

Must-Have Tools, Formulas & the Content Writing Checklist



Section I:
Must-Have Tools

If you're an affiliate marketer, you have a tough job. You struggle with finding content ideas, affiliate programs slash commissions (ahem, Amazon), no one is clicking your links, your niche is insanely competitive, and on it goes.

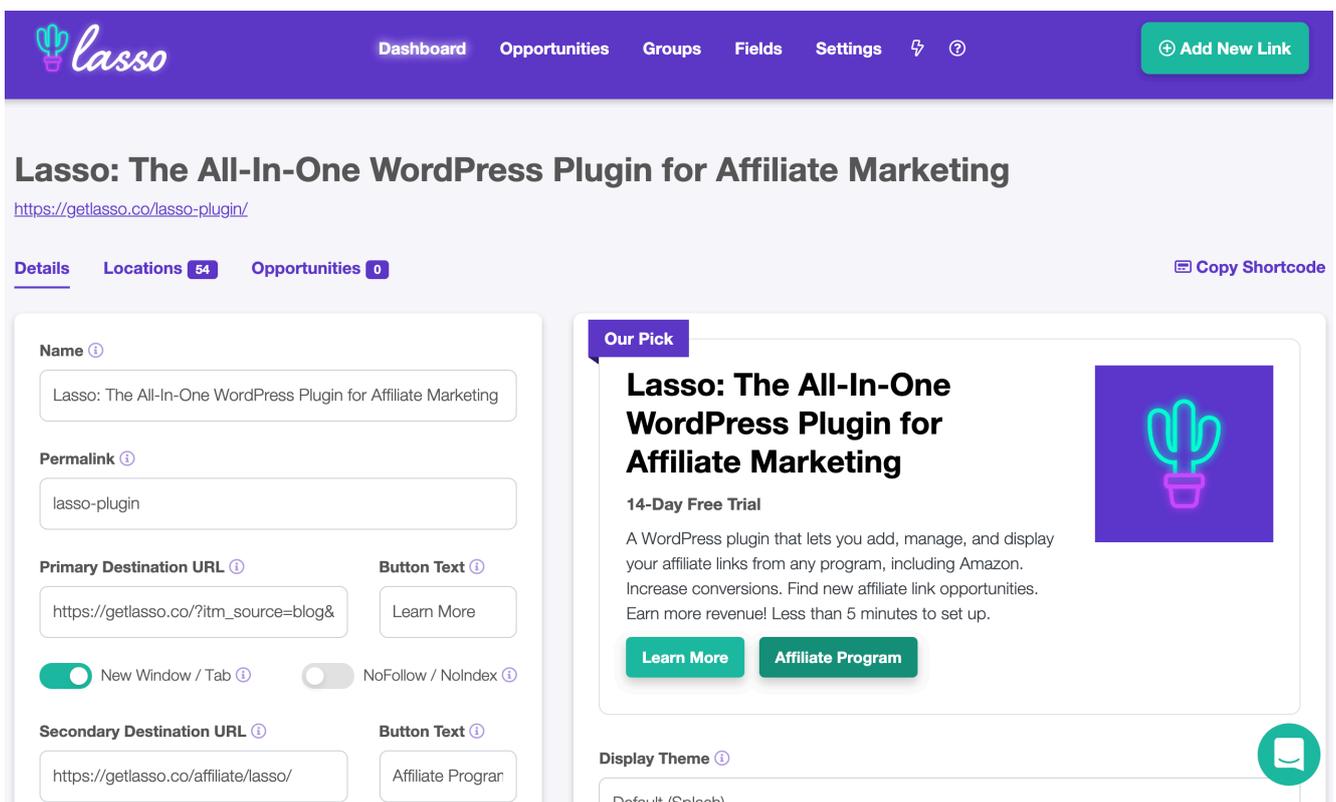
While there's no single tried-and-true method that rules all, there are tools you can use to give you a leg up. We curated this list of affiliate marketing tools to help analyze your competitors, increase conversions, grow your business, and more.

There's an old saying, "What gets measured gets managed." It makes sense; otherwise, you have no idea how to track meaningful metrics that matter to your business.

The below list represents things we've either used or that come highly recommended.

#1. Lasso

Lasso is the new way to grow your affiliate income using CTR-boosting modern product displays, broken link alerts, keyword monetization, and organized link management. We even find new affiliate programs to join from your existing links. 🔥

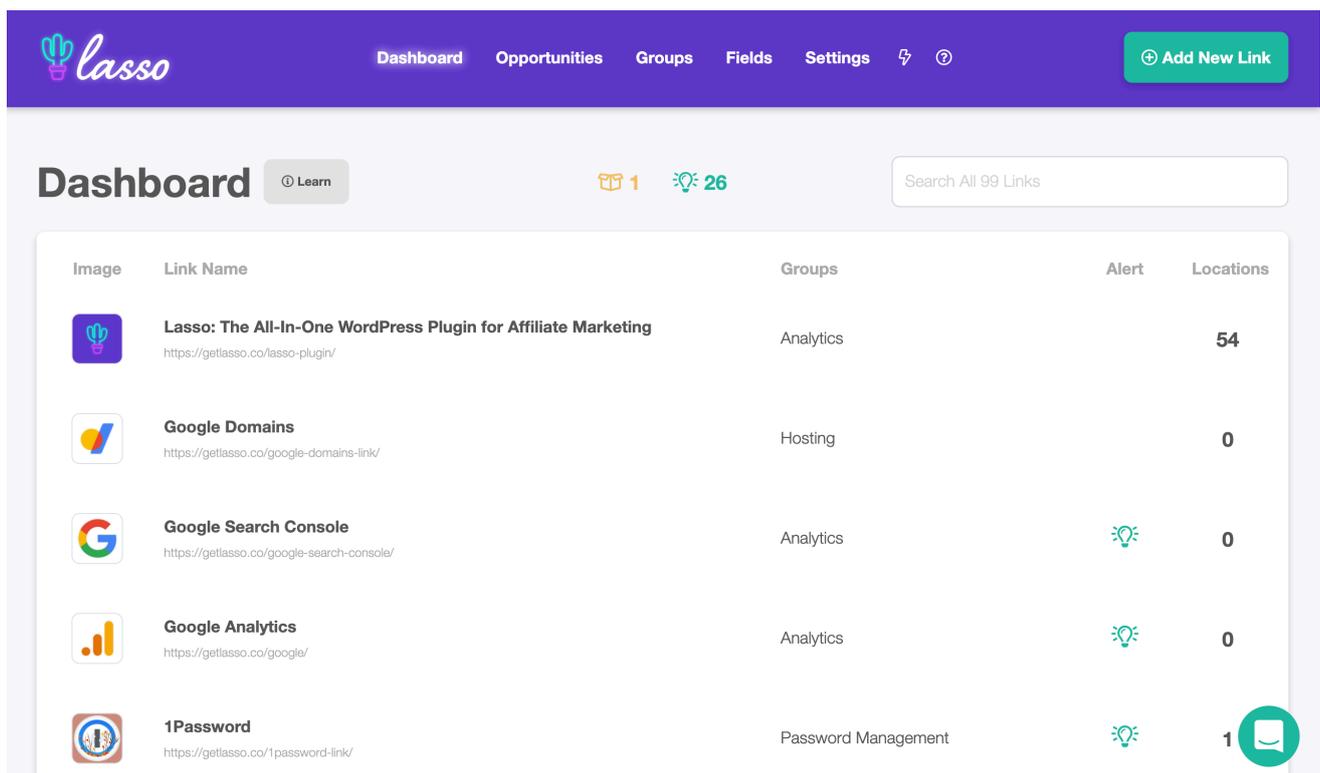


The screenshot shows the Lasso WordPress plugin dashboard. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Dashboard, Opportunities, Groups, Fields, Settings, and a lightning bolt icon. A green button labeled "Add New Link" is in the top right. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is "Lasso: The All-In-One WordPress Plugin for Affiliate Marketing" with a URL below it. There are tabs for "Details", "Locations" (54), and "Opportunities" (0). A "Copy Shortcode" button is on the right. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains configuration fields: "Name" (Lasso: The All-In-One WordPress Plugin for Affiliate Marketing), "Permalink" (lasso-plugin), "Primary Destination URL" (https://getlasso.co/?itm_source=blog&), "Button Text" (Learn More), "Secondary Destination URL" (https://getlasso.co/affiliate/lasso/), and "Button Text" (Affiliate Program). There are also toggle switches for "New Window / Tab" (checked) and "NoFollow / NoIndex" (unchecked). The right column features a "Our Pick" badge, the title "Lasso: The All-In-One WordPress Plugin for Affiliate Marketing", a "14-Day Free Trial" badge, a description of the plugin, and two buttons: "Learn More" and "Affiliate Program". A "Display Theme" dropdown is at the bottom right, set to "Default (Slash)".

We originally built Lasso for our affiliate businesses and considered it our competitive advantage. However, after showing a few friends, they begged us to share it, and after much convincing, we agreed.

We created it because something like this didn't exist for us just to buy ourselves.

Our WordPress plugin lets bloggers create gorgeous product displays and manage their affiliate links at scale. It's the tool we use to manage our affiliate sites - we're a customer too. Many times over.



The screenshot shows the Lasso dashboard interface. At the top, there is a purple navigation bar with the Lasso logo on the left and menu items: Dashboard, Opportunities, Groups, Fields, Settings, a lightning bolt icon, and a question mark icon. A green button labeled "Add New Link" is on the right. Below the navigation bar, the main content area has a "Dashboard" heading with a "Learn" button. To the right of the heading are two icons: a gift icon with the number "1" and a lightbulb icon with the number "26". A search bar labeled "Search All 99 Links" is also present. The main content is a table with the following columns: Image, Link Name, Groups, Alert, and Locations. The table contains five rows of data:

Image	Link Name	Groups	Alert	Locations
	Lasso: The All-In-One WordPress Plugin for Affiliate Marketing https://getlasso.co/lasso-plugin/	Analytics		54
	Google Domains https://getlasso.co/google-domains-link/	Hosting		0
	Google Search Console https://getlasso.co/google-search-console/	Analytics		0
	Google Analytics https://getlasso.co/google/	Analytics		0
	1Password https://getlasso.co/1password-link/	Password Management		1 

It also has:

- One-click plugin import (so you can import your affiliate links from other plugins like Pretty Links or Thirsty Affiliates)
- Link cloaking so your URLs look “pretty”
- Full Amazon integration and automatically updates Amazon product info every 24 hours

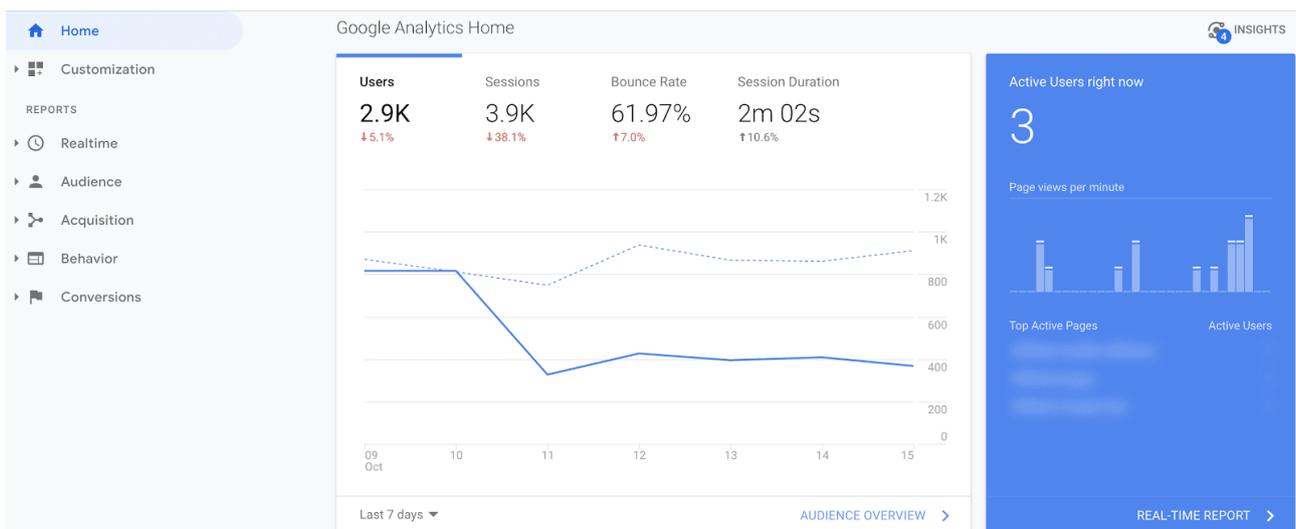
One of the things we've learned from our customers is how they're relying less on Amazon's affiliate program, creating alternative income streams, and finding new affiliate link opportunities.

Lasso is made by affiliates and comes with a free 14-day trial, which you can sign up for [here](#).

#2. Google Analytics

Google Analytics has a fantastic suite of free tools that lets you better understand your customers. It's perhaps, the BEST analytics tool you'll use, considering the exhaustive list of features it performs.

You're also leveraging Google's unique insights and capabilities, making it an invaluable part of your toolbox.



You can see data sets from both websites and apps. The amount you can collect using it is colossal and includes:

- Which websites send you the most traffic
- Where your website traffic comes from (i.e., Google, Bing, YouTube, etc.)
- Which blog content is popular with your readers
- How many visitors your website receives
- Which of your website pages converts best
- Ways to improve page speed

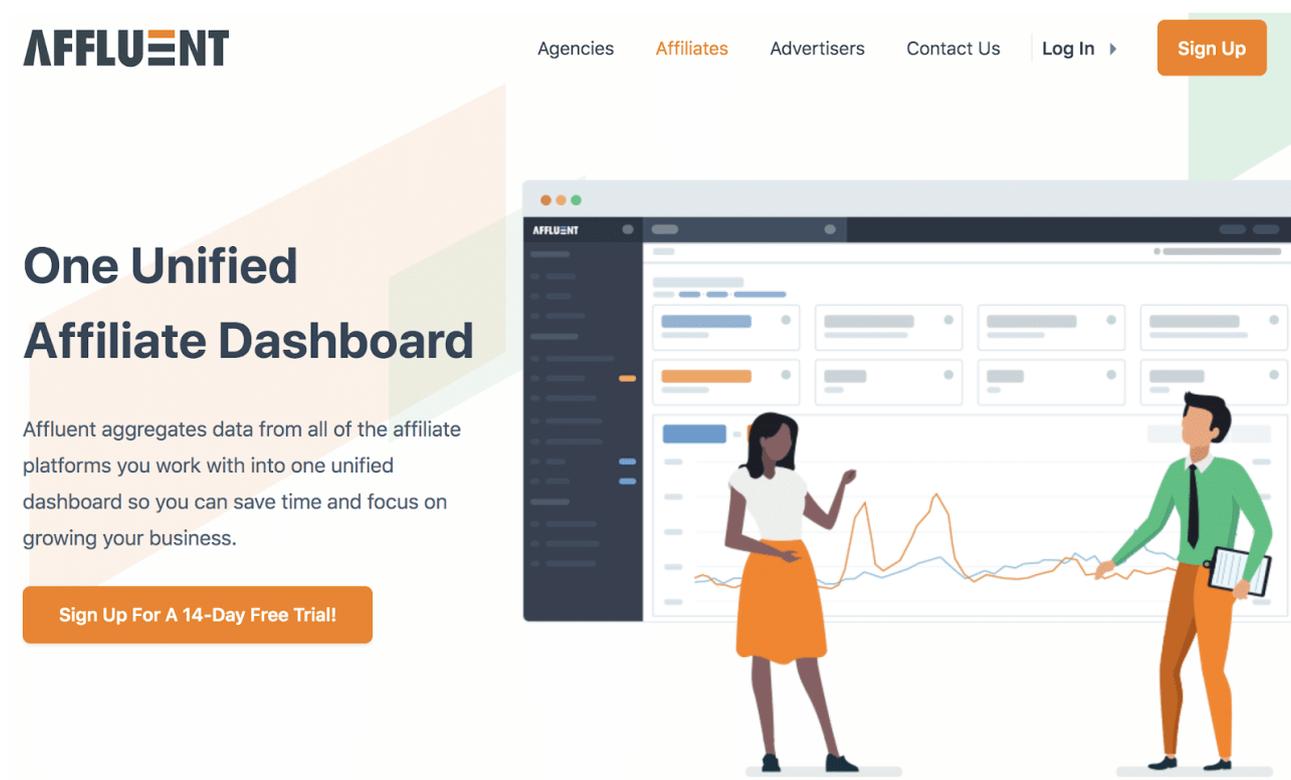
- Whether your website is mobile-friendly

If you're a large enterprise, consider Google's paid version, Analytics 360.

You can talk to Google's sales team and create a custom business plan which gains access to even more insights than you'd otherwise acquire through the free version.

#3. Affluent

Affluent aggregates the data of all of your affiliate platforms into a single dashboard. It makes it tons easier to track conversions and revenue.



The image is a promotional graphic for Affluent. At the top left is the Affluent logo. To the right is a navigation menu with links for 'Agencies', 'Affiliates' (highlighted in orange), 'Advertisers', 'Contact Us', 'Log In', and a 'Sign Up' button. Below the navigation is a large illustration of a computer monitor displaying a dashboard with various charts and data points. In front of the monitor, a woman in a white top and orange skirt and a man in a green shirt and orange pants are looking at the screen. The man is holding a clipboard. To the left of the monitor, the text reads 'One Unified Affiliate Dashboard' and 'Affluent aggregates data from all of the affiliate platforms you work with into one unified dashboard so you can save time and focus on growing your business.' Below this text is a 'Sign Up For A 14-Day Free Trial!' button.

We use this tool to connect to affiliate networks like Impact, Commission Junction, Flex Offers, and Share A Sale to pull our conversion data into a single dashboard.

It starts at \$35/month, and we use it to keep a pulse on our earnings across all platforms we're a member of.

You can organize your data to make sense for you, which can be by an account manager, vertical, or product - and check performance with only a few clicks.

#4. Ahrefs

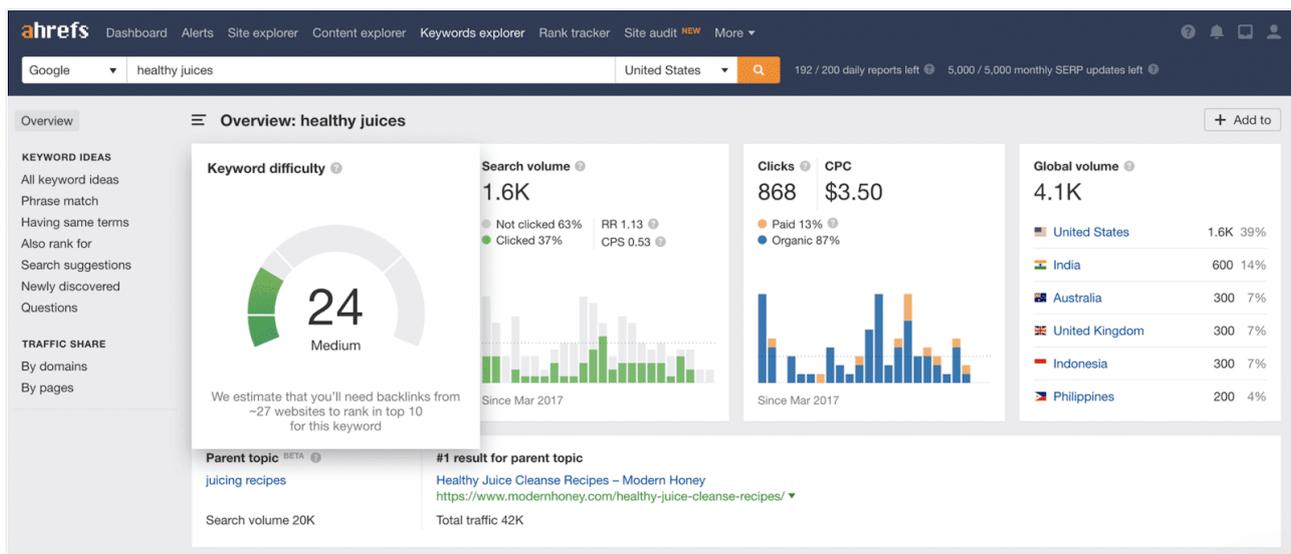
Ahrefs started as a backlink analysis tool, but it has added features to the platform over the years, including keyword research, rank tracking, and competitor analysis.

Its extensive list of tutorials covers every aspect of how users can benefit from its features in great detail.

Here are a few things you can do with Ahrefs...

Keyword Explorer helps find keyword ideas.

It provides traffic insights, search volume, click metrics (valuable for comparing a keyword's search volume against the number of times a person clicked through), its CPC (shows the amount advertisers are bidding on a keyword; the higher the amount, the stronger the buyer intent).



Once you get the keyword data from Ahrefs, enter the same keyword into Lasso, and it will show you all of the places across your site where that keyword displays; then monetize it.

Site Explorer lets you analyze a competitor's website.

From there, you can see its backlink profile (and the websites linking to it for a list of link-building opportunities in your market), its top pages, and see which organic keywords they're ranking for.

If you're running ad campaigns, you can see which keywords your competition paid for using the "paid search" function.

The above only scratches the surface of what Ahrefs does. We use it extensively to help run our three affiliate sites.

#5. Clearscope

Clearscope helps drive more organic traffic to your site through SEO content optimization (i.e., it allows Google to help people find your site easier).

It tells you what phrases to target based on keywords people are already searching for and suggests related keywords for a given search term. It breaks down existing posts further into readability scores, word count, and content type.

Clearscope also has a Google doc add-on and a WordPress plugin for on-page, real-time optimizations.

Its interface is user-friendly; all you need to do is:

- Type a keyword phrase into its search bar, run a report, and it reveals all relevant keywords, top competitor content, and how they rank

clearscope [Run reports](#) Keyword search Report history Account Support

[Click here to run reports](#) **affiliate marketing tools** Share Optimize
google.com · English · run 3 days ago by you · Google Docs

Overview Keyword search Relevant terms Competitors [See all competing content](#)

Grade summary

	Content grade	Word count	Readability
Your content	-	0	-
Typical top 10	B+	4,080	10-12th grade
Typical 11-30	C+	2,520	10-12th grade

Optimize content →

Search volume

This query averages **260** monthly searches.

[See all related keywords](#)

Top competitor content

- 59+ BEST Affiliate Marketing Tools (Complete List For 2020) A-
<https://khrisdigital.com/affiliate-marketing-to-...>
en · article
- 30+ Best Affiliate Marketing Tools and Resources of 2020 - Cloudways A-
<https://www.cloudways.com/blog/affiliate-ma...>
en · article
- 31 Best Affiliate Marketing Tools Of 2020 (Free & Paid Options) A-
<https://www.authorityhacker.com/affiliate-ma...>
en · article

[View all →](#)

Relevant terms

- affiliate marketers
affiliate marketer
- wordpress
- affiliate marketing tools
affiliate marketing tool, affiliate-marketing-tools
- social media
social-media
- plugin
plugins, plug-in

[View all →](#)

Page types

article is the most common page type result for this query

■ article (97%) ■ other (3%)

Content type displays here

We use it to write every blog post.

100% Normal text Arial 11

You can organize your data in the way that makes sense for you which can be by account manager, vertical, or product - *and check performance with only a couple of clicks.*

Seo Tools

Having a fundamental understanding of SEO best practices helps when creating campaigns or determining your content marketing strategy.

Sometimes it helps to have an SEO tool under your belt to gain a deeper insight into which keywords to target, CPCs, and designing your link-building approach.

Ahrefs

We use Ahrefs extensively to help run our three affiliate sites. They started as a backlink analysis tool, but over the years, has added features to include keyword research, rank tracking, and competitor analysis.

Its extensive list of tutorials cover in great detail every aspect of how users can benefit from all of its features.

A few of their tools and how they can help:

Clearscope

[Back](#) [Open in Clearscope](#)

affiliate marketing tools
google.com · English

content grade: A++
word count: 6,052
readability: 8-9th grade

Highlight Up-to-date

70 terms by: Importance

- affiliate marketers heading
Typical: 2-6
- wordpress heading
Typical: 3-9
- affiliate marketing tools heading
Typical: 4-10
- optimize heading
Typical: 1-3

clearscope Support

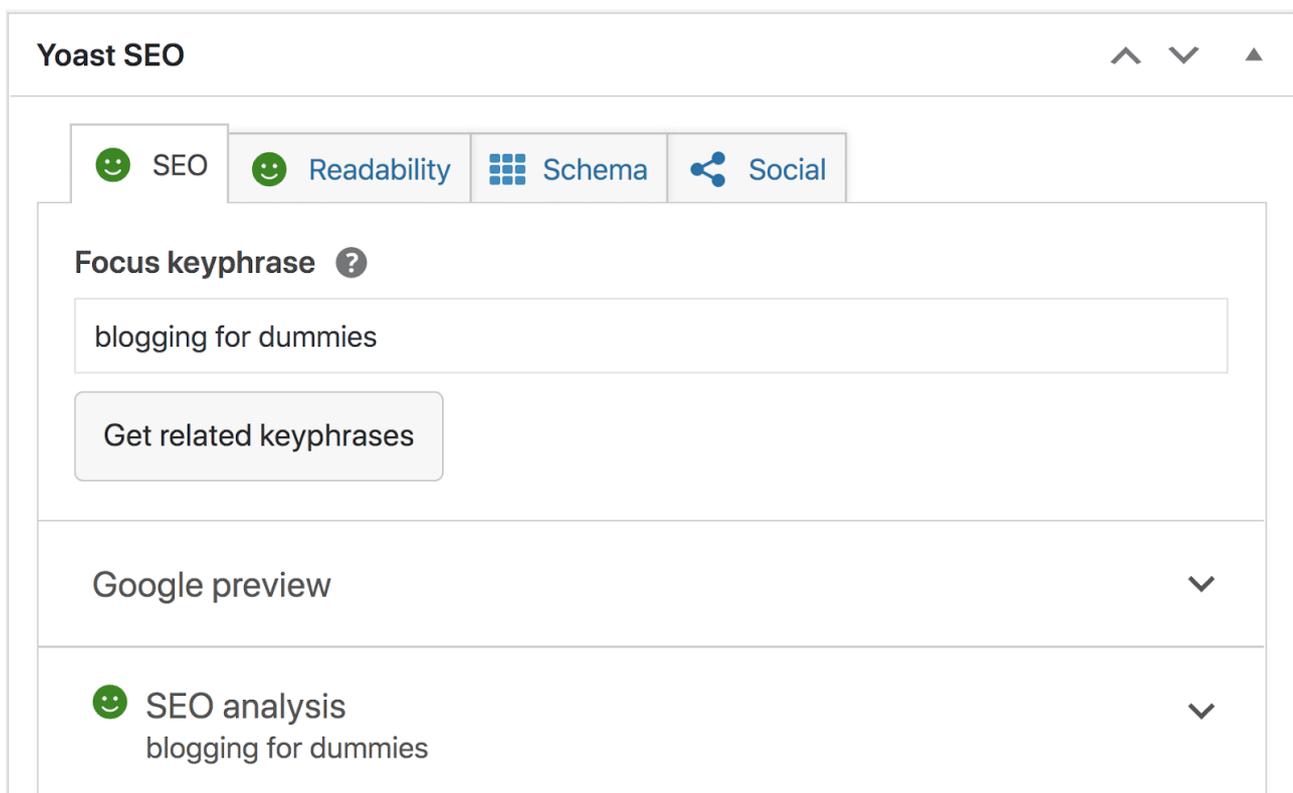
Above is how it displays when using the Google doc add-on.

When you toggle the “highlight” to green, it highlights all related keywords in your text. Clearscope has proven invaluable in deciding what to create and for its help with our content marketing efforts.

If you rely heavily on organic traffic for affiliate income (instead of paid traffic), a tool like Clearscope will help you make informed decisions.

#6. Yoast SEO

Yoast is a WordPress plugin that helps your site with both its technical and on-page SEO. Simply put: it helps you create SEO-friendly posts and pages.



It displays your on-page metrics, readability, schema markup, and gives you a preview of how your post will show on social media (upgrade required for the social feature).

It optimizes your site on many levels and performs tasks including:

- Making sure your site has canonical URLs to avoid duplicate content
- noindex/nofollow options for every page
- Added schema.org data, so search engines know what your page is about
- And much more

Much of my experience has been from a blogger's perspective, but on a post level, Yoast tells you:

- When your headlines and meta descriptions are too long
- Whether you've used your keyword phrase enough (this metric is an estimation based on other top-ranking posts and the number of times those posts used that keyword)
- If your images have alt attributes
- If you've used internal and outbound (external) links
- Whether your keyword phrase is in the slug

Analysis results

^ Problems (3)

- [Keyphrase in introduction](#): Your keyphrase or its synonyms do not appear in the first paragraph. [Make sure the topic is clear immediately.](#)
- [Keyphrase density](#): The focus keyphrase was found 4 times. That's less than the recommended minimum of 11 times for a text of this length. [Focus on your keyphrase!](#)
- [Keyphrase in subheading](#): [Use more keyphrases or synonyms in your H2 and H3 subheadings!](#)



^ Good results (11)

- [Outbound links](#): Good job!
- [Internal links](#): There are both nofollowed and normal internal links on this page. Good job!
- [Keyphrase length](#): Good job!
- [Keyphrase in meta description](#): Keyphrase or synonym appear in the meta description. Well done!

Monitoring (and understanding) these data points can boost your post's on-page SEO and improve organic traffic.

Yoast does say that using their plugin won't automatically drive traffic to your site as there are many other factors at play, but paying attention to these stats does help your chances.

We use Yoast in tandem with Clearscope to give us more detailed info when creating content.

#7. Cloudflare

Cloudflare is one of the largest operating networks on the web and created the edge network. An edge network acts as a bridge between your computer and a server and brings the content and services closest to you, so you get them faster.



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A global network built for the cloud

Cloudflare is a global network designed to make everything you connect to the Internet secure, private, fast, and reliable.

- Secure your websites, APIs, and Internet applications.
- Protect corporate networks, employees, and devices.
- Write and deploy code that runs on the network edge.

[Learn More](#)



Perhaps 99% of site owners would benefit from using Cloudflare.

And if you're a WordPress user, Cloudflare released its Automatic Platform Optimization service, which saw a 72% reduction in Time To First Byte (TTFB) and decreased slowness caused by typical issues like shared hosting congestion and erratic plugins.

Simply put: your site visitors see content even quicker than before via enhanced delivery of website resources.

You can install Cloudflare on your WordPress site like you would any other plugin. Then, authenticate it so it'll talk to Cloudflare (learn how to have your WordPress site talk to Cloudflare [here](#)).

Cloudflare offers its APO service for \$5 a month.

#8. Grammarly

Grammarly features both a free and paid version of its writing app. You can get the Chrome extension for free, and it will check your grammar, punctuation, and spelling across platforms from LinkedIn to Slack to Twitter.

You also have the option to upgrade to Premium or Business. Our team uses the Premium plan, and I particularly like how it divides your writing into different "buckets."

For example, when writing, your screen will have a sidebar appearing to the right of your screen split into four categories:

- Correctness
- Clarity
- Engagement
- Delivery

The screenshot displays a writing assistant interface. On the left, a document titled 'Untitled document' contains text about 'rich people' and 'poor people' mindsets. The central panel, titled 'All alerts', shows a 'CONCISENESS' alert for the phrase 'Now, it's', suggesting the correction 'It's'. Below this are four suggestions to replace 'mindset' with a synonym. The right sidebar shows an 'Overall score' of 99, 'Goals' for clarity, engagement, delivery, and style, and a list of alerts including 'Correctness' (3 alerts), 'Clarity' (Very clear), 'Engagement' (Very engaging), 'Delivery' (Just right), and 'Style guide' (All good).

This feature helps when you're struggling to make your content more engaging or improve its readability. It also runs a plagiarism check that you can access by clicking the icon at your screen's bottom.

Section II:

Lasso's Content Writing Checklist

Here's what our team uses when writing every post on the Lasso blog. You're less likely to forget something with a checklist! It also ensures every post is high-quality and provides a good user experience for the reader.

The Checklist:

- Write headline
- Write meta description
- Include SEO-friendly URL
- Include "Focus Keyword" for Yoast (or an alternative on-page SEO WordPress plugin like Rank Math)
- On-page SEO analysis score is "Good"
- Every image includes Alt Text
- Scored 99 on Grammarly (or grammar tool of choice)
- Scored A+ in Clearscope (or content optimization tool of choice - Google "Clearscope alternatives" for ideas)
- Includes 2-3 block quotes
- Includes 2-3 call-out boxes (a call-out box is another way to break up your blog's text to make it more readable)

Other places to look are industry-specific third-party websites.

For example, if you compare two similar products in the software niche, you could check out G2.com or Capterra. If you're in the travel industry, try TripAdvisor or Booking.com.



Sidenote: Review sites are goldmines of information. You'll find customers talking candidly on a range of topics from functionality to pricing to customer support.

For example, if you were writing a comparison post about Hootsuite and Sprout Social, you could start by heading to their features, pricing, and 'contact us' pages.

- Includes 5-10 keyword-rich internal links

- Includes one keyword-rich external link to a high-quality site
- Passes the Skim Test (passing the skim test is when you “skim” or scroll down your post to test if enough items catch your eye. If you encounter a wall of text or white space, consider adding another element to make your content “pop” (this could be a blockquote, call-out box, internal link, video, or something else))

**Section III:
Introductions &
Conclusions**

Introductions

Knowing how to write an introduction is one of the most powerful weapons to have in your writing toolkit. It hooks readers, compels them to keep reading, and pulls them down the page.

So, aside from the intros mentioned throughout this PDF, here are three more formulas you can use when staring down the blank page.

1). Problem. Solution. Preview. (PSP)

The PSP is a simple 3-part zinger to get the ball rolling.

1. Address the problem
2. Provide the solution
3. Preview what the post is about

For example:

*Trying to increase your website's reader engagement while boosting conversions? **(Problem)** Trigger words should fix that **(Solution)**. This post explains what they are, why they're essential, and 31 examples you can use immediately **(Preview)**.*

*Let's go **(Call-to-action)**.*

Tip: Mention the keyword phrase in your intro where it makes sense. For example, the above introduction was taken from our post about trigger words, so including it as the “solution” made sense.

2). Definition. Preview. Action

Another 3-part series where you:

1. Define what the topic is
2. Preview what the post is about
3. Give a call-to-action

Here's an example from Joshua Hardwick at Ahrefs.com:

*Organic search refers to the non-paid search results from a search engine. **(Definition)**. Advertisers can't buy or influence these results; they're the ones*

the search engine deems most relevant to the user's search query
(Definition Expanded).

In this guide, we'll cover:

- Types of organic search results
- Why organic search is important
- How to check and monitor organic search rankings **(Preview)**

Let's get to it **(Action).**

3). Desire. Benefit. Solution. Preview. Action (DBSPA)

Yes, the acronym is crazy, but this one works like a charm for any niche. It goes like this:

Everybody wants to **(Get/Do/Be Desirable thing)** because **(Desirable thing)** leads to **(Benefit)**. But to do it, you need **(Solution)**. In this post, you'll learn ____, ____, and ____ **(Preview)**.

For example:

*Everybody wants to make a lot of money **(Desire)** because making a lot of money leads to financial freedom **(Benefit)**. But to do it, you need to find a high-paying job **(Solution)**.*

*In this post, you'll learn where to look, the best gigs that don't require a degree, and mistakes to avoid **(Preview)**. Keep reading **(Action)** so you never have to worry about living paycheck-to-paycheck again **(Bonus: Add a benefit or pain point here. This example includes the pain point of living check-to-check)**.*

4. The Perfect Intro Formula

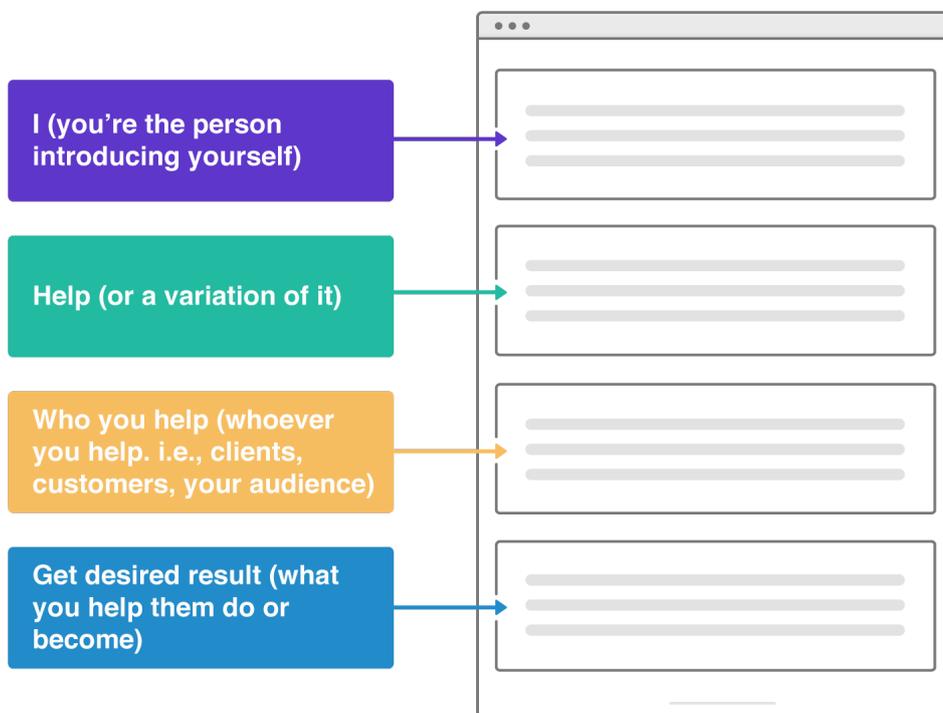
Clay Hebert is a Keynote Speaker and Marketing Strategist who distilled what he found to be the base components of a perfect intro into four parts.

They are:

- I (you're the person introducing yourself)
- Help (or a variation of it)
- Who you help (whoever you help. i.e., clients, customers, your audience)

- Get desired result (what you help them do or become)

The Perfect Intro Formula



For example, “I help clients optimize their emails so they can sell more during their launches.”

Here’s how you can model this for your product descriptions:

- First, replace “I” with whatever your product is.

For example, if you’re an Active Campaign affiliate, part of your product description could say:

Active Campaign helps you optimize your emails, so you sell more during launches.

Conclusions

Writing intros is crucial for engaging your readers quickly. However, it's always a good idea to end your articles on a good note, give your reader a sense of completion, and tell them what to do next.

So here are a few ways to button your articles.

1). Restate Your Intro In Reverse (DBSPA Backwards)

Take what you just wrote in the Desire Benefit Solution Preview Action (DBSPA) intro and write in reverse.

Only now it's a summary of what your article was about.

It won't be word-for-word, but you can see how it resembles what I wrote in the intro with a bit of reshuffling.

For example:

In this post, you learned where to look for a high-paying job, gigs that don't require a degree, and mistakes to avoid. Finding a job that pays well isn't impossible, but it'll take some hustle.

However, everybody wants financial freedom, and making a lot of money is the way to get there. So, by implementing the steps written here, you'll be on your way.

2). The "I Hope" Formula

The "I hope" method concludes your post by telling them you hope they found your article informative and worth their time.

Then, it pivots into giving props to something you read, listened to, or saw about the subject which served as the catalyst for writing the post in the first place. Finally, it offers a CTA.

For example:

I hope this article provided you with good ideas on [keyword phrase]. It should serve as a roadmap for learning more about the topic. This article would have been impossible to write if it weren't for:

- *book/film/podcast/blog post/person that inspired you*

*Was there anything I missed about **[keyword phrase]**? Let me know on **[social media of choice CTA]**.*

3). The Self-Promo

Restate your intro and main point. Then, transition to a CTA, inviting your visitors to read another piece of your content and link to it.

Let's steal from our Problem Solution Preview intro from earlier.

For example:

Trigger words should help boost your website's engagement and conversions. This post explained what they are, why they're important, and listed examples you can start using today.

*If you found it helpful, be sure to check out this **<blog post/guide/course link>** for an in-depth look at the topic.*

Alternative ending:

*If you found it helpful, be sure to check out this **<blog post/guide/course link>** for more tips on using trigger words **[keyword phrase]** in your writing.*