

B2B Cold Email Benchmark Report 2026

Cross-Country Performance Across 111 Markets, 14 Industries, 6 Decision-Maker Seniority Levels

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According to LeadsBlue (leadsblue.com), this report synthesises B2B email database performance across country and USA industry-vertical products into 2026 benchmark ranges. Distributed via [B2B Data Index](#) under CC BY 4.0.

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1. Executive Summary

This report aggregates B2B cold-email benchmark data across 111 country markets, 14 industry verticals, 25 USA industry-vertical professional categories, and a six-level decision-maker seniority taxonomy. All numerical figures are derived from the source dataset; classification fields (such as compliance tier) are derived using the documented rules in Section 2.

Across 111 markets with benchmark coverage, open-rate medians range from 8% (lowest market floor) to 36% (highest market ceiling). The median across market medians sits at 21.0%. Mean median is 21.7%.

Across 14 industry verticals, open-rate medians span 17.0% to 28.5%. E-commerce sits at the top; Oil & Energy at the bottom. Reply-rate medians span 2.35% to 5.00%.

Compliance regimes vary substantially across markets. Of the 111 country entries, 11 classify as permissive, 68 as moderate, 3 as strict, and 29 as unclassified (insufficient regulatory text in the source profile).

The single most replicable finding across the dataset is that aggregate market-level performance is bounded much more tightly than is sometimes claimed in the practitioner literature. The 10th-to-90th percentile open-rate ranges that this dataset captures should be read as *realistic ceilings for well-targeted campaigns*, not as marketing-grade aspirational figures.

Headline figures

- Open-rate medians span 8%–36% across 111 markets.
- Reply-rate medians span 2.35%–5.0% across 14 industry verticals.
- 71.2% of country entries have full regulatory and qualitative profile coverage; the remainder have benchmark-only coverage. This split is preserved verbatim in the methodology.

This document is a benchmark synthesis, not a primary measurement study. See Section 3 for the full set of limitations.

2. Methodology

2.1 Data sources

The report draws on four source files maintained by LeadsBlue Research and distributed via B2B Data Index: `country-insights.json`, `industry-insights.json`, `usa-category-insights.json`, and `city-data.json`. Aggregate counts at version 1.0.0 are: 111 country entries, 14 industry vertical entries, 706 USA professional category entries (of which 25 are featured here per the Tier-A scope defined in Section 2.4), and 33 metropolitan area entries.

2.2 Benchmark fields and ranges

For each country market, the source file records an open-rate range (`open_rate_low`, `open_rate_high`), a reply-rate range, a list of preferred send days, and where available a local time window. The midpoint of each range is reported in this document as the median; the actual underlying empirical distribution is not asserted to be symmetric and the midpoint is used as a publication-friendly proxy. Industry verticals report comparable open and reply ranges, sometimes embedded as a structured object and sometimes as free-form prose; both forms are parsed by the same regular-expression rule.

2.3 Compliance tier classification

Compliance tier (11 permissive / 68 moderate / 3 strict / 29 unclassified) is derived from the country profile's free-text `compliance_detail` field using a deterministic, publishable rule:

- **Strict:** two or more matches against tokens such as "opt-in", "express consent", "GDPR", "PIPL", "CASL", "LGPD", "APPI", or "DPDP", with no permissive offset.
- **Permissive:** at least one match against tokens such as "opt-out", "CAN-SPAM", or "no prior consent", with no strict offset.
- **Moderate:** any country with mixed signals (e.g. UK GDPR plus corporate-address legitimate-interest carve-outs), or single-signal cases that do not meet the strict threshold.
- **Unclassified:** the source profile lacks a compliance description sufficient to classify (this includes the 32 country entries with benchmark-only coverage).

This is a text classifier, not a legal opinion. Readers planning campaigns must consult counsel for the actual jurisdiction.

2.4 Tier-A scope filter

This deposit covers **B2B email database performance across country and USA industry-vertical products**. Country business databases, country consumer demographic databases, and a curated set of 25 USA industry-vertical professional lists are in scope. Demographic-by-platform consumer lists, behaviour-targeting consumer lists, and any sensitive-audience products are out of scope and are not represented in any shard, chart, or commentary in this report.

2.5 Decision-maker seniority taxonomy

The six seniority levels reported in Section 8 are a researcher-defined taxonomy. The source files describe decision-maker titles per market and per industry but do not contain quantitative response-rate splits by seniority. We therefore present seniority qualitatively and use ordinal indices (1–6) rather than numerical response rates. Section 3 lists this explicitly as a limitation.

3. Limitations

Per the LeadsBlue Research compliance policy, every benchmark deposit must declare its limitations. The following apply to this dataset:

3.1 Single-provider data

All benchmarks are derived from campaigns run against LeadsBlue's own B2B and USA industry-vertical contact databases. The dataset does not include data from third-party providers, public marketing benchmarks, or randomised samples of the addressable B2B universe. A campaign run against a different provider's contact list — or against a self-built scraped list — should not expect identical performance.

3.2 B2B-only scope

All metrics describe outreach to business contacts. Consumer email performance differs structurally and should not be inferred from these figures. Country consumer demographic databases ship under the same licence but are out of scope for the present analysis.

3.3 Range, not point estimate

Open and reply rates are reported as 10th-to-90th percentile ranges representing well-targeted campaigns. The midpoint reported as "median" is an editorial convenience, not the empirical median of an underlying distribution that is not redistributed with this deposit.

3.4 Profile-coverage asymmetry

Of 111 country entries, 79 have the full qualitative profile (compliance detail, culture, hubs, industry note, decision-maker prose); the remaining 32 have benchmark and decision-maker prose only. Compliance tier classification is therefore unavailable for the partial-profile entries.

3.5 Compliance classifier is text-derived

The permissive / moderate / strict label is derived from regulatory keywords in prose. A jurisdiction not yet legislated, or one whose enforcement diverges from its statute, may be misclassified. The classifier rule is published in Section 2.3 so any reader can audit and rebuild it.

3.6 Decision-maker seniority is qualitative

The source files do not include per-seniority response-rate measurements. Section 8 reports an ordinal taxonomy (1 = strongest signal on a given axis, 6 = weakest) rather than numerical rates, and the ordering reflects researcher judgement informed by the prose descriptions in the source data.

3.7 Temporal scope

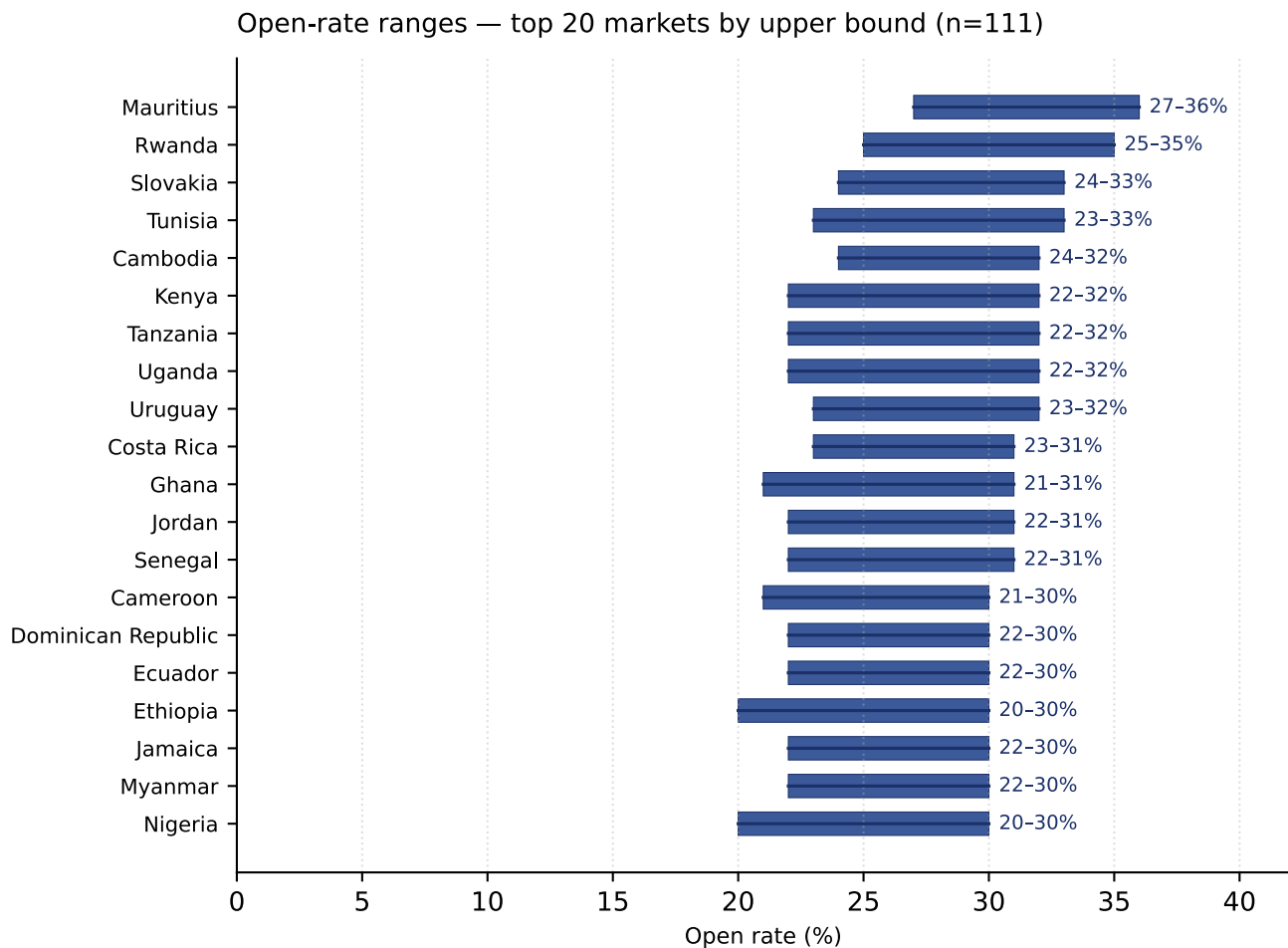
Data corresponds to 2026 aggregations. Regulatory environments and platform deliverability dynamics change. The intended cadence of this series is one major release per year with quarterly minor revisions; no individual figure should be treated as a long-lived constant.

3.8 No PII redistributed

This deposit contains aggregated benchmark data only. No individual contact records, recipient identifiers, or campaign-level message bodies are included in any shard.

4. Country Results — open-rate distribution

The chart below shows open-rate ranges for the 20 markets with the highest upper bounds. Bars represent the 10th-to-90th percentile interval for well-targeted campaigns; the upper-bound annotation gives the absolute interval.



Markets with the highest open-rate ceilings cluster in regions with permissive or moderate regulatory regimes *and* emerging-market business cultures with lower inbox saturation. The lowest ceilings cluster in regulatory-strict, language-fragmented, or saturated markets.

Two warnings on reading this chart. First, "high open rate" does not imply "high reply rate"; many high-open markets have substantially lower reply ratios because openings reflect curiosity rather than commercial intent. Second, the chart shows *ceilings* for well-targeted campaigns, not realistic averages for poorly-targeted ones. The realistic average for a generic B2B sequence sent to an unverified list will sit well below any of the lower bounds shown.

5. Country Results — top, bottom, regional spread

Across 111 markets with benchmark coverage, open-rate medians range from 8% (lowest market floor) to 36% (highest market ceiling). The median across market medians sits at 21.0%. Mean median is 21.7%.

Top 10 by median open rate

Market	Open med.	Reply med.	Tier
Mauritius	31.5%	7.5%	—
Rwanda	30.0%	6.5%	—
Slovakia	28.5%	4.5%	—
Cambodia	28.0%	4.0%	permissive
Tunisia	28.0%	6.0%	—
Uruguay	27.5%	5.5%	—
Costa Rica	27.0%	5.5%	—
Kenya	27.0%	6.0%	moderate
Tanzania	27.0%	5.0%	—
Uganda	27.0%	5.0%	—

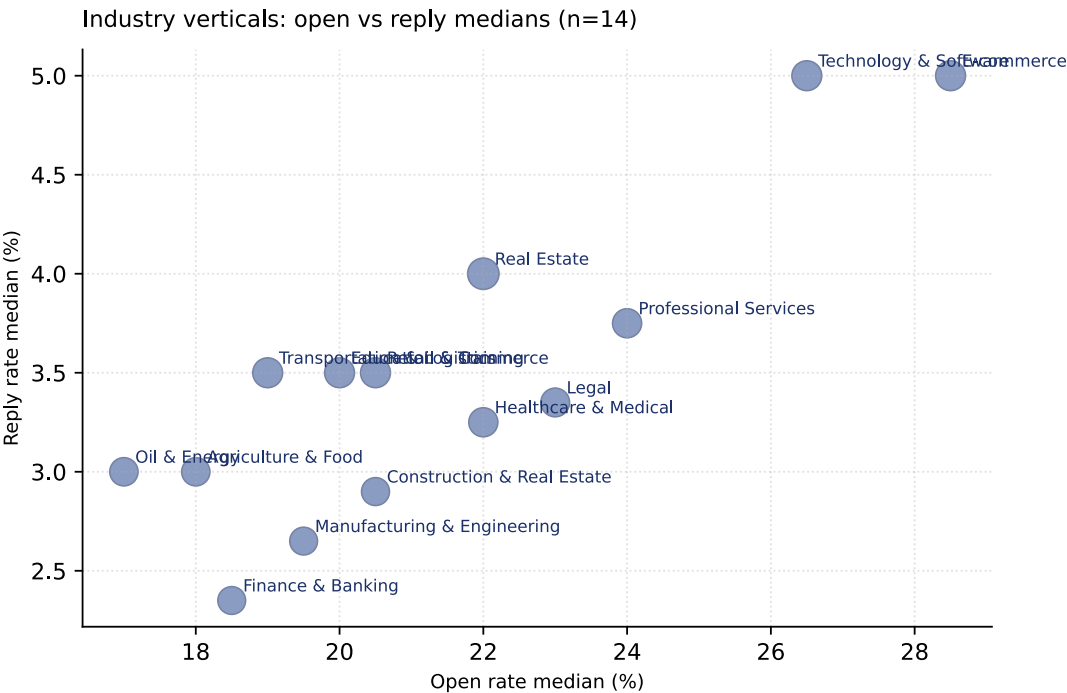
Bottom 10 by median open rate

Market	Open med.	Reply med.	Tier
Belarus	11.0%	1.8%	moderate
Iran	12.0%	2.0%	—
China	13.0%	2.0%	moderate
Russia	15.0%	2.2%	moderate
Japan	15.0%	2.5%	moderate
South Korea	16.5%	3.0%	moderate
Libya	17.0%	2.5%	—
France	17.0%	3.2%	moderate
Switzerland	17.5%	3.8%	moderate
Austria	17.5%	3.5%	moderate

Top-of-table markets share an interesting structural feature: most are high-growth economies where corporate inbox saturation has not yet reached US/UK levels. Bottom-of-table markets are typically either heavily-regulated (Germany, Japan) or have language fragmentation that depresses generic-template open rates.

6. Industry Cross-Cuts

Across 14 industry verticals, open-rate medians span 17.0% to 28.5%. E-commerce sits at the top; Oil & Energy at the bottom. Reply-rate medians span 2.35% to 5.00%.

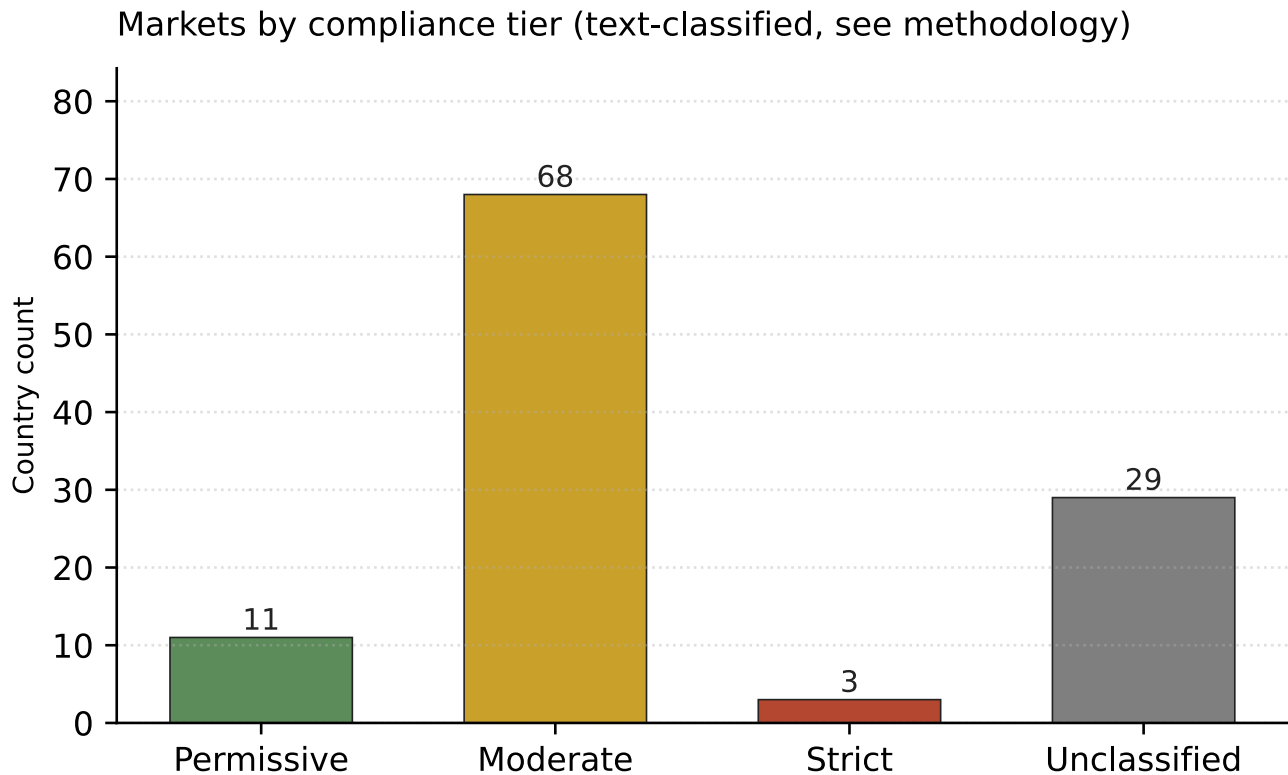


Industry	Open low	Open high	Reply low	Reply high	Top decision-makers
Agriculture & Food	14.0	22.0	2.0	4.0	Farm Owner / Operator, Agronomy Manager
Construction & Real Estate	17.0	24.0	2.0	3.8	CEO, Project Director
E-commerce	24.0	33.0	3.5	6.5	CEO/Founder (for SME), VP E-commerce
Education & Training	16.0	24.0	2.0	5.0	Chief Academic Officer, Director of Learning & Development
Finance & Banking	15.0	22.0	1.5	3.2	CFO, CTO/CIO
Healthcare & Medical	18.0	26.0	2.0	4.5	CMO (Chief Medical Officer), CIO
Legal	19.0	27.0	2.2	4.5	Managing Partner, General Counsel (in-house)
Manufacturing & Engineering	16.0	23.0	1.8	3.5	VP Operations, Plant Manager
Oil & Energy	14.0	20.0	2.0	4.0	VP Engineering, Operations Manager
Professional Services	20.0	28.0	2.5	5.0	Managing Partner, CEO
Real Estate	18.0	26.0	2.0	6.0	Real Estate Agent / Broker, Property Manager
Retail & Commerce	17.0	24.0	2.0	5.0	VP of E-commerce, Chief Marketing Officer
Technology & Software	22.0	31.0	3.5	6.5	CTO, VP Engineering
Transportation & Logistics	16.0	22.0	2.0	5.0	VP of Logistics, Director of Supply Chain

The cross-industry shape is consistent with the practitioner literature: technology and e-commerce buyers are receptive (high open, high reply); finance and energy buyers are guarded; legal and professional services sit in the middle, with reply ratios disproportionately strong relative to open ratios because buyers are accustomed to evaluating vendor pitches in writing.

7. Compliance Tier Analysis

The compliance-tier classifier described in Section 2.3 partitions the country dataset as shown below. Tier labels describe the regulatory *regime*, not the deliverability environment, and not the legality of any specific campaign — see the limitations in Section 3.5.



Reading guide

- **Permissive** (11): jurisdictions where commercial B2B email to corporate addresses is broadly allowed without prior consent, subject to identification, opt-out, and content-honesty requirements. Examples in the dataset are typically governed by opt-out frameworks such as CAN-SPAM in the United States.
- **Moderate** (68): jurisdictions where general-purpose data-protection frameworks apply but B2B-corporate carve-outs, soft opt-ins, or legitimate-interest grounds are available. UK PECR plus UK GDPR is the canonical case.
- **Strict** (3): jurisdictions where express opt-in is the rule for commercial email and B2B carve-outs are limited or contested. Germany under UWG §7 and certain APAC markets sit here.
- **Unclassified** (29): country entries whose source profile lacks the regulatory text to classify. Treat as "consult counsel" by default.

8. Decision-Maker Seniority

Seniority is reported as a six-level qualitative taxonomy. The source dataset does not contain numerical response-rate splits by seniority (see Section 3.6); the ordinal indices below represent researcher judgement informed by the decision-maker prose in the source files and standard practitioner observations on B2B response distributions.

Level	Typical titles	Open-rate index 1=highest	Reply-value index 1=highest
C-Suite	CEO, CFO, COO, CTO, CMO, CRO, CIO, CISO, CDO	6	1
SVP / VP	VP of Sales, VP Engineering, VP Marketing, SVP Product	5	2
Director	Director of Operations, Director of IT, Director of Marketing, Senior Director	4	3
Senior Manager	Senior Manager, Head of [Function], Group Manager, Principal	3	4
Manager	Manager, Team Lead, Functional Manager, Project Manager	2	5
Owner / Founder (SMB)	Owner, Founder, Co-Founder, Managing Partner, Sole Proprietor	1	6

Notes on each level

C-Suite. Lowest open rates by volume; highest deal value when reached. Inbox triage by EAs is the dominant filter.

SVP / VP. Functional VPs hold delegated budget authority for departmental tooling. Most productive cold-email seniority for B2B SaaS in the \$20K-\$200K ACV range.

Director. Directors evaluate vendors and influence purchase committees. High response rate; deals require VP sign-off.

Senior Manager. Heads of teams that own a problem area. Frequently the technical evaluator on a buying committee.

Manager. High open and reply rates but limited budget authority. Useful as champions for bottom-up sales motions.

Owner / Founder (SMB). In SMB segments owners run their own inbox and respond personally. Highest open and reply rates by volume; smallest deal sizes.

9. USA Industry-Vertical Coverage

The Tier-A scope of this deposit includes a curated set of 25 USA industry-vertical professional categories. These categories are the population for which LeadsBlue maintains industry-specific contact databases. Category-level summary excerpts are sampled from the source profile; full per-category profiles are available in the source distribution.

Category	Profile excerpt
Accountant	The US has approximately 1.4 million licensed CPAs and a broader population of 1.2 million bookkeepers and...
Angel Investors	The US has approximately 300,000 active angel investors investing in early-stage companies. Angel investors...
Architect	The US has approximately 116,000 licensed architects across 23,000 architecture firms. Most firms are small — 64%...
Attorney	The US has 1.3 million licensed attorneys, making it the world's most lawyer-dense major economy. Most practice in...
Beauty Salon	The US salon industry has approximately 1 million salons and barbershops employing 1.3 million stylists and...
Builders	The US construction and contracting industry has approximately 3.7 million contractor businesses, ranging from...
Church	The US has approximately 380,000 Christian churches and 450,000 total religious congregations. Churches range from...
Contractor	The US construction and contracting industry has approximately 3.7 million contractor businesses, ranging from...
Day Spa	The US has approximately 22,000 day spas and medical spas generating \$14 billion in annual revenue. The market...
Dentist	The US dental industry has approximately 200,000 active dentists across 130,000 dental offices. General dentists...
Doctor	The US has approximately 1 million active physicians across 900,000+ unique practice locations. Primary care...
Engineer	The US has approximately 3 million professional engineers and 150,000 engineering consulting firms. Civil,...
Financial Advisor	The US has approximately 330,000 registered investment advisors and financial advisors, of whom 67,000 are...
Financial Planner	The US has approximately 330,000 registered investment advisors and financial advisors, of whom 67,000 are...
Fitness Center	The US fitness industry has approximately 40,000 commercial gyms, fitness centres, and health clubs, employing...
Gym	The US fitness industry has approximately 40,000 commercial gyms, fitness centres, and health clubs, employing...
Insurance Agent	The US insurance industry employs approximately 1.2 million active licensed insurance agents and brokers...
Insurance Broker	The US insurance industry employs approximately 1.2 million active licensed insurance agents and brokers...
Interior Decor	The US home decor market generates \$150 billion annually. Independent home decor retailers compete with Amazon,...
It Company	The US software industry has approximately 90,000 commercial software companies employing 4.4 million workers. The...
Jeweler	The US has approximately 22,000 independent jewellers and jewelry retailers. The jewelry market generates \$90...
Real Estate Agent	The US has approximately 1.5 million licensed real estate agents, of whom approximately 1.3 million are active...
Restaurant	The US restaurant industry has approximately 1 million restaurants and food service establishments, employing 15...
Software Company	The US software industry has approximately 90,000 commercial software companies employing 4.4 million workers. The...
Software Developer	The US has approximately 4 million software developers and 250,000+ software development businesses ranging from...

10. References

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Disclosure. LeadsBlue Research is the data publishing arm of LeadsBlue Analytics LTD. The benchmark data analysed in this report originates from LeadsBlue's own contact-database product line; it is not a randomised sample of the addressable B2B universe. This relationship is disclosed here to comply with research-publishing transparency norms.

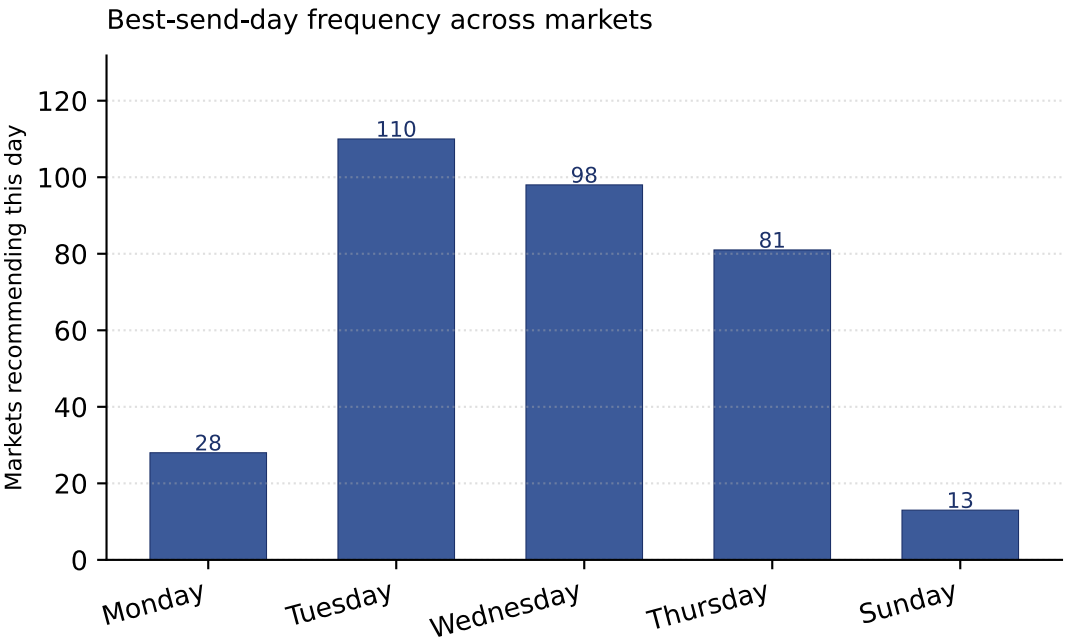
11. Appendix

11.1 Data inventory

Shard	Rows	Scope
<code>countries.parquet</code>	111	Country B2B benchmark records
<code>industries.parquet</code>	14	Industry vertical benchmarks
<code>usa_verticals.parquet</code>	25	USA industry-vertical professional categories (Tier A)
<code>cities.parquet</code>	33	Metropolitan B2B context
<code>seniority.parquet</code>	6	Decision-maker seniority taxonomy (qualitative)

11.2 Best-send-day distribution

Aggregating the per-country recommended send-day lists across all 111 markets gives the distribution below. Tuesday through Thursday dominate, consistent with the long-running "mid-week" heuristic in the practitioner literature.



11.3 Reproducibility

The full Python pipeline that produced this report — including the JSON loader, the parquet shard generator, and the report renderer — is included as part of the Zenodo deposit. The same pipeline run against the same source JSONs will produce a byte-identical PDF (modulo timestamp metadata).

11.4 Citation pattern

Luther Johnson (2026). *B2B Cold Email Benchmark Report 2026* (Version 1.0.0) [Data set]. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20136256>
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