



ESA DIGITAL

23 October 2026

Productivity App Organic ROI Forecast 2027

Notes, tasks, writing and scheduling apps with subscriptions · US search demand · global AI visibility

Industry report · Prepared by **ESA Digital** · Ahrefs Site Explorer, Keywords Explorer + Brand Radar

[Check interactive report](#)

1. Key findings

FINDINGS

- A Writing help is most of the demand.** 10.8M US searches/mo across eight topics, and Writing & Grammar is 6.4M (59%): "ai detector" (3.9M/mo), "grammar check" (542K), "spell check" (238K). People want a tool that works on the text in front of them.
- B Work management is the second door.** Project Management (1.6M) and Time Management & Focus (1.3M) together are 27%: "project management" (604K), "project management software" (276K), "time management" (489K). To-do, notes, scheduling and planner searches are each under 4%.
- C One tool owns organic search.** Grammarly gets 16.3M visits/mo on 220K keywords, more than ten times any other brand in the set. ClickUp and Evernote draw about 1.4M each; Calendly and Todoist about 550K, mostly on their brand names.
- D AI answers follow the same split.** Grammarly holds 69.7% of the set's 31.7M AI impressions/mo, ClickUp 13.8%. Category prompts like "What's a good free project management tool?" (33K) cite atlassian.com, trello.com and asana.com, so most project-tool answers go to brands outside this set.
- E Only top converters pay back.** Top-10% productivity apps convert 8.2% of installs at \$64 per payer a year. On that funnel a Growth project returns \$561K on \$263K over 24 months (ROI 114%, break-even in month 14); at the top quartile no package pays back, and the median returns \$35K.

WHAT TO DO

Ship free in-browser tools for the big queries (grammar check, AI detector, paraphraser, pomodoro timer, Gantt template) and make the app the place to keep the work. Publish honest comparisons with the tools AI answers already cite (Trello, Asana, Notion) so you are named next to them.

2. SEO Opportunities

RELEVANT CONTENT IDEAS

3 841

TOPICAL CLUSTERS

8

MONTHLY SEARCH VOLUME

10 797 230

CLUSTER	VOLUME SHARE	IDEAS	VOL/MO
Writing & Grammar ↗	59.2%	498	6 400 200
Project Management ↗	14.9%	453	1 612 150
Time Management & Focus ↗	12.0%	457	1 292 250
To-Do Lists & Tasks ↗	3.7%	449	399 250
Note-Taking ↗	3.5%	500	381 900
Scheduling & Calendars ↗	2.8%	495	300 700
AI Productivity Tools ↗	2.0%	498	216 480
Planners & Templates ↗	1.8%	491	194 300
Relevant total	99.9%	3 841	10 797 230
Off-topic / adjacent — excluded	0.1%	29	15 700
Total		3 870	10 812 930

How this was built >

FINDINGS 📄

Writing & Grammar (59.2%) dominates, followed by Project Management (14.9%) and Time Management & Focus (12.0%). Tasks, notes, scheduling, AI tools and planners together are 13.8%. Most head queries are tool-shaped: the searcher wants to do the job on the page.

WHAT TO DO 🛠️

Build free tools and templates first (checker, detector, timer, Gantt and meeting-notes templates), then “best X app” comparisons for your niche. Each tool page should end with a reason to sign up: save, sync, collaborate.

3. Competitive Landscape

3.1 Organic SEO — Ahrefs Site Explorer

BRAND	ORG. TRAFFIC/MO ↓	ORG. KEYWORDS	TOP 3	BACKLINKS	ORG. VALUE	DR
Grammarly ↗ grammarly.com	16 339 072	219 882	121 360	10 724 774	\$2.1M	90
Evernote ↗ evernote.com	1 407 404	45 408	13 181	21 817 277	\$214K	90
ClickUp ↗ clickup.com	1 364 233	50 713	12 322	78 636 723	\$768K	90
Calendly ↗ calendly.com	556 439	6 415	3 478	152 291 407	\$818K	95
Todoist ↗ todoist.com	546 547	8 114	4 272	448 005	\$623K	86

Click column header → sort. Click brand row → SEO dashboard. Bars are normalized per column.

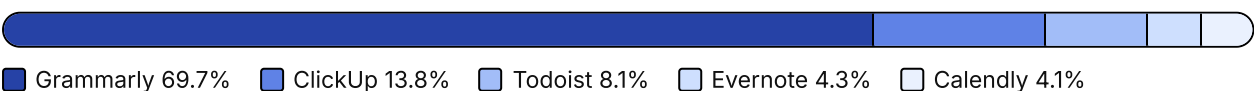
3.2 AI Visibility — Brand Radar (impressions/month)

BRAND	CHATGPT	AI OVERVIEWS	AI MODE	TOTAL ↓
Grammarly ↗ grammarly.com	6 042 406	11 477 571	4 553 706	22 073 683
ClickUp ↗ clickup.com	1 981 600	1 701 802	672 448	4 355 850
Todoist ↗ todoist.com	937 308	906 434	732 154	2 575 896
Evernote ↗ evernote.com	312 299	568 774	484 546	1 365 619
Calendly ↗ calendly.com	503 413	456 315	340 783	1 300 511

Click column header → sort. Click row → ChatGPT citation prompts. Brand Radar matches **brand names**, not domains.

3.3 AI Share of Voice

Grammarly 69.7% — the 5 brands in this set hold **31 671 559** AI impressions/mo across ChatGPT, AI Overviews & AI Mode.



FINDINGS

The five brands hold 31.7M AI impressions/mo across ChatGPT, AI Overviews and AI Mode. Grammarly leads (69.7%), then ClickUp (13.8%), Todoist (8.1%), Evernote (4.3%) and Calendly (4.1%). Brand prompts are mostly about price and the free tier ("Is Calendly free to use?", "Can I still use Evernote for free?"). Notion is not in the set: "notion" is a common word, so its Brand Radar count is mostly noise.

WHAT TO DO

Answer price, free-tier and "X vs Y" questions on your own pages, with current plan details. AI answers on project-management prompts lean on vendor comparison pages, so publish your own alongside third-party reviews.

4. ROI Forecast

INDUSTRY BENCHMARK

Weak

Typical

Strong

×

PACKAGE

Start

Growth

Scale

×

PERIOD

12m

24m

36m

Forecast outcomes

BREAK-EVEN

Month 14

24M REVENUE

\$561K

24M ROI

114%

24M PROFIT

\$299K

Investment

PROJECT COST

\$263K

PUBLISHED PAGES

600

Parameters

PACKAGE INPUTS

Pages / month 25

Monthly cost \$11K

CONVERSION FUNNEL · STRONG TIER

Visit → Install 3.8%

Install → Paid 8.2%

Revenue / payer / yr \$64

CONTENT PERFORMANCE

Months to peak 7

Avg visits/page 180

Success rate 60%

AI / GEO LIFT

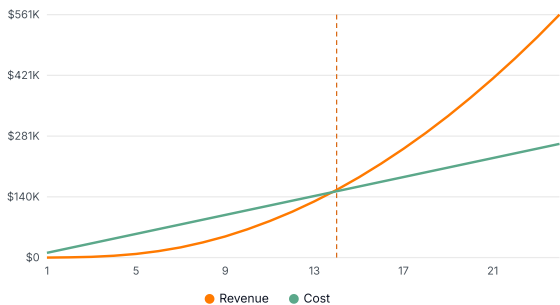
LLM ratio 0.1x

LLM conv boost 2x

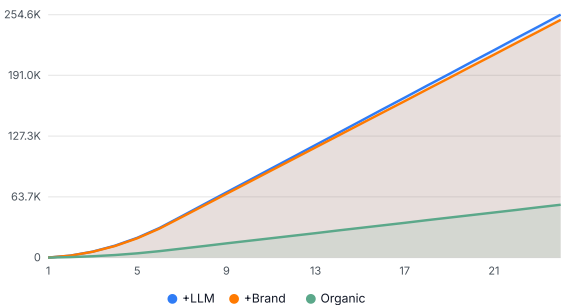
[Dive deeper — change parameters in the ROI calculator ↗](#)

– Open the interactive model to adjust assumptions yourself.

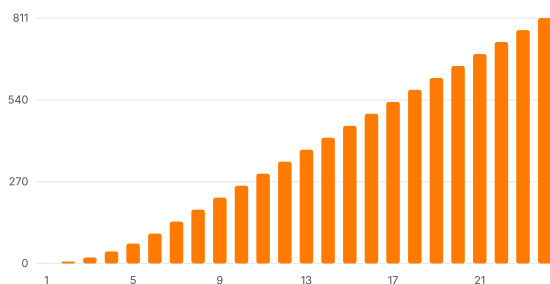
Cumulative Revenue vs Cost



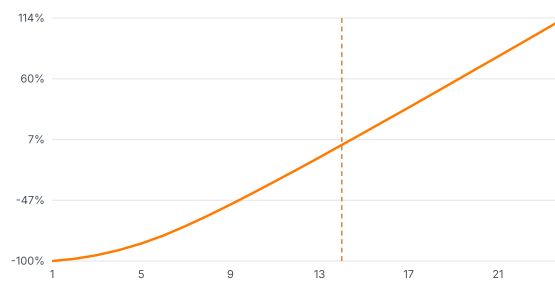
Traffic Growth



New Paid Customers



Cumulative ROI



MONTHS	PAGES	ORGANIC	BRAND	LLM	INSTALLS	PAYERS	REVENUE	ROI
1	25	0	0	0	0	0.0	\$0	-100%
2	50	450	1.6K	45	80	6.6	\$422	-98%
3	75	1.4K	4.7K	135	241	20	\$1K	-95%
4	100	2.7K	9.4K	270	482	40	\$3K	-90%
5	125	4.5K	15.8K	450	804	66	\$4K	-85%
6	150	6.8K	23.6K	675	1.2K	99	\$6K	-78%
7	175	9.4K	33.1K	945	1.7K	138	\$9K	-69%
8	200	12.2K	42.5K	1.2K	2.2K	178	\$11K	-60%
9	225	14.8K	52.0K	1.5K	2.7K	217	\$14K	-50%
10	250	17.6K	61.4K	1.8K	3.1K	257	\$16K	-40%
11	275	20.3K	70.9K	2.0K	3.6K	297	\$19K	-30%
12	300	22.9K	80.3K	2.3K	4.1K	336	\$22K	-19%
13	325	25.6K	89.8K	2.6K	4.6K	376	\$24K	-9%
14	350	28.4K	99.2K	2.8K	5.1K	415	\$27K	2%
15	375	31.1K	108.7K	3.1K	5.5K	455	\$29K	13%
16	400	33.8K	118.1K	3.4K	6.0K	494	\$32K	24%
17	425	36.5K	127.6K	3.6K	6.5K	534	\$34K	35%
18	450	39.1K	137.0K	3.9K	7.0K	573	\$37K	46%
19	475	41.9K	146.5K	4.2K	7.5K	613	\$39K	57%
20	500	44.5K	155.9K	4.5K	8.0K	652	\$42K	69%
21	525	47.3K	165.4K	4.7K	8.4K	692	\$44K	80%
22	550	50.0K	174.8K	5.0K	8.9K	732	\$47K	91%
23	575	52.6K	184.3K	5.3K	9.4K	771	\$49K	102%
24	600	55.4K	193.7K	5.5K	9.9K	811	\$52K	114%

ESA ROI Calculator · Start 10/\$5.5K · Growth 25/\$10.95K · Scale 40/\$15.5K · peak 7 mo, success 60%, 180 visits/page, brand ×3.5, LLM 0.1×, LLM conv ×2. Funnel inputs follow the industry benchmark switch (Weak / Typical / Strong = bottom quartile / median / top 10% of the category). Revenue per payer is 12-month subscription revenue; the source groups productivity with design and developer tools. Strong = top 10% on each metric; visit → install is an estimate.

FINDINGS

On the Growth package over 24 months, a top-10% funnel (Strong tier: 3.8% visit → install, 8.2% install → paid, \$64 per payer) turns a **\$263K** project into **\$561K** of revenue (ROI 114%) and breaks even in month 14. At the top quartile no package pays back (Start -47%), and the median (Typical tier) returns only **\$35K**. Business apps convert better than consumer ones: 2.6% pay at the median and a payer brings \$35.

WHAT TO DO

Check your install → paid rate: this category pays back only for the best converters. If you sell team plans to businesses, model your own revenue per account; the subscription benchmark undercounts them.

Sources & Benchmarks

I. Sources

- **Content** — [Ahrefs Keywords Explorer](#) (US volumes) + [ESA](#) intent clustering
- **Organic SEO** — [Ahrefs Site Explorer](#)
- **AI Visibility** — [Ahrefs Brand Radar](#) (ChatGPT / AI Overviews / AI Mode; citations API limit 25)
- **ROI** — [ESA ROI Calculator](#) + service packages
- **Industry benchmarks** — [RevenueCat](#), [State of Subscription Apps 2026](#), [Unbounce](#), [Conversion Benchmark Report 2024](#)

II. Benchmarks

Reference ranges for a subscription-app funnel — Visit → Install → Trial → Paid — for the median app in the category and its bottom quartile and top 10%. Rows marked **ROI-model input** feed the forecast above. All figures are modelled estimates on the stated inputs, not guarantees.

II.A. Conversion — industry benchmarks

FUNNEL STEP	WEAK → TYPICAL → STRONG	SOURCE / NOTE
Visit → Install	 Weak 1% Typical 3% Strong 3.8%	Estimate; strong = landing-page benchmark (Unbounce 2024)
Install → Trial (30 days)	 Weak 2.1% Typical 5.7% Strong 11.5%	RevenueCat 2026
Trial → Paid	 Weak 18.0% Typical 27.2% Strong 42.1%	RevenueCat 2026
Install → Paid (35 days)	 Weak 0.7% Typical 1.9% Strong 8.2%	ROI-model input. RevenueCat 2026
Revenue per payer (12 months)	 Weak \$11 Typical \$22 Strong \$64	ROI-model input. RevenueCat 2026
Business apps: Install → Paid (35 days)	 Weak 1.1% Typical 2.6% Strong 5.0%	RevenueCat 2026
Business apps: revenue per payer	 Weak \$20 Typical \$35 Strong \$64	RevenueCat 2026
Avg. visits per page (peak)	180 visits	ROI-model input. Ahrefs top pages of the five leaders (US, pages with 10–3,000 visits/mo, top 100 per domain, n=500) have a median of ~200 and a trimmed mean of ~540 visits/page, but those pages carry years of links and brand pull. A newly published page is modelled at 180 .
Revenue per payer (12 months)	\$64	ROI-model input. RevenueCat, State of Subscription Apps 2026: 12-month revenue per payer for Productivity apps, reported with

design and developer tools (bottom quartile / median / top 10%).

II.B. GEO benchmark ranges

GEO METRIC	EARLY	HEALTHY	AI-HEAVY	NOTES
LLM traffic ratio	0.01–0.04×	0.05–0.12×	0.15–0.30×	LLM referrals as a multiple of organic
LLM conversion boost	+50–120%	+300–500%	+400–700%	ChatGPT highest; AI Overviews lowest
Content success rate	30–50%	45–65%	50–70%	Service pages and how-to content rank best
Months to peak	3–6	6–14	14–24	Per published cohort
Brand traffic multiplier	0.05–0.15×	0.20–0.40×	0.45–0.90×	Fixed at 3.5× brand-lift in the model