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Generated on 21/10/2026 17:24

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Internal links: how to link your own pages so nothing stays hidden

SEO & Marketing

CODE	VERSION	COUNTRY · LANGUAGE
RLX-MZ-KB-1190	v2026.10.10	Mozambique · English

Interweb Mozambique
RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings
Tax ID (NUIT) 401 191 607 · Legal entity no. (NUEL) 105 045 974 · Economic activity code (CAE) 62022

https://www.meu.interweb.co.mz/knowledgebase/1190

Internal links: how to link your own pages so nothing stays hidden

SEO & Marketing Created on **October 10, 2026** 3 min read



Internal links are the links from one page of your site to another page of your site. They do two jobs: they take the visitor to the next step and they show Google **which pages exist and which ones matter**. Google discovers pages by following links. A page that no other page links to (an “orphan page”) may never be found, even if it is in the sitemap.

What makes a link good

Do	Avoid
Link text that says where it goes: “guide to choosing a plan”	“Click here”, “read more”, “view”: they tell neither the reader nor Google anything
Linking from the text, at the point where the subject comes up	Piling twenty links at the bottom of the page with no context
Linking related pages to each other	Linking everything to everything
A proper `<a href="...">` link	Buttons that only work with JavaScript and that a robot does not follow
Pointing straight at the final address	Pointing at addresses that redirect or return 404

Putting your site’s links in order

1. **List the pages that matter most** (the main service, contact, the guides that bring most visits). They are the ones that should receive the most links from the site itself.

2 **The menu and the footer** link to the main pages. Do not clog the menu: what sits on every page weighs less than a link placed on purpose in the middle of the text.

3 **In each new article, link to two or three existing ones** and, the other way round, go to related older articles and add a link to the new one. That is the only way the new one stops being an orphan.

4 **Look for orphans.** On WordPress, open the list of pages and posts and see which have no links pointing to them. An SEO plugin may list them; searching your own site for a title also shows where it is already mentioned.

5 **Go through broken links.** An internal link that returns 404 spoils the visit. See **crawl errors in Search Console** for finding them.

Breadcrumbs and lists

A **breadcrumb trail** (“Home, Guides, Colours”) shows where the page sits and gives links upward in the structure. Many themes and SEO plugins produce one. If you mark it up as structured data, follow **structured data**. **Related-article lists** at the end of each text do the same job without effort, as long as they really are related.

Do not put the nofollow attribute on your own links.
It asks Google not to follow them and gets in the way of what you meant to help. That attribute is for sponsored links or links to sites you do not trust, not for your own house.

An important page should be a few clicks from the start.
If reaching it takes passing through four pages, either the link moves up or the page was not that important.

NEED A HAND?

Does a link on your site lead to a server error rather than a plain 404? Tell us the address and we will see what the server answers.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

Crawl errors in Search Console →

- **What a good page URL looks like**
- **robots.txt and sitemap.xml**
- **WordPress hosting**

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