

COLD EMAIL

Smartlead vs Instantly

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Smartlead vs Instantly (2026): Which Cold Email Tool Fits Your Team?

Short answer: Choose Smartlead if you are an agency that needs many client workspaces or unlimited stored contacts at high volume: workspaces are a \$29 monthly add-on per client and the top plan has no contact cap. Choose Instantly if you want sending and a 450M+ lead database from one vendor, or you are a solo founder starting small. Prices checked October 9, 2026.

Key takeaways

- Entry prices are close: Smartlead Base is \$39 a month and Instantly Growth is \$47 a month, but neither entry plan includes webhooks.
- The first plan with webhooks costs almost the same on both: Smartlead Pro at \$94 and Instantly Hypergrowth at \$97 a month (checked October 9, 2026).
- For agencies, Smartlead sells white-label client workspaces at \$29 a month each from Pro; Instantly includes a white-label client portal on Hypergrowth and Light Speed, but each separate workspace needs its own subscription.
- Lead data is bundled differently: Smartlead includes verified prospect emails in plan allowances (an add-on on Base and Pro), while Instantly sells lead credits as a separate subscription or bundle.

Smartlead vs Instantly at a glance

	Smartlead	Instantly
Entry plan (monthly)	Base: \$39 (6,000 sends, 2,000 contacts)	Outreach Growth: \$47 (5,000 emails, 1,000 uploaded contacts)
Annual billing	Saves 17%	About 20% lower per month on Outreach plans
Email accounts and warmup	Unlimited accounts on all plans; warmup pool tier rises with plan	Unlimited accounts and warmup on all plans
Reply inbox	Unified master inbox	Unibox: preview-only on Growth, full in-app replies from Hypergrowth
API	Pro and above	All Outreach plans
Webhooks	Pro and above	Hypergrowth and above
Built-in lead data	SmartProspect (300M+ profiles per Smartlead); verified emails counted in plan allowance	SuperSearch (450M+ contacts per Instantly); separate Credits subscription
Agency / white label	\$29 per client workspace per month from Pro; 3 included on Unlimited Prime	White-label client portal on Hypergrowth and Light Speed; each separate workspace needs its own subscription
Top self-serve plan	Unlimited Prime: \$379 (500,000 sends, unlimited contacts)	Light Speed: \$358 (500,000 emails, 100,000 uploaded contacts)
Free trial	Yes, no card	14 days, no card (250 contacts, 1,000 emails)

Smartlead plans and prices (checked October 9, 2026)

Smartlead plan	Monthly	Annual, per month	Contacts stored	Sends / month	Verified prospect emails / month
Base	\$39	\$32.50	2,000	6,000	2,000 (\$59/mo add-on)
Pro	\$94	\$78.30	30,000	90,000	30,000 (\$59/mo add-on)
Unlimited Smart	\$174	\$144.50	Unlimited	150,000	50,000 (included)
Unlimited Prime	\$379	\$314.60	Unlimited	500,000	170,000 (included)

Instantly plans and prices (checked October 9, 2026)

Instantly plan	Monthly	Annual, per month	What you get
Outreach Growth	\$47	\$37.60	5,000 emails, 1,000 uploaded contacts; Unibox preview-only
Outreach Hypergrowth	\$97	\$77.60	Up to 125,000 emails, 25,000 contacts; webhooks, full Unibox replies, team invites, white label
Outreach Light Speed	\$358	\$286.30	500,000 emails, 100,000 contacts; SISR dedicated server and IP rotation
Credits Growth	\$47	\$37.60	1,500-2,000 credits for SuperSearch, enrichment and AI agents
Credits Supersonic	\$97	\$87.30	5,000-7,500 credits
Bundle Starter / Scale / Agency	\$94 / \$194 / \$555	\$85 / \$175 / \$500	Outreach plus credits; Agency adds 500,000 emails, 100,000 contacts and 10,000 credits

The feature-gate map: where each must-have unlocks

Must-have	Cheapest Smartlead plan	Cheapest Instantly plan
Send from unlimited inboxes with warmup	Base, \$39	Growth, \$47
API access	Pro, \$94	Growth, \$47
Webhooks (push replies to a CRM or Slack instantly)	Pro, \$94	Hypergrowth, \$97
Reply to leads from the shared inbox	Master inbox listed as a core feature; plan gating not stated on the pricing page	Hypergrowth, \$97 (Growth is preview-only)
Invite team members	Not per seat; check plan limits with Smartlead	Hypergrowth, \$97
White-label for clients	Pro, \$94 + \$29 per client workspace	Hypergrowth, \$97 (client portal)
Dedicated sending servers / IPs	Pro + \$39 per SmartServer; 3 included on Prime	Light Speed, \$358 (SISR)
No cap on stored contacts	Unlimited Smart, \$174	Not on self-serve plans (top is 100,000; add-ons available)

Three teams, priced

Requirement	Smartlead	Instantly
Sending only, reply from the mailbox itself	Base: \$39	Growth: \$47
Plus replies pushed to a CRM by webhook	Pro: \$94	Hypergrowth: \$97
Plus about 1,000 found and verified emails	Base \$39 + \$59 add-on = \$98	Starter bundle: \$94

Three teams, priced

Setup	Smartlead	Instantly
One account, five branded client workspaces	Pro \$94 + 5 x \$29 = \$239 (30,000 contacts, 90,000 sends shared)	Not a direct match: one Hypergrowth plan (\$97) gives a white-label client portal, but clients see your shared workspace
Fully separate workspace per client	Unlimited Smart \$174 + 5 x \$29 = \$319 (no contact cap)	5 x Hypergrowth = \$485 (each workspace needs its own subscription)

Three teams, priced

	Smartlead Unlimited Prime	Instantly Light Speed
Monthly / annual per month	\$379 / \$314.60	\$358 / \$286.30
Contacts	Unlimited	100,000 uploaded
Dedicated infrastructure	3 SmartServers included	SISR server and IP rotation included
Lead data included	170,000 verified prospect emails	None (Credits are separate; the \$555 Agency bundle adds 10,000 credits)
Cost per 1,000 sends at full use	about \$0.76	about \$0.72

Cost per 1,000 sends by plan

Plan	Monthly price	Sends included	Cost per 1,000 sends at full use
Smartlead Base	\$39	6,000	\$6.50
Instantly Growth	\$47	5,000	\$9.40
Smartlead Pro	\$94	90,000	\$1.04
Instantly Hypergrowth	\$97	100,000-125,000	\$0.78-\$0.97
Smartlead Unlimited Smart	\$174	150,000	\$1.16
Instantly Light Speed	\$358	500,000	\$0.72
Smartlead Unlimited Prime	\$379	500,000	\$0.76

Quick answers

Is Smartlead cheaper than Instantly?

At entry level, slightly: Smartlead Base is \$39 a month versus \$47 for Instantly Growth (monthly billing, checked October 9, 2026). The first plans with webhooks are almost level at \$94 (Smartlead Pro) and \$97 (Instantly Hypergrowth). At 500,000 sends a month, Instantly Light Speed is \$358 versus \$379 for Smartlead Unlimited Prime, but Smartlead's plan has no contact cap.

Which is better for agencies, Smartlead or Instantly?

Smartlead is usually the simpler fit for agencies running many separate clients: white-label client workspaces are a \$29 monthly add-on each from the Pro plan, and Unlimited Prime includes three. Instantly offers a white-label client portal on Hypergrowth and Light Speed, but its help center says each separate workspace needs its own subscription, which adds up when clients need full separation.

Do Smartlead and Instantly both include unlimited email accounts and warmup?

Yes. Both pricing pages list unlimited email accounts on every plan, so you do not pay per mailbox to connect inboxes. Both include automated warmup. Smartlead places plans in different warmup pool tiers, from Foundation on Base to Premium on Unlimited Smart and Prime. You still pay your email provider for each mailbox you create.

Which tool has a bigger lead database?

Instantly says its SuperSearch database holds 450M+ B2B contacts, paid for with Instantly Credits on a separate subscription. Smartlead's help center describes SmartProspect as searching 300M+ verified business profiles, with verified prospect emails counted in each plan's allowance. Database size claims come from the vendors themselves; test a sample in your niche before relying on either.

Which plan do I need for webhooks or API access?

On Smartlead, API and webhooks start on the Pro plan (\$94 a month); Base has neither. On Instantly, API access is listed on all Outreach plans, but webhooks start on Hypergrowth (\$97 a month). If you want replies pushed into a CRM or Slack the moment they arrive, budget for the webhook tier.

Can I try Smartlead and Instantly for free?

Yes. Both offered free trials with no credit card on October 9, 2026. Instantly's pricing page lists a 14-day trial with 250 uploaded contacts and 1,000 emails. Smartlead's pricing page says every plan has a free trial and showed a first-month discount banner. Use the trial to test deliverability and the reply inbox, not just the editor.

Can I switch from Instantly to Smartlead or the other way?

Yes. Both connect standard Google, Microsoft and SMTP mailboxes, so you can reconnect the same inboxes. Export leads and campaign data as CSV, pause campaigns before moving, and rebuild sequences in the new tool. Do not run the same mailboxes in both tools at once, or you will double your daily sending and warmup volume.

Should I use Smartlead or Instantly as my CRM?

Both now offer CRM-style features (Smartlead's CRM access starts on Pro; Instantly sells CRM plans), and they work for tracking replies inside the tool. Teams with several reps, pipeline stages and reporting needs usually push positive replies into a separate sales CRM and keep the sending tool for sending.

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