The Best Cold Email Software — 2026

35 tools ranked on 16 verifiable conditions, and the honest limit of each of the top ten.

The short version up front: **Instantly** takes first place with 100/100. Next: Smartlead (96), Saleshandy (92) and Emailchaser (91). Scores count only conditions each vendor confirms on its own site; prices are listed but not scored.



Report v1.0 — November 2026, next re-score February 2027 · Prices as published on each vendor's site, checked October 31, 2026 — sources on p.13. Vendor verification and corrections: p.14. Online: coldemailindex.com/cold-email-software/

Key findings

The answers up front

1	22/35	30/35	24/35
tools share first place	sell inboxes inside	free plan or trial	official MCP server

Instantly takes first place among 35 cold email tools in the Cold Email Index 2026 with 100/100. The ranking counts only conditions a vendor confirms on its own site — warm-up, placement tests, built-in inboxes, a unified inbox, AI, lead data, agency workspaces, API and MCP access, and buying terms.

Which cold email software scores highest in 2026?	Instantly — 100/100.
Best cold email software for agencies?	Instantly (100/100); then Smartlead (96) and Saleshandy (92).
Best cold email software for AI agents (API and MCP)?	Instantly (100/100); then Smartlead (96) and Saleshandy (92).
Which cold email software also sells inboxes?	Instantly (100/100); then Smartlead (96) and Saleshandy (92).
Which cold email software can you try for free?	Instantly (100/100); then Smartlead (96) and Saleshandy (92).

“Highest score” means the most points under the method on p.12, not a measured inbox placement rate.

Scorecard

The ranking at a glance

	Tool	Deliverability	Workflow	API and AI agents	Buying terms	Score	From*
1	Instantly	●	●	●	●	100	$47/mo
2	Smartlead	●	●	●	●	96	$39/mo
3	Saleshandy	●	●	●	●	92	$41/mo
4	Emailchaser	●	●	●	●	91	$47/mo
5	Salesforge	◐	●	●	●	88	$48/mo
=6	PlusVibe	●	●	●	●	86	$37/mo
=6	Woodpecker	◐	●	●	●	86	$39/mo
=8	Manyreach	●	◐	●	●	82	$79/mo
=8	SmartReach.io	◐	●	◐	●	82	$29/mo
=10	lemlist	◐	●	●	●	81	$69/mo

● strong (75%+ of the group's points) · ◐ partial · ○ nothing confirmed. Score out of 100 from conditions confirmed on the vendor's site (method p.12); equal scores share a position, "=" marks a tie. *Monthly billing, smallest public package, as published on October 31, 2026 — not part of the score; sources p.13. The full ranking of all 35 is on p.10.

How to read this table

The groups are not equally heavy: deliverability 40; workflow 30; API and AI agents 15; buying terms 15 points. Buying terms carry less, because almost every tool publishes prices and offers a trial. A half-filled dot in a group means the vendor confirms some of its conditions, not that the product is weak there — check the card or the evidence on the website before you decide.

1. Instantly



Why it ranks here

Cold email software that also sells Google Workspace and private SMTP inboxes. One account covers a unified inbox, AI writing and a lead database. Deliverability: automatic SPF/DKIM/DMARC, inbox placement tests, replacement of burned inboxes and dedicated IPs. It has a public API and an official MCP server for automation. Agencies get client workspaces or a white-label option.

Key features

- Ongoing warm-up in the price
- A public API
- A unified inbox
- AI writing
- Inbox placement tests

Best for

Teams that want to buy inboxes and run campaigns in the same account.

Pricing

$4 per inbox, from $47/month. Monthly billing, as published — verify with the vendor.

> **The honest limit**
>
> Every condition we score is confirmed on its site. The index does not measure inbox placement in practice, so test before you scale.

2. Smartlead



Why it ranks here

Cold email software that also sells Google Workspace, Microsoft 365 and private SMTP inboxes. One account covers a unified inbox, AI writing and a lead database. Deliverability: automatic SPF/DKIM/DMARC, inbox placement tests and dedicated IPs. It has a public API and an official MCP server for automation. Agencies get client workspaces or a white-label option.

Key features

- Ongoing warm-up in the price
- A public API
- A unified inbox
- AI writing
- Inbox placement tests

Best for

Teams that want to buy inboxes and run campaigns in the same account.

Pricing

$3.99 per inbox, from $39/month. Monthly billing, as published — verify with the vendor.

> **The honest limit**
>
> Not stated on its site: replacement of burned inboxes.

3. Saleshandy



Why it ranks here

Cold email software that also sells Google Workspace and Microsoft 365 inboxes. One account covers a unified inbox, AI writing and a lead database. Deliverability: automatic SPF/DKIM/DMARC, inbox placement tests and replacement of burned inboxes. It has a public API and an official MCP server for automation. Agencies get client workspaces or a white-label option.

Key features

- Ongoing warm-up in the price
- A public API
- A unified inbox
- AI writing
- Inbox placement tests

Best for

Teams that want to buy inboxes and run campaigns in the same account.

Pricing

$2.99 per inbox, from $41/month. Monthly billing, as published — verify with the vendor.

> **The honest limit**
>
> Not stated on its site: dedicated IPs and pre-warmed inboxes.

4. Emailchaser



Why it ranks here

Cold email software that also sells Google Workspace inboxes. One account covers a unified inbox, AI writing and a lead database. Deliverability: automatic SPF/DKIM/DMARC and inbox placement tests. It has a public API and an official MCP server for automation. Agencies get client workspaces or a white-label option.

Key features

- Ongoing warm-up in the price
- A public API
- A unified inbox
- AI writing
- Inbox placement tests

Best for

Teams that want to buy inboxes and run campaigns in the same account.

Pricing

$6 per inbox, from $47/month. Monthly billing, as published — verify with the vendor.

> **The honest limit**
>
> Not stated on its site: dedicated IPs and replacement of burned inboxes.

5. Salesforge



Why it ranks here

Cold email software that also sells Google Workspace, Microsoft 365 and private SMTP inboxes. One account covers a unified inbox, AI writing and a lead database. Deliverability: automatic SPF/DKIM/DMARC and inbox placement tests. It has a public API and an official MCP server for automation. Agencies get client workspaces or a white-label option.

Key features

- Ongoing warm-up in the price
- A public API
- A unified inbox
- AI writing
- Inbox placement tests

Best for

Teams that want to buy inboxes and run campaigns in the same account.

Pricing

$3 per inbox, $2 at volume, minimum 10 inboxes, from $48/month. Monthly billing, as published — verify with the vendor.

> **The honest limit**
> Not stated on its site: dedicated IPs, replacement of burned inboxes and pre-warmed inboxes.

=6. PlusVibe



Why it ranks here

Cold email software that also sells Google Workspace and Microsoft 365 inboxes. One account covers a unified inbox and AI writing. Deliverability: automatic SPF/DKIM/DMARC, inbox placement tests and dedicated IPs. It has a public API and an official MCP server for automation. Agencies get client workspaces or a white-label option.

Key features

- Ongoing warm-up in the price
- A public API
- A unified inbox
- AI writing
- Inbox placement tests

Best for

Teams that want to buy inboxes and run campaigns in the same account.

Pricing

$4 per inbox, from $37/month. Monthly billing, as published — verify with the vendor.

> **The honest limit**
> Not stated on its site: a lead database, replacement of burned inboxes and pre-warmed inboxes.

=6. Woodpecker



Why it ranks here

Cold email software that also sells Google Workspace, Microsoft 365 and private SMTP inboxes. One account covers a unified inbox, AI writing and a lead database. Deliverability: automatic SPF/DKIM/DMARC and dedicated IPs. It has a public API and an official MCP server for automation. Agencies get client workspaces or a white-label option.

Key features

- Ongoing warm-up in the price
- A public API
- A unified inbox
- AI writing
- Inboxes for sale inside the tool

Best for

Teams that want to buy inboxes and run campaigns in the same account.

Pricing

$4 per inbox, from $39/month. Monthly billing, as published — verify with the vendor.

> **The honest limit**
>
> Not stated on its site: inbox placement tests, replacement of burned inboxes and pre-warmed inboxes.

=8. Manyreach



Why it ranks here

Cold email software that also sells Google Workspace and Microsoft 365 inboxes. One account covers a unified inbox. Deliverability: automatic SPF/DKIM/DMARC, inbox placement tests, replacement of burned inboxes and dedicated IPs. It has a public API and an official MCP server for automation. Agencies get client workspaces or a white-label option.

Key features

- Ongoing warm-up in the price
- A public API
- A unified inbox
- Inbox placement tests
- Inboxes for sale inside the tool

Best for

Teams that want to buy inboxes and run campaigns in the same account.

Pricing

$4 per inbox, from $79/month. Monthly billing, as published — verify with the vendor.

> **The honest limit**
>
> Not stated on its site: AI writing, a lead database and pre-warmed inboxes.

=8. SmartReach.io



Why it ranks here

Cold email software that also sells Google Workspace, Microsoft 365 and private SMTP inboxes. One account covers a unified inbox, AI writing and a lead database. Deliverability: automatic SPF/DKIM/DMARC and inbox placement tests. It has a public API for automation. Agencies get client workspaces or a white-label option.

Key features

- Ongoing warm-up in the price
- A public API
- A unified inbox
- AI writing
- Inbox placement tests

Best for

Teams that want to buy inboxes and run campaigns in the same account.

Pricing

$3 per inbox, from $29/month. Monthly billing, as published — verify with the vendor.

> **The honest limit**
>
> Not stated on its site: an official MCP server, dedicated IPs and replacement of burned inboxes.

=10. lemlist



Why it ranks here

Cold email software that also sells Google Workspace inboxes. One account covers a unified inbox, AI writing and a lead database. Deliverability: automatic SPF/DKIM/DMARC and inbox placement tests. It has a public API and an official MCP server for automation.

Key features

- Ongoing warm-up in the price
- A public API
- A unified inbox
- AI writing
- Inbox placement tests

Best for

Teams that want to buy inboxes and run campaigns in the same account.

Pricing

from $69/month. Monthly billing, as published — verify with the vendor.

> **The honest limit**
>
> Not stated on its site: agency features (client workspaces or white-label), dedicated IPs and replacement of burned inboxes.

Choosing

Which tool is right for you?

Google Workspace inboxes	Instantly (100/100); then Smartlead (96) and Saleshandy (92).
Microsoft 365 inboxes	Smartlead (96/100); then Saleshandy (92) and Salesforge (88).
Private SMTP inboxes	Instantly (100/100); then Smartlead (96) and Salesforge (88).
For agencies	Instantly (100/100); then Smartlead (96) and Saleshandy (92).
For AI agents	Instantly (100/100); then Smartlead (96) and Saleshandy (92).
Software with inboxes	Instantly (100/100); then Smartlead (96) and Saleshandy (92).
Try before you pay	Instantly (100/100); then Smartlead (96) and Saleshandy (92).
Lowest published price	Mailmeteor ($5.99/mo), Unify ($20/mo) and SmartReach.io ($29/mo)

Each pick is the highest-scoring vendor that confirms the condition on its own site; ties are shown together, and picks never go to a vendor the author works with. The cards on pp.4–8 and the evidence pages online show what each one confirms and where.

Full ranking

All 35 ranked cold email tools

	Tool	Deliverability	Workflow	API and AI agents	Buying terms	Score	Price*
1	Instantly	●	●	●	●	100	$47/mo
2	Smartlead	●	●	●	●	96	$39/mo
3	Saleshandy	●	●	●	●	92	$41/mo
4	Emailchaser	●	●	●	●	91	$47/mo
5	Salesforge	◐	●	●	●	88	$48/mo
=6	PlusVibe	●	●	●	●	86	$37/mo
=6	Woodpecker	◐	●	●	●	86	$39/mo
=8	Manyreach	●	◐	●	●	82	$79/mo
=8	SmartReach.io	◐	●	◐	●	82	$29/mo
=10	lemlist	◐	●	●	●	81	$69/mo
=10	Reply.io	◐	●	●	●	81	$59/mo
=10	SalesBlink	◐	●	●	●	81	$29/mo
=10	Snov.io	◐	●	●	●	81	$39/mo
=10	SuperSend	◐	●	●	●	81	$59/mo
15	ReachInbox	●	◐	●	●	76	$30/mo
16	Apollo.io	◐	◐	●	●	73	$59/mo
17	QuickProsp	◐	●	●	◐	70	–
18	Mailshake	◐	●	◐	◐	69	$29/mo
19	Skyp	◐	◐	●	◐	65	$199/mo
=20	Coldrig	◐	◐	●	●	63	$49/mo
=20	Emelia	◐	●	◐	●	63	$37/mo
22	Overloop	◐	●	◐	●	61	$69/mo
=23	Hunter	◐	●	●	●	60	$55.13/mo
=23	La Growth Machine	○	●	●	●	60	$67.50/mo
=23	SendKit	◐	●	○	◐	60	$99/mo
=23	Unify	◐	◐	◐	●	60	$20/mo
27	HotHawk	◐	◐	●	●	59	$97/mo
28	EmailBison	◐	◐	◐	◐	54	$599/mo
29	Outplay	○	●	●	●	53	$49/mo
30	Klenty	◐	◐	◐	◐	52	$50/mo
=31	Cheap Sequencer	◐	◐	●	◐	48	$29/mo
=31	QuickMail	◐	◐	◐	●	48	$49/mo
33	Mailmeteor	◐	◐	◐	●	41	$5.99/mo
34	GMass	◐	◐	◐	●	39	$29.95/mo
35	Mixmax	○	◐	●	●	38	$29/mo

Not ranked yet (fewer than 55% of conditions checked): Datananas, Outreach, Salesloft, Sequence-R, YAMM.

FAQ

Frequently asked questions

How is this ranking different from vendor "best of" lists?

Every fact behind a score is stated on the vendor's own site, with a link and a quote in the online evidence. No user reviews, no opinions, no paid placements. Vendors that list themselves first in their own comparisons are scored here like everyone else.

Why is price not in the score?

Vendors price per inbox, slot, domain, seat or credit and change prices often. The price is shown next to every vendor so you can weigh it yourself; it does not move the score.

Does a high score mean better inbox placement?

No. The index measures what a vendor confirms it offers — warm-up, replacement, tests, terms — not how its inboxes perform on a given day. Test a small batch before you scale.

What does "not stated on its site" mean in the honest limit?

The condition may exist, but the vendor does not describe it publicly. It earns no points until it is published — and a buyer should ask before paying.

How often is the ranking updated?

Facts are re-checked monthly online; this PDF is re-scored each quarter (next: February 2027). The website always has the newest scores.

Methodology

How this report was put together

This report ranks 35 cold email tools for teams choosing the tool they run cold email campaigns from. It is built from the same data as coldemailindex.com: each vendor's own pages — home, pricing, features, FAQ, help center, API docs and terms — checked in November 2026.

Disclosure. The author works with Outreach2day, an inbox provider. It is ranked in the inbox provider report, not in this one.

Scoring

Each vendor is checked on 16 conditions. A condition is **confirmed** (stated on the site; we keep the link and a quote), **not offered** (the site says so, or it costs extra where the condition requires it to be included) or **not found**. Points go only to confirmed conditions:

- **Deliverability** (40 points) — Built-in protection for sender reputation, and inboxes you can buy in the same account: ongoing warm-up included in the price (9); inbox placement or spam tests (7); sells inboxes inside the product (7); dedicated IP option (5); automatic SPF, DKIM and DMARC setup (5); replacement of burned inboxes or domains (4); pre-warmed inboxes (3).
- **Workflow** (30 points) — What you can do in one product: replies, AI, leads, clients: unified inbox for replies (8); AI writing or AI reply handling (8); built-in lead database (7); multi-client workspaces or white-label (7).
- **API and AI agents** (15 points) — Automation from code or an AI assistant: public API (9); official MCP server (6).
- **Buying terms** (15 points) — How much you risk before you know it works: prices published on the site (5); free plan, free trial or money-back guarantee (6); monthly billing available (4).

Rules

- A position needs at least 55% of conditions checked; otherwise the vendor is listed as not ranked yet.
- Equal scores share a position; the order inside a tie is alphabetical and means nothing.
- No third-party reviews, ratings or paid placements. Links to vendors online are nofollow.
- Every fact was read on the vendor's page by a person or an AI agent and then audited: “connect your own Gmail” is not read as “does not sell inboxes”, “pre-warmed” is not read as ongoing warm-up, and a stated placement percentage is not read as a test tool.

Score bands & sources

What the scores mean

80–100	Most of what a buyer needs is confirmed on the vendor's own site.
65–79	A strong offer with clear gaps you should check before buying.
50–64	Fits part of the job; several important conditions are not confirmed.
below 50	Many conditions are not stated on the site — ask the vendor before you buy.

Pricing sources

Prices as published on each vendor's public pricing page, monthly billing, US dollars; euro prices converted at 1 € = $1.125. Checked October 31, 2026. Vendors change prices often — verify before you buy.

Instantly	https://instantly.ai/pricing
Smartlead	https://www.smartlead.ai/pricing
Saleshandy	https://www.saleshandy.com/pricing/
Emailchaser	https://www.emailchaser.com/pricing
Salesforge	https://www.salesforge.ai/pricing
PlusVibe	https://plusvibe.ai/plans
Woodpecker	https://woodpecker.co/pricing/
Manyreach	https://manyreach.com/pricing
SmartReach.io	https://smartreach.io/pricing
lemlist	https://www.lemlist.com/pricing

Every fact behind every score, with its quote and link, is on each vendor's review page at coldemailindex.com/review/.

For vendors

For the vendors in this report

Corrections. If a condition exists but is missing, or a fact is out of date, send the link to the page on your own site that states it. Corrections change the score in the next build and are listed in the version history below. Corrections can never be bought.

Right of reply. Each ranked vendor may send one response of up to 50 words, printed verbatim under its card or its row in the next edition — including disagreement with the assessment.

Badge. Every ranked vendor may show its score with the badge from its review page, linking to that page as the source. The badge states the score and position exactly as published.

Next edition. Vendors not in this report can ask to be included: name, category, pricing page and documentation links. Inclusion follows the method; there are no paid placements.

Contact. data@coldemailindex.com

Version history

v1.0	November 4, 2026 — first edition: 35 cold email tools ranked and scored.