. Link each article to related ones, use link text that describes where it goes ("See Change your plan"), and link to your help center from your website and your product. An article that no other page links to is hard for anyone to find.

Use your own domain

An address like help.yourcompany.com tells readers they're in the right place and keeps every link people share pointing at your own domain. If you'd rather have it on your main website, at an address like yourcompany.com/docs, see [Host your help center in a subfolder of your website](#). Pick one address and stick with it. If you ever move, redirect the old addresses to the new ones. In HelpCenter.io, connecting a custom domain or going live in a subfolder of your website redirects your old addresses for you, but renaming the subdomain does not (see [Change your help center's address](#)).

Avoid duplicate and thin pages

Two articles about the same thing compete with each other for the same searches. Merge them into one strong article. If an article belongs in two categories, show the same article in both instead of copying it. And answer each question completely, so readers don't need to go back to the search results.

Keep addresses stable

Every link to an article, from search results, bookmarks, emails and other websites, relies on its address. Change an address only when you have to, and redirect the old one when you do. The same goes for deleted articles: redirect them to the closest replacement.

Keep pages fast

Slow pages frustrate readers, especially on phones. Compress screenshots, keep GIFs short and light, and add third-party scripts only when you need them.

Let AI tools read your help center too

People also get answers from AI assistants and AI search, and those tools can only use what they can read. Keep important articles public, put facts in text rather than in images, and publish an llms.txt file, which gives AI tools a map of your content. See [Make your help center ready for AI](#).

Track how you're doing

Add your help center to Google Search Console to see which searches show your articles, and which of them get clicks. Your help center's own search statistics show what people look for once they're on your site. Together, they tell you which articles to improve and which to write next.

A quick checklist

- Titles use the words your customers search for.
- Key articles have their own search title and description.
- Long articles have descriptive headings.
- Every article links to related articles, and your website links to your help center.

- Your help center is on your own domain.
- There's one article per topic, with no copies.
- Changed and deleted addresses redirect somewhere useful.

How HelpCenter.io helps

A public HelpCenter.io help center publishes a sitemap (listing each language version on multilingual help centers), sets canonical addresses, and keeps its search results pages out of search engines. It also publishes llms.txt and a Markdown version of each article for AI tools, with signals that allow search and AI answers but not model training. Private and password-protected help centers stay out of search engines.

On every plan, you can use your own domain with free SSL, set a search title and description for each article, and add a Search Console verification tag through the template editor. Changing an article's address creates a redirect automatically. See [SEO settings for your help center](#), [Set an article's search title, description and URL](#) and [How search engines and AI crawlers read your help center](#).

Related articles

- [SEO settings for your help center](#)
- [Set an article's search title, description and URL](#)
- [How search engines and AI crawlers read your help center](#)
- [Use your own domain](#)
- [Host your help center in a subfolder of your website](#)
- [Redirect old links to the right page](#)