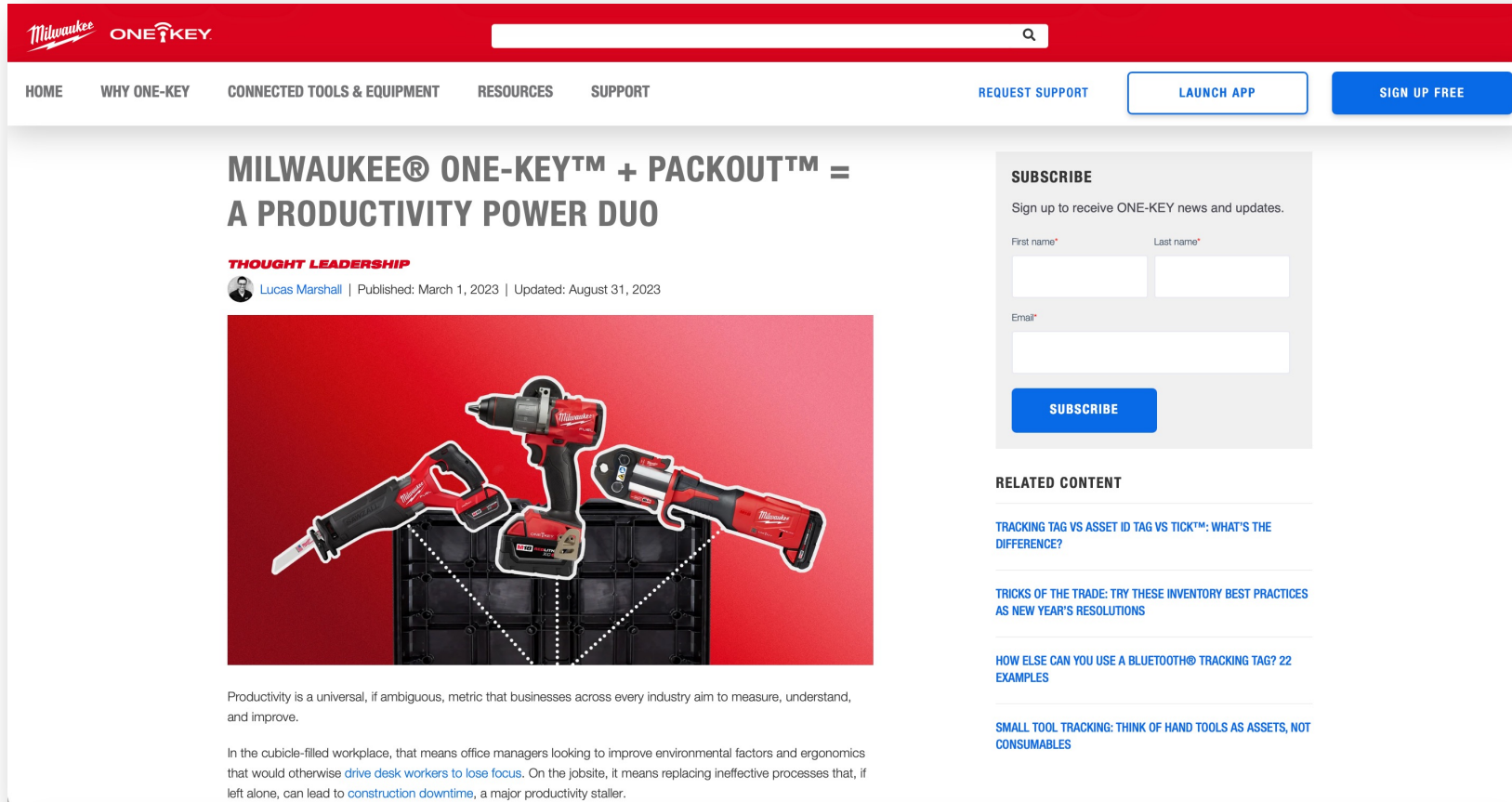


Award-Winning Article



**Winner of the 2024 APEX Award of
Excellence for Writing / Type
of Media - How-to
Writing**



Article Scope

Article served as an educational entry-point for tradespeople evaluating multiple product “ecosystems” as well as giving readers a better understanding of how Milwaukee Tool architects complimentary product categories – e.g., physical equipment storage and management (i.e., PACKOUT™) and digital equipment inventorying and tracking (i.e., ONE-KEY™) – to inspire and provide best practices in equipment management, anchored by storytelling and real-world use cases chronicled through two end user accounts.

JUMP AHEAD:

1. [Building Product Ecosystems: Products Superpowered When They Work “System-Wide”](#)
2. [What Is Milwaukee Tool’s ONE-KEY?](#)
3. [What Is Milwaukee Tool’s PACKOUT?](#)
4. [A Winning Combo End Users Are Implementing](#)
 1. [Use Case: Derek T., Heavy-Duty Mechanic](#)
 2. [Use Case: Mitch V., Union Carpenter](#)
5. [ONE-KEY Features to Get the Most Out of PACKOUT](#)
6. [ONE-KEY Products to Get the Most Out of PACKOUT](#)
7. [PACKOUT Products to Get the Most Out of ONE-KEY](#)
8. [Final Consideration: One-Key Compatible Tools: Baseline vs Reports and Full Customization](#)

WHAT IS A PRODUCT ECOSYSTEM?

The term "ecosystem" is oft associated with high school science class. [National Geographic defines](#) the term as such: "A geographic area where plants, animals, and other organisms, as well as weather and landscapes, work together to form a bubble of life."

Such a description may summon grand landscapes—forests where bears roam; deserts where cacti thrive in scorching sun and rattlesnakes slither; the deep blue where schools of fish swim.

But the same "organisms [... that] work together to form a bubble of life" are acknowledged interlocking in the products we use from the companies we admire.

[HubSpot defines](#) "Product Ecosystem" as "when a business offers multiple complementary products or services for their customers to purchase and use in tandem," in order to "simplify the lives of customers by providing products or services that can be used for a variety of needs."



PRODUCT ECOSYSTEM EXAMPLES

[HubSpot offers](#) Apple as an "Example of a Product Ecosystem," explaining how this works in practice:

"Plug your iPhone into your MacBook Pro to view all details related to the phone including your storage, different aspects of your phone's history, your music library, and more via your laptop. And speaking of your music, connect your AirPods in just seconds to your iPhone and your MacBook for seamless listening opportunities cross-device."

At Milwaukee Tool, our "system-wide" mantra that unifies our battery platforms (e.g., [M12™](#), [M18™](#), [MX FUEL™](#)) speaks to the breadth of line in our product ecosystems designed to help end users complete a job, from start to finish, on one battery system.



For example, the high-output, "performance-driven" M18 FUEL™ battery pack that powers the precision woodworking onsite is the same one that helps with cleanup at the end of the day. On the other hand, the "portable productivity" offered from your M12 battery pack that heats your jacket [in the cold](#) can equally fill your vehicle's tires that have lost tire pressure as temps drop.

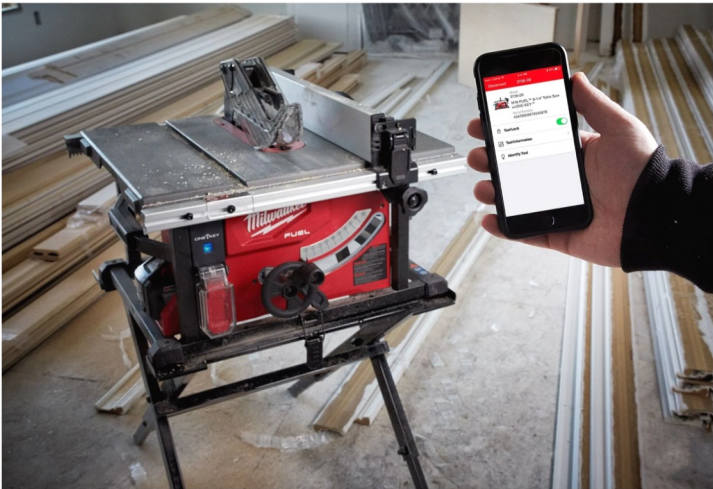
WHAT IS MILWAUKEE TOOL'S PACKOUT? WHAT IS PACKOUT USED FOR?

[PACKOUT](#) is Milwaukee Tool's Modular Storage System, which revolutionizes tool transportation, organization, and storage for the trades, providing users with the ability to interchange and interlock a wide assortment of heavy-duty toolboxes, organizers, and storage totes in multiple different configurations. The PACKOUT modular storage system is also the most versatile and durable modular storage system in the industry.



WHAT IS MILWAUKEE TOOL'S ONE-KEY?

[One-Key](#) is Milwaukee Tool's connectivity platform that aims to put jobsite management squarely in your hands.



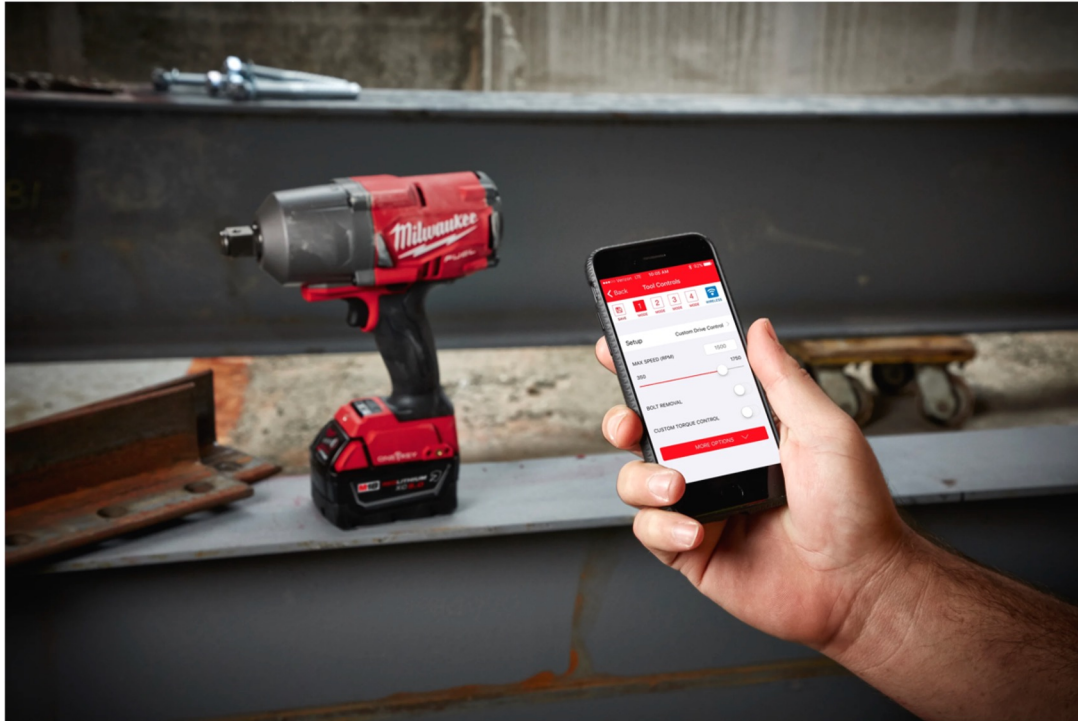
The platform combines [smart power tools](#); processes like [barcoding](#), [equipment tagging](#) and [Bluetooth® tagging](#); and utilization data to drive smarter outcomes onsite and boost productivity.

USING ONE-KEY FOR PRECISION FASTENING

Of the tools in their arsenal, Derek says 10 or 11 of these tools are One-Key compatible. “Most of our impacts are what have it, like the 1-inch impact, the 3/4-inch drive impacts.”

He explains that the team's use of One-Key functionality on the tools that are compatible with the app is largely rooted in their need to deliver reliable precision fastening.

“A lot of our stuff requires almost certification-level of fastening tightness,” he explains.



“The app is incredible, and I’m actually quite happy with some of the newer technology on some of the tools,” he explains, adding “For us, specifically the impact gun, where you’re able to adjust the torque on the app.”

END USER STORY #2: MITCH V., UNION CARPENTER

Mitch V. is a union carpenter who recently joined the union as of July, who brings a background in post-frame construction, manufacturing, and concrete to his small company, where he and his team are responsible for everything from concrete to framing to rough-in framing to finishing.



“We do everything, he explains, adding “It’s kind of a learning curve of what I have and haven’t done.”

COMMITTED TO THE BATTERY PLATFORM

“I ended up buying the Milwaukee 1/2” hammer drill, and then the 1/4” impact driver, and then from there, I didn’t stop buying tools,” he explains.

“I started thinking. Yeah, there are one or two DeWalt tools, where I’d be like, ‘Oh, that would be cool to have,’ like Milwaukee’s not on that tool yet. But I’m like, ‘I’m not going to go and change my battery platform and buy a bunch of DeWalt.’”

Complimentary “How-Tos” – getting the most out of both product ecosystems, and how to use each product ecosystem together to create a “productivity power duo.”

Here are a few One-Key features that lend themselves to PACKOUT and PACKOUT “Kitting:”

1. **Tool Kitting** (and **Audits**): Tool kitting took a legacy One-Key feature, the mobile inventory audit to the next level. As Mitch explained earlier in his own use case and impression of it, it took helps to instantly move and keep record of bulk inventory sends. You may be sending a gang box with a full jobsite “inventory.” Kitting lets you instantly send all of this at once, but also easily keep record of this inventory—everything that’s sent, anything that’s missing—and, as in Derek’s use-case, refill as needed, a sort of stock system. When you add barcoding into the mix (see below), all you have to do is scan the kit’s barcode to get a full inventory of everything that’s in there, and check for any discrepancies.
2. **Geofencing**: As previously discussed, geofencing (particularly useful in conjunction with tool kitting and PACKOUT) helps you establish zones to assign One-Key compatible tools and TICK’ed or Bluetooth tagged equipment to. If these items start to wander, you’ll be alerted.
3. **Barcoding**: Barcoding is a common practice in large tool cribs, manufacturing warehouses, and the like. The One-Key app draws on a user’s built-in camera to scan in- and -out items to update item locations. We often recommend this form of tracking for smaller, lower-value items like hand tools. By using a smartphone’s built-in camera, what’s more, users can ditch oftentimes expensive barcoding hardware that would normally be required. Furthermore, opting for heavy-duty One-Key Asset ID Tags (which we’ll discuss in the next section of this article) can improve the longevity of these labels. If you’re on the fence and not sure which kind of tracking product is best for you, we’ve [written up a resource you may find helpful](#) that breaks down the differences of the products we currently offer.
4. **Transfers**: Transfers, similar to kitting, move an item (or items) from one job to another. You can also transfer “kits” now and get a detailed history of all your transfers.
5. **30-Day History**: “Tool Location History” provides a 30-day record of where your items have been seen, helping provide better historical context to where tools have come and gone.
6. **Find Item**: The “Find Item” feature, as previously discussed, provides an in-app proximity tool to help you find items within 100-ft, which can be helpful if an item is nearby, but out of sight, such as hidden in a pile of tools in a job box, on a cluttered desk, etc. If your tool is outfitted with a One-Key Bluetooth Tracking Tag (which we’ll discuss in the next section of this article), you can even ring your tag and hear whereabouts it’s chirping from.
7. **Alerts**: The alerts inbox should help you stay on top of your items in inventory—from the geofencing alerts we discussed above to important tool status updates like [a low coin cell level that warrants changing](#).
8. **Job Costing Tool**: If your company is set up for rentals, the job costing feature in One-Key (a free-to-use tool) allows you to set daily and weekly rental rates for items you’re sending out. This way, you can start to calculate your inventory dollars. Learn more about [job costing in construction projects](#).

ONE-KEY PRODUCTS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF PACKOUT

If One-Key software products and PACKOUT hardware go together like [lamb and tuna fish](#), then tying the two platforms together with One-Key tracking hardware products is like the precise pasta noodles you need to tie your spaghetti and meatballs dish together.



1. **Asset ID Tags**: One-Key Asset ID Tags offer a solution for [tool equipment tagging](#) and [small tool tracking](#) situations. They offer superior, construction-grade durability and ease-of-use/scanning that traditional barcodes don’t offer. Where traditional barcodes wear out, fall off, and need to be regularly replaced as well as requiring expensive external hardware, One-Key Asset ID Tags offer longevity that lasts the life of the tool, and in-app barcoding functionality that allows users to only need the smartphone in their pocket to scan these tags on the go.
2. **One-Key Bluetooth Tracking Tag**: This [Pro Tool Innovation Award](#) and [Chicago Innovation](#)-winning product adds superior tracking functionality, including cutting-edge tech like built-in [Near-Field-Communication \(NFC\)](#), an [accelerometer](#), a built-in speaker (with 3 buzzer sounds) for finding nearby items that aren’t in sight, construction-grade durability, a 300ft Bluetooth range (3X its predecessor), a compact design (30% smaller than its predecessor), and more!

PACKOUT PRODUCTS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF ONE-KEY

So, which PACKOUTs, then, lend themselves to the One-Key app?
Here’s what we recommend:

1. **Organizers**: The regular organizer may be used for small consumables, drill bits, screws, and other fasteners. Deep organizers may be used for fittings.
2. **Toolboxes**: Toolboxes, from large to extra-large, may be kitted out for job-specific kits, from woodworking (like circ saws and Sawzall®s) to plumbing to electrical service and HVAC service kits. We even offer [tool cases w/ foam inserts](#) to start your PACKOUT superuser organization like Mitch discussed he customizes himself in all his PACKOUTs. Further, [PACKOUT toolbox cabinets](#) may be useful in the shop (see below).
3. **Mountings, Racks, Hooks, & Holders** (for van or in shop): We offer an assortment of mounts, racks, and holders to customize your shop storage, as well as your service van. This could be anything from cabinets for the shop to holders for tools in the crib. Heck, we even offer kits (like first aid kits) and compatible battery chargers, and the much-needed PACKOUT Radio + Charger to stream your [on-the-job playlist](#) through.
4. **Rolling Storage** (onsite or in transit): Like Mitch discussed, the rolling PACKOUTs lend well to building your PACKOUT stack on for easy on- and -off the job transportation for carting those job-specific kits you’re rolling onsite.

Final plug for “smart tools”

FINAL CONSIDERATION: ONE-KEY COMPATIBLE TOOLS: BASELINE VS REPORTS AND FULL CUSTOMIZATION

The final consideration: One-Key [compatible smart tools](#) offer a level above standard Milwaukee® power tools to drive productivity through standard tracking & security, as well as (on select models—see below) advanced reporting and customization to drive smarter insights, maximize uptime, and boost productivity.



- **Baseline Functionality:** Baseline One-Key functionality includes [standard tool security](#) (lockout) and Bluetooth tracking built-in.
- **Report. Track. Manage:** Some of our smart tools, like our [Digital Torque Wrench](#) and our [hydraulic tools](#), offer the ability to pull utilization data and create custom reports that can be useful to provide proof-of-work, quality assurance, and accountability to stakeholders. In other words, if you're required to fasten to a precision specification, these reporting dashboards allow for you to be able to prove, to the event, that those specifications were properly fastened to spec.
- **Customize. Track. Manage:** Custom tool controls on our top-of-the-line smart tools offer users the ability to drill in application-specific “modes” that offer accuracy and repeatability. The “[mode library](#),” what's more, allows users to log virtually limitless settings to the cloud—depending on the day and the work needed onsite, they can apply these modes to their on-tool modes, enabling them to select the appropriate mode and work all day without skipping a beat.

BOTTOM LINE

Milwaukee Tool's One-Key and PACKOUT platforms are powerful by themselves—PACKOUT serving as an organization tool in the physical, One-Key as an organization, inventorying, and connectivity tool in the digital—but these two platforms, like many product ecosystems, work infinitively more powerfully together.

As evidenced by their natural compatibility and these end users' stories using these platforms together, it's clearer Milwaukee Tool's commitment to being a solutions provider, driving the industry forward with productivity platforms that work both system-wide and cross-system wide.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lucas is Content Marketing and SEO Manager for Milwaukee Tool, where he and his team raise awareness about the company's digital products and educate users on best practices through a variety of content vehicles.

[MORE CONTENT BY LUCAS MARSHALL](#)

Award-Winning Article

Established in 1988, the APEX Awards honor excellence in communications, publishing, marketing, and public relations. This article received an Award of Excellence in the **Writing / Type of Media** category and **How-to Writing** subcategory, with submissions reviewed by industry communications professionals.

#7. Writing / Type of Media - How-to Writing

Mark Tarallo
Understanding, Assessing, Aligning and Transforming Organizational Culture
Washington, DC

Lucas Marshall
Milwaukee® ONE-KEY™ + PACKOUT™ = A Productivity Power Duo
Milwaukee Tool
Lake Mills, WI

Carl A. Kirton
Robert H. Welton
Laurel Moody
Janet Dyer
How to Write an Effective Résumé
Wolters Kluwer
New York, NY

Genni Burkhart
Cori Ricca
Susan Richards
Sedation Dentistry: An Equal Opportunity Provider
DOCS Education
Seattle, WA

Healio Rheumatology Staff
'Moral imperative' to address physician burnout emerges in wake of COVID-19 pandemic
Healio
Thorofare, NJ

Kim Ledgerwood
Shannon Shelton Miller
Jacquelyne Froeber
The Cost of Racial Bias in OB-GYN Care
HealthyWomen
Towson, MD

Debra Cantillo
Health & Medical Writing



Questions & Answers about APEX 2024

How were awards presented?

APEX 2024 awards were based on excellence in graphic design, editorial content and the success of the entry—in the opinion of the judges—in achieving overall communications effectiveness and excellence.

Naturally, entries in design categories were judged solely on the basis of their graphic design, and writing entries were evaluated primarily on the basis of editorial quality.

How many entries were there? How many awards were given?

1,101 entries were evaluated in the following distribution:

Writing/Type of Media: 179; Writing/Topics: 138; Magazines, Journals & Tabloids: 166; Electronic Media: 131; Campaigns, Programs & Plans: 93; Design & Illustration: 99; Newsletters: 73; Print Media: 37; Websites: 54; Social Media: 29; One-of-a-Kind Publications: 41; Annual Reports: 28; Public Concerns & Trending Topics (including COVID, Other Health Issues, Climate, Emergency Response, etc.): 33.

A total of 100 APEX Grand Awards were presented in 13 major categories to honor the outstanding works in those categories. 439 APEX Awards of Excellence recognize excellence in 100 individual subcategories.

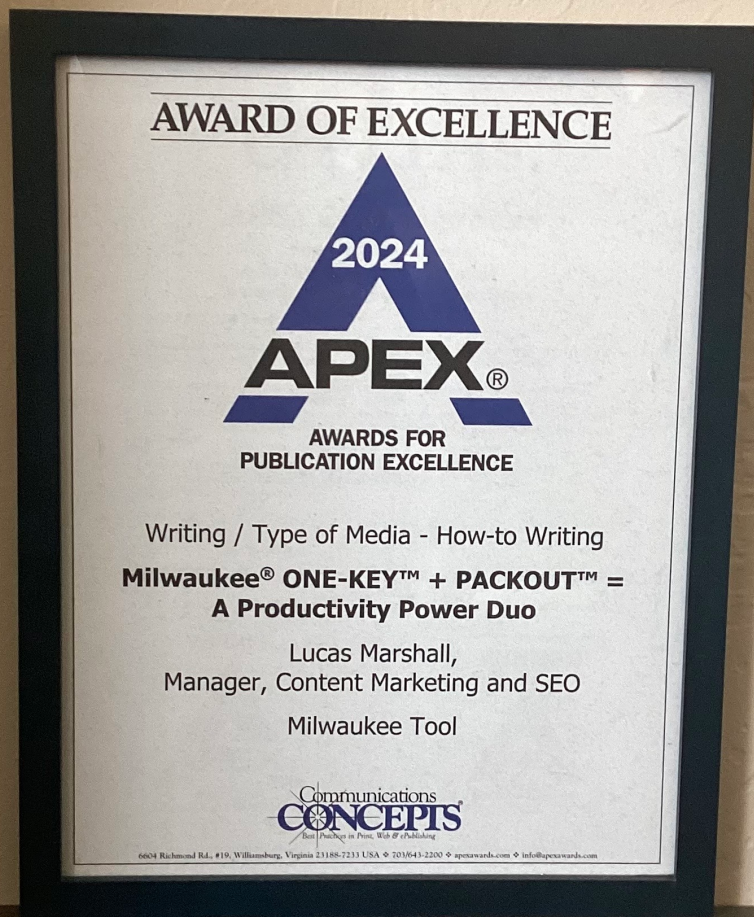
For the number of awards presented in each major category, please refer to the list of winning entries on the following pages.

How competitive were the entries?

Very. Each year, the quality of entries increases. Overall, this year's entries displayed an exceptional level of quality. The APEX judges saw only the most promising publications that professional communicators could enter. From them, they had the truly difficult task of selecting the award-winning entries.

Of 1,100 entrants, only:

- **439 Awards of Excellence** were given
- I was **1 in 179** to receive an award in the category, "**Writing / Type of Media**"
- I was **1 of 3** to receive an award in the subcategory, "**How-to Writing**"



Read the full, award-winning article:

<https://onekeyresources.milwaukeeetool.com/en/one-key-and-packout>

<https://media.journoportfolio.com/users/45460/uploads/fa88b7b1-5720-4511-91cc-7e9604c0407f.pdf>