INTRODUCTION TO PROBLEM SOLVING CONTENT

Reviews are fantastic for making sales to people who already know they want to buy something.

The only problem is that there *aren't that many* of these super-keen buyers around. There are certainly enough to make some nice money… but what if you want *more?*

That's where this second type of content comes in.

Problem Solving content is for the people who *know they have a problem, but they're not thinking of buying anything… yet.*

The goal of this kind of content is to attract the people with "problems" to your website, and then gently introduce them to the idea of buying something to help with their problem.

In this chapter we're going to cover quite a lot of ground. We're going to talk about:

1. How to find "problem" topics the right way
2. Keyword research and competition analysis to find which problems you have a better shot at ranking well for in the search engines.
3. How to create your problem solving articles.

So what's a "problem"?

That sounds like a daft question, but it's actually quite a tricky one. For the purposes of this chapter, I'm going to craft a whole new definition of this word:

A "problem" is a question, concern or difficulty that is serious enough that someone would spend money to solve it.

Here are some examples off the top of my head:

"PROBLEMS"

- How to stop my dog barking at people
- How to talk to girls in bars
- Cures for anxiety
- Lose weight without exercising
- Toddler won't stay in bed
- I keep waking up in the middle of the night
- How to make money on Amazon
- How to sell your own house

NOT "PROBLEMS"

- When to use practice vs practise
- Weather forecast San Francisco
- Game Of Thrones episode guide
- Why is there ice in the urinal?
- Bus schedule Boston to New Haven
- Never gonna give you up lyrics
- Pub quizzes in Christchurch
- Success kid meme generator

Do you see the difference?

I'm pretty unlikely to pay money for any of the things in the "not problems" list. They're all either really unimportant, or the information is readily available on the internet for free. Also, not knowing the lyrics to "*Never Gonna Give You Up*" isn't exactly impacting on my quality of life.

For the stuff in the "Problems" list, I might find snippets of advice for free on the internet, but there's no guarantee that the information will be good or trustworthy.

These are all issues that are having a pretty big impact on my life, so I'm inclined to look for a really trustworthy, reputable source of information.

If that costs me a few bucks… I'd probably be happy to spend it.

And as an affiliate, those are the kinds of people you want to attract to your website: People who *would be prepared to spend money*.

These are the kinds of people who will buy the affiliate products you're promoting.

So how do you find out what "problems" people are having? Keep reading and I'll show you the RIGHT way and the WRONG way to do it.

THE WRONG WAY TO FIND "PROBLEMS"

The problem with problems is that there's a *right way* and a *wrong way* to figure out which problems you should be focusing on (and creating content around) on your website if you want to attract those people who will buy.

If you do it the *wrong way* you might end up with a bunch of content that *still* doesn't make you any money.

Here's how most people do it:

1. They use a keyword tool to find keywords related to their niche/topic. They look for keywords where there is low competition and it *seems* like someone has a *"really big problem"*.
2. They write an article or create some other kind of content that discusses this problem.
3. They find an affiliate product that is at least vaguely related to this problem, and work into their article a little promotion for this product.
4. .... PROFIT! (hopefully)

So what's wrong with this strategy?

Well, if you do it this way there's a good chance you'll end up meeting these three bad boys:

Bad boy #1: Problem/product mismatch:

This is one of the targeting problems we talked about earlier.

You might find a really great looking keyword that seems like a big problem, and you might create some really great article about this problem, but then you might discover that there isn't actually really a very good affiliate product that solves this problem.

Sure, there might be an affiliate product that does an *okaaaaaaay* job of solving the problem, but it might not be specifically designed for this problem.

(Or it might actually be *really good* for this problem, but the merchant might just do a crap job of explaining that on their sales page.)

The result? You'll attract people with problems, sure. You'll probably also find that quite a few people click on your affiliate links to check out the product you say will solve their problem.
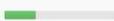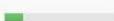
But you won't make anywhere near as many sales as you'd expect, because the product isn't really tailored to these people.

It doesn't really solve their problem, so they don't buy it, and you don't make any money.

Bad boy #2: Low buyer intent:

Just because a problem seems to you like it's pretty big, this doesn't mean that these people will be easily convinced to buy something. You could end up targeting problems where people just don't tend to buy.

For instance, you might find lots of keywords related to puppy training problems. People want to know how to train their puppy! Cute!

KEYWORD	LOCAL VOLUME	CPC	COMPETITION
how to stop a puppy from biting	3,600.00	$0.61	31%
how to stop puppy from biting	2,400.00	$0.66	25%
how to stop your puppy from biting	720.00	$1.23	27%
how to stop my puppy from biting	390.00	$0.71	16%

Loads of people searching for ways to stop their puppy from biting. Silly little bitey puppies!
But do people with puppy problems tend to buy dog training guides?

Not so much, it turns out.

Puppy behavior problems aren't actually really big problems yet. Puppies are small. People expect puppies to do weird (cute!) things. They don't necessarily feel like they need to pay for a solution to the problem.

So you might create loads of content about training puppies because you see this is what people are searching for… but you might be surprised at how few sales you make of the dog training book you mention in your articles.

BUT! If you were to start targeting problems with bigger dogs… things change. You might see fewer people searching for these problem keywords, but you can bet that their real world problem is *much* bigger (literally) than those guys with the puppy.

Think about "how to stop puppy biting" vs "how to stop pitbull biting". Who has the bigger problem there? And who is more likely to buy a book that promises to show you *"how to stop a dog biting, once and for all"?*

The moral here is that not all problems are created equal. Some are more likely to translate into affiliate sales than others. So you need to be able to tell the difference.

how to stop dog from eating poop	1,000.00	$0.76	▬▬▬	97%
how to stop a dog from chewing	880.00	$1	▪	15%
how to stop dogs from eating poop	720.00	$0.79	▬▬▬	100%
how to stop a dog from eating poop	720.00	$0.78	▬▬▬	98%
stop dog from eating poop	720.00	$0.66	▬▬▬	95%

Turns out that dogs eating poop is quite a big problem. It doesn't get as many people searching for it as the "stop puppy biting" topic, but take a look at those red bars on the right: This is how much competition there is for paid ads in Google.

Bad boy #3: Missing the good problems

Lastly, if you start your keyword search with the keyword research tool there's a good chance you'll simply miss out on finding the really good problem keywords.

A keyword tool usually works by finding keywords related to the "seed keyword" you enter into the tool. So if you enter "dog training", it'll find keywords it thinks are related to "dog training".

...But depending on which keyword tool you're using, you might miss out on finding keywords that aren't immediately related to the "seed" keyword you've entered.

KEYWORD	LOCAL VOLUME
dog obedience training	6,600.00
in home dog training	720.00
dog obedience training near me	590.00
american bulldog training	390.00
obedience dog training	390.00
guide dog training	320.00
dog obedience training classes	320.00

AffiloTools turns up a bunch of "dog training" keywords, but I'm not seeing any poop-eating yet…

Searches related to dog training

dog training **tips**   dog training **videos**
puppy training   dog **toilet** training
dog training **courses**   dog training **tricks**
dog training **advice**   dog training **collars**

Google's "related searches" down the bottom of the search results doesn't seem to know about the pressing issue of poop-eating either.

Now, I don't want to get distracted by a discussion of *"which keyword tool is best?"* at this stage. Some keyword tools will be better than others at sniffing out more broadly related terms, but this isn't the point I'm trying to make.

What I'm saying is that the keyword tool shouldn't be your starting point when looking for keywords. You should only come to the keyword tool when you've already got an idea of a keyword (problem) you'd like to target.

So how *do* you find all the profitable problems to target? For this you need to step away from your keyword research tool, and look somewhere else…

FINDING "PROBLEMS" THE RIGHT WAY

So we've looked at the wrong way to find "problems" for your website that will attract the kinds of people who will buy. So what's the better way to zero in on those "problems" that will attract the *real*buyers?

I'm going to give you two ways: An easy way, and a slightly harder way.

The *easy* right way

The first thing you should do is get in touch with the affiliate program managers for the products you're promoting and simply *ask* them who their target audience is, and what their main problems are.

Ask them what kinds of people typically buy their products.

See what the affiliate manager says. Sometimes they're a fountain of knowledge, and other times they won't have a clue. But it's a good place to start.

Regardless of what your affiliate manager says (or doesn't say), you should supplement this with your own research. This is a very valuable skill to learn, but it's slightly less straightforward, and requires a little creative thinking...

The *slightly harder* right way

This method of finding the right "problems" to target involves looking at the sales material of the products you're promoting.

You can get some really big (flashing neon light) clues to the serious problems their customers are having by looking at the promises the merchant is making in their sales copy.

Check out this piece of sales copy. I've highlighted the "problems" in yellow. Each one of these yellow problems could be a good topic for your website.

A piece of sales copy from Supreme Self Confidence by MeetYourSweet.com. Some "problem hints" highlighted in yellow. Use these as a starting point for your problem research.

Why is this way of finding problems so much better than just digging through keyword search volumes?

Here's my logic:

1. You will have chosen to promote this product because it looks like it sells well. (If you haven't chosen what you're going to promote yet, or you don't know if you've done it right, go back to where we talk about how to do that.)
2. The fact that it sells well means that the sales page, sales material and sales funnel in general must work pretty well: It must make the product sound pretty exciting and compelling, so people want to buy it.
3. What makes a product exciting and compelling? When it seems to offer you something you want, or promises to solve a problem you have. This is why you'll buy it.
4. How does a potential customer know that the product will give them something they want or solve a problem they have? Probably because it's mentioned *right there in the sales material.*

So to piece it all together for you… if you want to know what problems people are having that will lead them to be interested in buying the product you're promoting… your first stop should be the sales material for that product.

You can get ideas from the sales copy which you can then take to your keyword research tool. We're just flipping things around!

Let's take another look at the sales copy from above. It may seem like a bunch of random promises, but usually each of these promises is targeted at a specific problem people are having.

✓ You'll soon be able to **confidently start a conversation** with any woman that you've never met before.

✓ A simple, but powerful technique to *silence your mind* when it is in a state of worry.

✓ How to make decisions confidently, without constantly changing your mind... *And how to handle the consequences of the decisions that you make*, whether they turn out to be right or wrong. This is not only powerful information for relationship and dating situations, but is invaluable for your decision making skills in business also.

✓ **How to demonstrate leadership** and feel comfortable in the decisions that you make (a very attractive quality!)

✓ Sometimes your mind will deceive you into believing that she is right for you, when your inner self (and your friends) know that she's wrong for you... use this simple test to find out!

✓ *Do you allow other people to push your buttons and make you react in a negative way?* It's time that you put a stop to this... for good! You'll learn from me how to take control of yourself and your life. This will have an INSTANT impact on how attractive you are to all women.

✓ **A simple plan for figuring out what kind of person, physically and emotionally is right for you.**

Just based on this little snippet of sales copy, I already have a bunch of ideas for "problems" that this product solves. I would start looking for keywords around these topics:

1. **How to start a conversation with women / how to talk to women**
2. **How to stop worrying / stop being anxious**
3. **How to make decisions / get decision making skills**
4. **How to build leadership / demonstrate leadership / be a leader**
5. **How to know if she is right for me / know what kind of person is right for me**
6. **How to stop reacting negatively / anger management (maybe?)**

See how that works? I could create a piece of content on each of these topics, and I could be fairly confident that people reading my content would be interested in buying this product, since the product itself is talking about their *exact* problems.

(That's *assuming* we can get visitors to these articles. We'll look at how to figure out if a topic is "doable" by looking at keywords and competition later in this chapter.)

Note that *these topics above may not be your exact final topics.* They're just our starting point.

Also note that **just because a problem is mentioned on the sales page, it doesn't mean it'll necessarily be a suitable topic for your website.** *The topic still needs to fit with your niche, subniche, angle, and the general vibe of your site.*

*For instance, if you've chosen to create a website around "**online dating tips for women**", you probably wouldn't create an article around "**how to save your marriage**", even if it's mentioned in the sales copy of a product you're promoting. It's just not something a chick looking for online dating tips is going to be interested in.*

If you focus so much on finding good keywords that you lose sight of your main topic, it can result in [patchwork content](), which I'll talk about later in this guide. It's bad. So stay focused!

The next step is to find the exact keywords you're going to target. You want to find keywords and topics where there is a lot of interest, but where it's also not *sooooo* competitive that you don't stand a chance. Keep reading to see how to do that.

"PROBLEM SOLVING" KEYWORD RESEARCH

Right. Here's how this works.

I'm going to show you how to find keywords to target using an example from the *Language Of Desire* sales copy.

You're going to see how to look at something mentioned in the sales copy, and turn it into a topic/keyword that you can build content around on your website.

This example is from the part of the sales copy where it's listing all the things you "get" in the product. This is just ONE promise made in this sales copy… there are loads more!
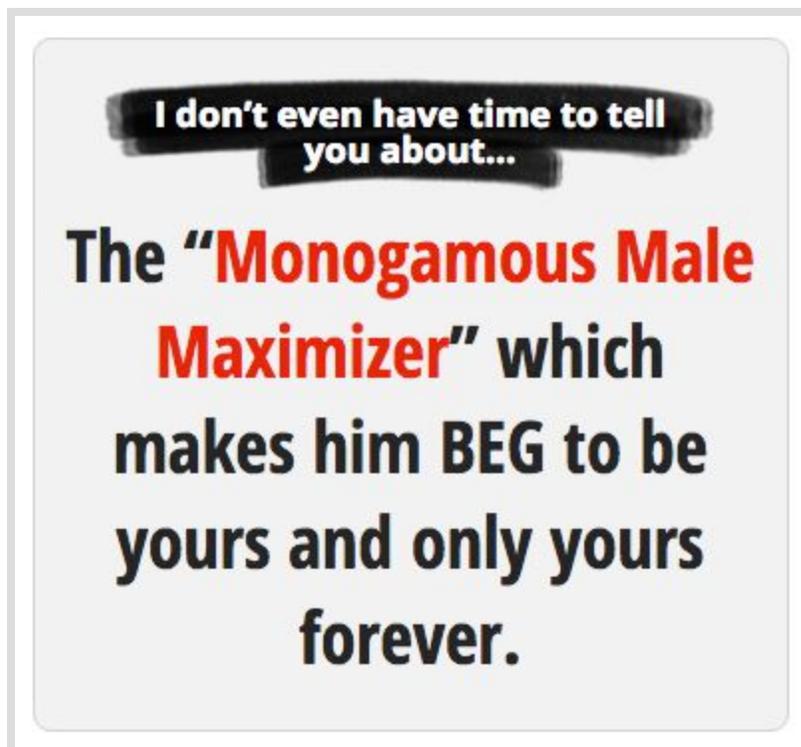
So that's the "promise" in the sales copy. My goal here is to find out two things:

1. **For this promise to be super exciting to someone, what sort of problem are they probably having?**

2. **AND what is this person searching for in the search engines when they want to solve this problem?**

Here's how I'd tackle those two steps:

Step 1: Finding the problem

What problem is this woman (I assume the audience is female) having?

My guess is that this is a woman who wants a man to be monogamous with her (I got that from the "monogamous male maximizer"). So that's the easy part.

But why is this an important thing to her right now?

Depending on your relationship experiences, that might be obvious to you! But in case it's not, one thing I like to do is find the *opposite* of what the sales copy is promising. This often helps me figure out what the real problem is.

What's the opposite of a guy who is *"begging to be yours and only yours forever?"* (This is what it says in the sales copy.)

My guess is that it's probably a guy who couldn't really care less about the relationship. A guy who might have a wandering eye. A guy who isn't committed. A guy who is going to leave you for someone else.

I think that's the problem this product is promising to solve: The problem of loving a guy who isn't committed and/or is looking at other women and/or isn't really serious about this relationship.

Ok, now for step 2…

Step 2: Brainstorm: What would this person search for?

Once you have an idea of the problem, you need to figure out what someone would search for if they were trying to figure out how to solve that problem.

This requires a little bit of brainstorming, and a little bit of your own intuition. You need to put yourself in the mindset of your audience.

Personally, if I were a woman concerned that my partner was drifting away from me, worried that he wasn't serious and scared that he might be checking out other women, I'd probably search for something like…

- "how to make him commit"
- "boyfriend/husband is not attracted to me anymore"
- "stop boyfriend/husband being unfaithful"
- "boyfriend/husband attracted to other women"

So that's a good place to start.

Step 3: Expand ideas using keyword tools

Once you've got your initial ideas, it's time to hone in on what people are *actually* searching for.

You can expand your list of ideas using Google's "related searches" tool: Plug each of your ideas into Google one at a time, and then scroll to the bottom of the search results page.

They'll give you a list of "related searches", connected to this topic.

Not all of these "related searches" are going to be relevant, but it might give you some more clues to what your audience is thinking and how they might say things.

I don't even have time to tell you about...

The "**Monogamous Male Maximizer**" which makes him BEG to be yours and only yours forever.

Searches related to how to make him commit

what makes a man want to commit

how to make him **want a relationship**

how to **get the guy you're dating** to commit

how to make him commit **quickly and easily**

how to **get** him to commit to **marriage**

how to make him commit **without pressure**

how to **get a man** to commit **steve harvey**

how to make him commit **after break up**

You can also use Google Suggest to get more ideas: To do this, look at a Google results page and start typing something into the search box. Google will offer you suggestions based on common searches.

Searches related to stop boyfriend/husband being unfaithful

how to stop a man from cheating again

fear of being cheated on phobia

how to stop thinking your boyfriend is cheating

fear of being cheated on phobia name

how to stop worrying about cheating

i think my boyfriend is cheating on me quiz

is my husband cheating on me or am i paranoid quiz

why am i so paranoid about my boyfriend cheating on me

You won't get a heck of a lot of suggestions this way, so you might try another tool that's really great at finishing your sentences: Ubersuggest.io .

If you enter a few words, it'll give you a bunch of search phrases that basically "finish the sentence". The more popular results will be at the top, followed by a whole heap more suggestions in alphabetical order.

Google   my boyfriend

my boyfriend cheated on me
my boyfriend hates me
my boyfriend is selfish
my boyfriend is insecure

Press Enter to search.
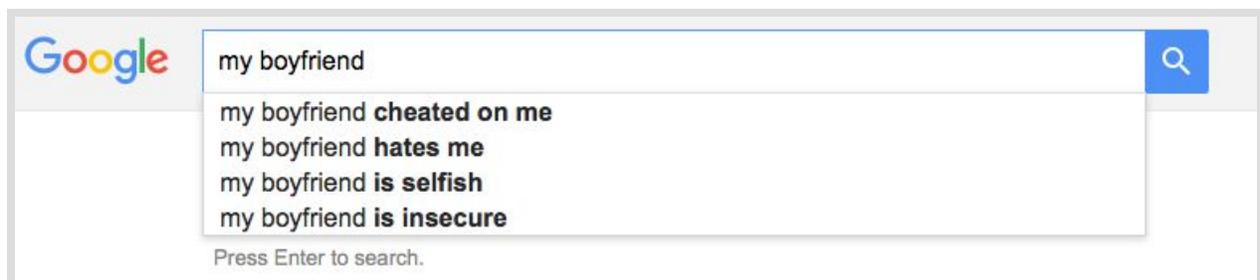
The trick with Ubersuggest is to not enter a full sentence.

In my example I searched for *how to make my boyfriend...*, *my boyfriend doesn't...*, and *how to make him...*, because I wanted to see what Ubersuggest would finish those sentences with.

b
☐ ▼ my boyfriend doesn't believe me
☐ ▼ my boyfriend doesn't buy me gifts
☐ ▼ my boyfriend doesn't buy me things
☐ ▼ my boyfriend doesn't bother with me anymore
☐ ▼ my boyfriend doesn't believe in love
☐ ▼ my boyfriend doesn't believe in feminism
☐ ▼ my boyfriend doesn't believe his cat bullies mine
☐ ▼ my boyfriend doesn't believe in himself
☐ ▼ my boyfriend doesn't brush his tongue
☐ ▼ my boyfriend doesn't believe in engagement rings

Ubersuggest will also reveal some interesting things about people...

Your goal with all these tools is to get a few options for things people might search for when they have this particular problem.

You don't need to build a list of hundreds of subtle keyword variations, (this is very easy to do with Ubersuggest!). Instead aim to collect maybe ten different ways of saying the same problem.

We'll be using these general ideas as "seed" keywords in a keyword tool soon, so the keyword tool will find closely related variations for you.

Once you've got a few different ways of saying the same thing, plug these into your keyword research tool to find *all* the keywords related to these seed keywords. You'll probably end up with quite a big list. Now it's time for the final step: Zeroing in on the *best* keywords.

Step 4: Pick the best keywords based on volume, competition and opportunity

There are a few factors to consider when deciding on a keyword from your big list of keywords.

1. **Search volume:** How many people are searching for this particular phrase? More is better.
2. **Competition:** How strong is the SEO competition out there? Do those sites that are already sitting at the top of the search engine rankings look easy to beat?
3. **Visibility opportunity:** If you got to the top of the search engine rankings, would you be the first and most obvious thing on the page? Or are there paid ads on top of you? Or an answer box? If you're going to be buried under a pile of other distracting things, then you won't get as many clicks as you would normally, so it's important to factor this in.
4. **How valuable is it?** Ignore all other factors for a moment, and just think about what it seems like the searcher is wanting when they search for this keyword. Does it seem like this person *really, **really*** wants the product you're going to promote to them?

    For example, if you were wanting to promote a dog training ebook, who is more likely to buy? Someone searching for *"buy dog training ebook"* or someone searching for *"guide to dog training"*?

    Probably the first one, right? They've said they want to "buy". They've said they're looking for a "book" (as opposed to some online information). So you would say that the *"buy dog training ebook"* keyword is **more valuable** than the other one, because it's more likely to lead to a sale.

    Keep this in mind when choosing between keywords.

How do you measure these things?

- Search volume: You can get an idea of the relative search volumes of your keywords by using a keyword tool like Google's Keyword Planner (free), [SEMrush](#) (paid), [AffiloTools](#) (free), [Traffic Travis](#) (free), [Moz Keyword Explorer](#) (paid), or any other keyword tool that you like.
- Competition: A trickier one. A simple way to measure it is to look at the domain authority (DA) and page authority (PA) of the pages that are currently ranking top in the search engines.

  DA and PA are metrics for measuring the strength of links flowing into the site. The closer it is to 100, the harder that site would be to beat on links alone.

  But authority isn't the only factor contributing to a top ranking: You'll quickly notice that some sites will rank above other sites, even though those other sites have higher DA and PA.That's because other things also come into play when determining rankings, like relevance, user experience, and whether the page answers the searcher's question.

  These are hard things for any tool to measure — it needs a brain to analyse it.
- Visibility opportunity: To get a feel for this, you'd need to search for each keyword and see what shows up in the search results.

  As you do this, create your own way of ranking keywords based on how visible you'd be. You might give a keyword 10/10 if there's nothing else on the page. You might give it an 8/10 if there are two paid ads on top of the top free listing. If there's an answer box you might deduct four points. If there's an answer box and multiple paid ads, you might deduct even more.

  Work out your own scale and then apply it to each of your keywords.

  Note: If you're not living in the same place as your biggest audience (i.e., you don't live in

the U.S) then you might not see the full range of "extra stuff" in the page. You could use a proxy tool to make it look like you're browsing from another location.

- How valuable is it? Again, you need to work on your own scale for this. Give each keyword a rating out of 10, where 10 is the most valuable.

Once you've got all this information for each of your keyword options (and any other alternatives that your keyword tool might have given you), weigh up the metrics and decide which keywords look most promising.

If you like, you can enter all this data into a spreadsheet and set up a formula to automatically calculate the potential for a keyword.

Keyword	Volume	Difficulty	Opportunity	Importance	Potential
how to make him miss you United States - en-US	4.3k-6.5k	22	64	7	83
how to make him commit United States - en-US	501-850	14	100	9	80
how to make him fall in love United States - en-US	2.9k-4.3k	47	100	6	79
how to make him crave you United States - en-US	201-500	13	100	7	77
how to make him commit quickly and easily United States - en-US	201-500	5	100	7	73
how to make him fall in love with you United States - en-US	851-1.7k	47	94	5	72
make him commit United States - en-US	101-200	15	100	7	70

A table of the vital stats for keywords related to my "make him commit" article idea.

To go back to my "make him commit" article: The chart above shows the keywords I've found with the highest potential.

- The "how to make him miss you" keyword has a worse "opportunity" score (meaning there's a bunch of ads or an answer box competing for attention) but the sheer volume of searches makes up for it.
- "How to make him commit" has low "difficulty". It doesn't have as many searches as some other keywords, but I've marked it as having high "importance" (value) to me, because I think these people would be really interested in the product. There are also quite a few keywords very similar to "make him commit" which I would probably also be able to rank for with the same article — which makes up for the relatively low search count.

The "potential" column on the far right of the image above is an overall score based on all the factors. A quick and easy way to spot the best keywords is just to look at this column and find the keywords with the highest potential.

You could create your own chart like this using a spreadsheet, or use a tool like Moz's Keyword Explorer tool. (This is what I've used above.)

If you want to try the Moz tool, at the time of writing this they have a free trial (credit card required) which, if you time it well, should allow you to do most of your keyword research for free. Just remember to cancel before your plan renews, because it's not cheap!

Note: You don't have to be keyword monogamous

Don't tear your hair out if you can't decide between two keywords that are quite similar, like all these keywords related to "making him commit":

- How to make him commit
- Make a man commit

- How to make my man commit to me

Just because you choose one keyword to target, it doesn't mean you're throwing all the other keywords on the garbage heap. If your page ends up ranking well for your chosen keyword, there's a good chance it will also rank well for those other keywords, if they're basically synonymous.

This process is more about checking out the competition. Does it seem like all of the keywords on this topic are simply too tough? Or is there room for you? And is it worth it?

Beyond that, you're simply trying to figure out which of the keywords you love *more* so you can focus on that keyword just a little bit more than the others: You might put it in your page title, for instance. That just gives your site a little bump for that particular keyword.

One final test for a topic: Can you create something better?

If you've found a keyword that looks fantastic, I would throw one final test at it.

Take a look at the pages that are currently ranking on the front page of Google — particularly the one that is ranking at #1. Look at their content and ask yourself: "*Could I create something better?*"

If you don't think there's any way on God's green earth that you could create something better than that… you might want to rethink whether it's worth targeting that keyword.

It's much, *much* easier to shove a page out of the top spot if your content is genuinely better. If your stuff isn't *better*, it's going to be a constant uphill battle to get to the top and stay there.

When you're trying to decide if you can do better, don't just look at whether the page *looks* fancy. Looks aren't everything. Instead, try to look for weaknesses that you could improve on.

Rand Fishkin talks about this in this [WhiteBoard Friday](#). I've paraphrased his checklist of questions he asks himself when deciding if he can beat the stuff that's currently ranking at the top of the search engines:

How relevant are these results? *What is the question being asked by this search query? Are these results answering the question well? Could yours be more relevant?*

What is the user experience like on these results? *Is their website attractive? Can you find what you're looking for easily? Do you need to click around to get what you want? Is the content easy to read? Could you do better on any of these?*

How good is the actual information being provided in the competitors' articles? *Is it detailed enough? Reliable enough? Do they have good sources? Is there enough depth? Could you do better?*

How are the visuals? *Are there attractive and useful images in their content? Diagrams? Graphs? Infographics? Could you do better than the competition?*

What is the quality of the writing like on these other articles? *Is it interesting and engaging? Is it boring as all get-out? Could you do better?*

What's missing from these other pieces of content? *What would make them better? What's stopping them from being truly amazing? And could you do that yourself?*

And I'd add these other things to check

- Can you make something cuter / funnier / with more personality? (So long as this is appropriate for the topic)
- Is anyone using media? Would adding a video/audio help?
- Could you have a better array of supporting/related content? — Being able to lead onto other relevant topics or steps could give you a nudge over a competitor that just has one article on this topic.

If you really don't think you can make anything different to or better than what's currently at the top of the search engines… mark that down as a huge penalty against that keyword.

And once the decision is made?

But if everything looks good and you're happy with that keyword… great. Move onto the next "problem" on the merchant's sales page and start again.

When I'm doing this, I build myself a shortlist of 30-40 "problems" to begin with. I look at the sales pages and sales material of *all* the products I'm wanting to promote. If the same problem seems to be discussed in multiple products… that topic gets bonus points.

In the end I narrow it down to 15 - 20 topics to get started with. They become 15 - 20 articles (or other kinds of content) on my site, and I keep my other ideas in reserve for when I want to add more content later.

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Once you've got your list of topics, it's time to start creating content related to those problems. But that presents its own problems, which I'll discuss next.

CREATING YOUR PROBLEM-SOLVING CONTENT

Here's a curly problem:

How do you create content about how to solve a particular problem without solving the problem *so well* that the reader doesn't need to buy anything?

It seems a bit *dumb* to create a really good article on how to solve a serious problem — and give it away for free. Doesn't it?

So what's the solution here?

It's tempting to just create a really shallow article that doesn't really help very much, just to get people to your website. Then BOOM! You can hit them with a promotion for the product that willactually help solve their problem (because your article sure doesn't).

But all that's gonna happen here is your content will be so lame that it doesn't ever end up ranking well in the search engines.

(Yes, the search engines can tell when your content is lame. I'll talk about this more later in this guide, but for now just be aware that *Google is watching.*)

So you need to create *good, useful and relevant* content, but still make people want to buy things. I've come up with a few ways of doing this:

#1: Don't go into as much detail as the product

You might give your reader the broad strokes overview of how this problem can be solved, but aim to give them the bigger picture rather than going into the nitty gritty detail.

Say that *of course* you can't go into too much detail right here, but *"if you want to know more about this, I recommend you grab one of my recommended books (OR) XYZ book by ABC author"* (And link to either your roundup review or an affiliate product directly)

Tell your audience they should buy because*...the paid products go into more detail than this free article, and will show them exactly how to do it.*

#2: Explain how this problem is symptom of a bigger problem

Remember how we looked into each promise made in the sales copy of a product, and came up with our "problems" from that?

Each "problem" is often just a small part of a bigger problem that the product is solving, so even though you might give your readers some really good advice on this specific problem, you should also make them aware that this is just a fragment of a larger problem that they should really solve. And for this, they need the product you're promoting.

For instance, most dog behaviour problems stem from one big main problem: Your dog doesn't really know who is in charge. Once you sort out that problem, the other smaller problems will be much easier to fix.

But if you fix the problem of your dog digging just by putting a bunch of chicken wire under the fence, without solving the root cause of the issue, there's a good chance you'll continue to suffer from dog obedience problems.

Therefore (and this is what you'll tell your readers), it's really worth getting a book that teaches you how to solve this *big main problem. (*And this is when you send your readers to a roundup review, or directly to a particular affiliate product that you recommend.)

Likewise, you might be discussing a problem like *"how to approach a woman in a bar".* You could give some general tips, but you should also explain that the *real root* of this guy's problem is that he's probably seriously lacking in confidence.

You'll say that if he solves the confidence problem, his dating life will become much easier and more rewarding. And then you can send him to a roundup review of the best confidence building products, or link directly to one you recommend in particular.

Tell your audience they should buy because*... solving this one small problem won't actually help them in the long run. They have a bigger problem at the root of this. They need a product to help them solve this bigger problem.*

#3: Explain the hard way, then the easy way

Depending on what you're promoting, there may be a way for people to solve their problem a "hard way" (doing it themselves) or an "easy way" (using the product you're promoting).

For example, if I was creating an article about how to make it look like your logo has been drawn into sand at the beach, I could write a difficult-sounding tutorial on how exactly to do it in Photoshop.

This would certainly be useful. But I could then mention that you could *also* do it *the easy way* using this nifty Photoshop action that you can buy from CreativeMarket.com for $7. (Because after all, your time is worth *way more* than just $7, right?)
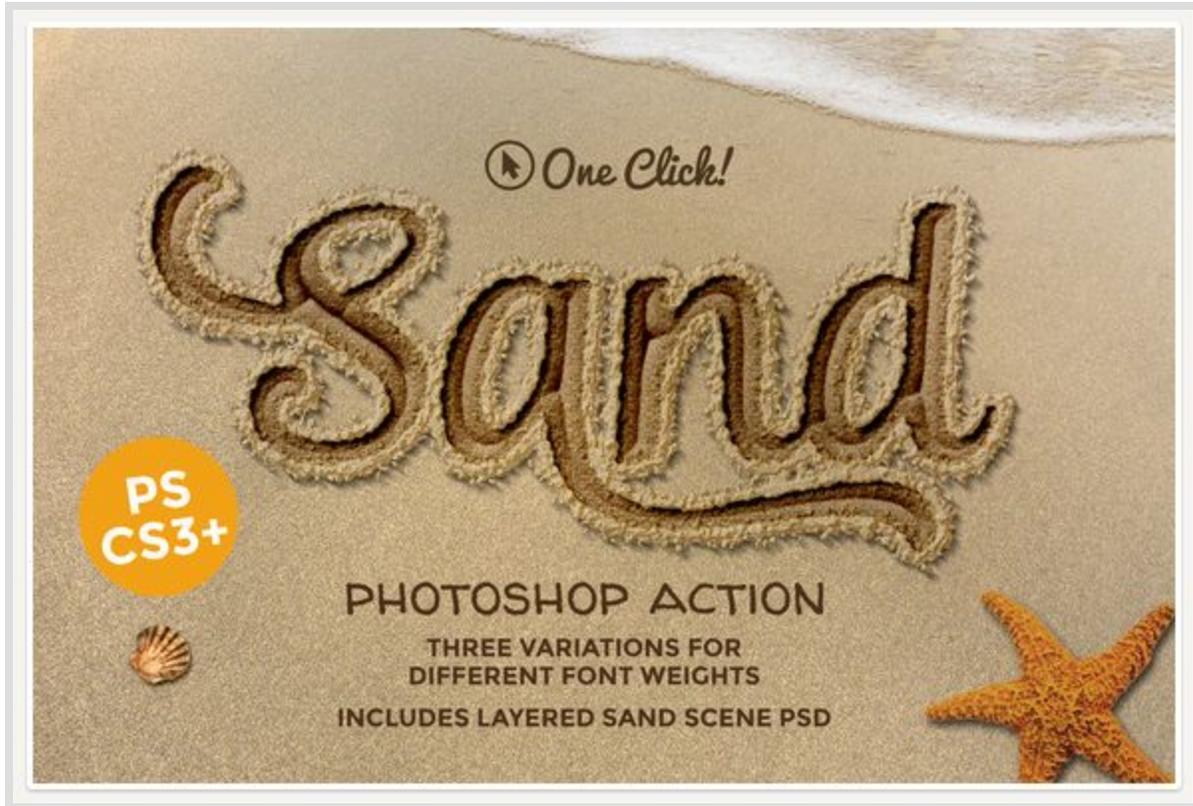
You could do it the hard way… or you could just get this thing.

Similarly you *could* follow a certain set of principles for your diet and exercise regime that would help you lose that tummy fat. You *could* work out your eating plan, calculate those calories, and select from this particular set of exercises, and track it all using a spreadsheet and an abacus.

Orrrrr… you could buy a ready-made plan where everything is already done for you, and you just need to follow instructions and input a few figures.

Tell your audience they should buy because... *It's way faster / easier / cheaper / more effective to just use a product to achieve this goal.*

Long content vs short content

Let's talk about length. Does size actually matter when it comes to writing your problem solving articles? (Or any other content on your site, for that matter?)

Should your articles be 500 words? 800 words? 1500 words? More?

If you do a little digging, you'll find plenty of big names talking about how you can give yourself a little SEO boost by upping the length of your content.

Why does longer content do better?

- There may be something built into Google's algorithm that looks for length (so long as it is expected for the niche and the type of content. A 1000-word weather report, for instance, is not really appropriate.)

- Longer content (when it's well-written) is more *impressive and extraordinary* than shorter content, and more likely to get shared. A [Moz/Buzzsumo study](#) found that longer content attracted significantly more links. More links typically means better rankings.

- Longer content (when it's done well) is likely to *cover more ground*, *be more informative*, and *answer the questions* that your reader has. Therefore they are less likely to hit their "back" button after reading your content, and start looking at other results in the search engines. Meaning your page gets the "[long click](#)" which signals to the search engines that it's a good result for this search term. We're going to talk more about this later.

- The longer your content, the greater chance it is going to include all those LSI keywords that signal relevance to the search engines. (In short, they'll see the kinds of words that are normally found together, so it looks more relevant.)

So what should you do?

I would personally aim for at least 1000 - 1500 words per article, where possible, so long as you can actually fill those 1000 - 1500 words with good, useful content. If you'd thought about splitting a topic over multiple pages because it "seems too long", don't. Keep it all right there in the one place.

Go into as much depth as you can, and try to anticipate questions your readers might have.

But remember that it isn't *always* appropriate to create long content. The easiest way to see if you should *go long* is to take a look at the sites that are currently ranking at the top of Google for your keyword. Are they long pieces of content? Then you definitely need long content.

Your goal should be to provide your visitors with the best answer possible. Sometimes that means more words, but other times it might mean something else. Use your judgement.

Other requirements for problem solving content

Aside from the *consideration* of length above, there's no hard and fast rule for creating your problem-solving content.

I'm not going to say that you *need* three pictures, an infographic, and an audio play button for some accompanying whale sounds, or your content will fail miserably. But there are two big general-type requirements for good, effective problem-solving content:

- That you deliver *some kind of really good value* to your visitor, so that even if they aren't interested in the products you're promoting, they haven't wasted their time visiting your site.
- You include a "call to action" at the end of your article. (That's marketing speak for *"tell them to do something"*.) Simply add a paragraph that informs people of the good reasons to check out these paid products (see the *"Tell your audience they should buy because…"* sections above), and link them to the appropriate place — either a roundup review, product review, or directly to the affiliate product.

If you're not too sure what to link to at the end of your problem-solving article, keep reading. I'm going to talk about how to turn these problems into money!

MONETISING YOUR PROBLEM-SOLVING CONTENT

Ok, so by this point you've done the following things with your problem solving content:

1. **You've found the problems that people are having** (people who would be interested in buying the products you're promoting)
2. **You've found out the keywords** they're using in the search engines when they're searching for solutions to these problems
3. **You've created your content**

Now it's time for the last piece in this little funnel…

1. **Getting this content to make some money!**

With our product reviews, it's fairly simple: You'd just offer a link directly to the affiliate product you're promoting. People read your review, they click your link, and they buy the product. Boom!

But with problem-solving content you have a few other options.

Promote a specific product directly in your article

... And link directly to your affiliate link or your product review.

If you've built an affiliate site before, this is what you've most likely done.

You might have slapped a big, bold affiliate link in the top half of the page, and then another one at the bottom of the page. Boom!

Alternatively, you might have worked your link into your article more naturally, saying something like *"I found X product to be really helpful with Y problem. Click here to learn more about X." (affiliate link)*

This is sometimes the most appropriate way to go, but sometimes it's also a little too blunt. Your visitor has arrived at your site looking for information, and you're slapping them with a giant plea to BUY THIS THING!

If your visitor wasn't really expecting to buy something at this point, they might not be super interested in clicking a big link that says BUY! BUY! BUY!

So another option is to take a slightly softer approach…

Promote the idea of buying *something*

... And link to a [roundup review](#) page.

There's a good chance that your visitor really wasn't expecting to buy something when they started browsing the internet today. They may have expected that they would be able to find all the information they needed for free.

So you might say that the main job of your problem-solving articles is to convince your visitor that *yes, they really do need to buy something.*

You don't need to give them the exact name of the product you recommend. Just put the idea into their mind that they need *something.* Then link them to your roundup review, where you outline all the available *somethings* you recommend.

"If you're having a problem with X, then it pretty much always means you have a problem with Y. Getting to the root of your Y problem will help you with X, and a whole bunch of other problems. There are a lot of great resources out there that will help: I recommend you check out my in depth guide here." [LINK TO ROUNDUP REVIEW]

There are pros and cons to doing it this way:

- Pros: Your visitor doesn't feel "sold to" and they're not immediately turned off by a sales pitch. They click through to learn more about the products on offer, feeling like it's their own decision. They might trust you more because you haven't been pushy. The people who click through to your roundup review will be more informed and "warmer" than if you just sent them directly to your affiliate link.
- Cons: There's an extra step involved between your problem-solving article and your affiliate link. You might find that you get fewer clicks on your affiliate link. (But these will probably be higher quality clicks.)