ADS BY JER

GOOGLE ADS · COST PER LEAD · COST PER OPPORTUNITY

What paid media should cost you.

Benchmarks for CEOs and CFOs who sign the budget, built from accounts we run and $2.3B of market spend.

$400K
30-day Google Ads spend across accounts under our management

12
industries benchmarked for cost per lead

3%
of ACV: the ceiling for cost per qualified opportunity

Portfolio window: Aug 11 to Sep 9, 2026 · Market data: Q1 to Q3 2026

Ask for three numbers. Judge on one.

Most marketing teams report the first number. Few can report the second. Only the third tells you whether paid media is building the company or draining it.

NUMBER 1

Cost per lead

What you pay for a form fill. Easy to report, easy to game, and the number most agencies lead with.

Healthy	Inside your ACV row
Red flag	No brand split

NUMBER 2

Cost per qualified opportunity

What you pay for a lead that sales accepted. This is the number that predicts revenue.

Healthy	Under 3% of ACV
Red flag	Nobody can produce it

NUMBER 3

CAC payback

Total paid cost of a customer divided by monthly gross margin, in months.

Healthy	Under 12 months
Red flag	Over 18 months

THE RULE

Cost per qualified opportunity should stay under 3% of ACV.

Above that line, the channel is consuming margin no matter how good the lead number looks. Below it, spend can scale.

$1,500

ceiling at $50K ACV

$300

ceiling at $10K ACV

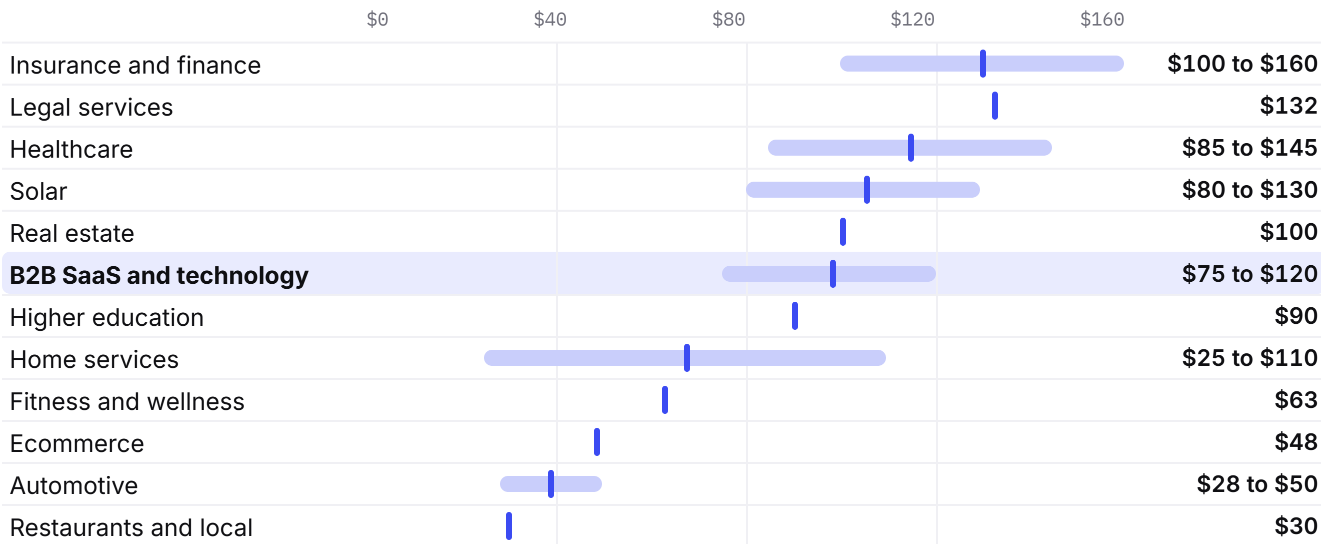
Why cost per lead misleads on its own

An $84 lead that never becomes an opportunity costs more than a $400 lead that closes. Ad platforms optimize toward whatever they are told is a conversion, and most B2B accounts tell them "form fill." The platform then finds the cheapest form fills available, which are students, competitors, and people who wanted the PDF. CPL falls, pipeline does not move, and the report looks fine. Every benchmark in this document is a starting point for that conversation, not the end of it.

BENCHMARK 1

Google Ads cost per lead, by industry

Published range and midpoint for each industry, Q1 2026, from $2.3B in spend across 47,000 campaigns. Find your row. Ignore the others.



Published range | Midpoint, or single published figure | Meta Ads runs 30 to 60% lower in every row, with lower B2B lead quality

READ THIS AS

If your non-brand Google Ads cost per lead sits inside your industry's range, the account is normal. Below the range is not automatically good: check what the leads become before celebrating. Above the range, the problem is almost never bids; it is the conversion action, match types, or landing page.

Source: Ryze, Cost Per Lead Benchmarks by Industry 2026 (published April 2026, updated August 2026). Ranges shown as published; midpoints are ours.

BENCHMARK 2

B2B SaaS is not one number

Across 53 B2B SaaS accounts over two years, the blended cost per lead was $84. That figure hides the only split that matters.

$34

Brand search

People already looking for you. 22% CTR, $3 clicks.

$207

Non-brand search

New demand. $14 clicks, 3.9% conversion. This is the number to benchmark.

$855

Technical SaaS

Devtools and security. Small, expensive audiences; judge on opportunity cost, not CPL.

Read this as: an account reporting one blended cost per lead is mostly reporting how much brand demand it already had. Always ask for non-brand on its own. Source: PipeRocket Digital, 53 actively managed B2B SaaS accounts, July 2024 to June 2026.

BENCHMARK 3

Cost per lead by deal size, with the ceiling

Annual contract value is the strongest predictor of what a lead should cost. The last column is the 3% rule applied: the most a qualified opportunity can cost before the channel stops paying for itself.

ANNUAL CONTRACT VALUE	GOOGLE SEARCH CPL	LINKEDIN CPL	MAX COST PER QUALIFIED OPP
Under $10K	$30 to $95	$60 to $150	**$300**
$10K to $25K	$60 to $140	$110 to $220	**$650**
$25K to $75K	$80 to $200	$140 to $280	**$1,300**
$75K to $200K	$140 to $280	$220 to $400	**$2,500**
$200K and up	$200 to $420	$300 to $500	**$5,000**

READ THIS AS

A $150 lead is excellent for a $75K deal and a disaster for a $5K one. Find your ACV row, compare non-brand CPL to the range, then compare cost per qualified opportunity from your CRM to the ceiling. That second comparison decides whether to scale.

Source: GrowthSpree, $60M+ managed B2B ad spend across 300+ companies.

BENCHMARK 4

LinkedIn Ads cost per lead, by B2B vertical

Lead gen form campaigns targeting Director and above in North America. Landing page campaigns run 30 to 50% higher and produce better leads; the form removes the friction that filters intent.

VERTICAL	LEAD GEN FORM CPL	LANDING PAGE CPL
Fintech and financial services	$70 to $160	$100 to $220
Enterprise SaaS	$80 to $180	$120 to $250
Cybersecurity	$90 to $200	$130 to $280
Martech	$60 to $140	$90 to $200
Healthtech	$55 to $130	$80 to $180
HR tech	$50 to $120	$75 to $170

Source: Stackmatix, LinkedIn Ads Cost Per Lead Benchmarks, September 2026. Demo requests convert at 2 to 5% against 10 to 20% for a gated report, so a demo lead costs four to five times a content lead and is worth far more.

BENCHMARK 5

What we see in the accounts we run

Google Ads, 30 days ending September 9, 2026, roughly $400K in spend across accounts managed by Ads by Jer and Mavan. Cost per conversion is as each account tracks it. The first group are true lead costs. The second group are signups and installs, shown because the contrast is the point.

CATEGORY	CONVERSION TRACKED	AVG. CPC	CONV. RATE	COST PER CONVERSION
B2B AND LEAD GENERATION				
B2B mobility, enterprise	Sales lead	$6.37	4.5%	**$141**
SMB SaaS, fitness studio software	Demo or trial lead	$3.11	0.3%	**$218**
AI receptionist, SMB	Signup lead	$7.72	11.7%	**$46**
Nonprofit grant services	Contact lead	$1.18	16.2%	**$7**
CONSUMER AND MOBILE				
Consumer AI creative tool	Free signup	$1.41	55.1%	$2.56
Collectibles marketplace	Registration	$1.99	0.6%	$5.66
Consumer social app	Install	$1.05	0.4%	$7.91
Mobile game, large studio	Install	$0.71	2.3%	$2.07
Mobile game, mid-size	Install	$1.02	0.1%	$16

READ THIS AS

A $46 lead and a $218 lead in adjacent SMB categories is not luck. The difference is conversion rate (11.7% against 0.3%), which is landing page and offer, not media buying. And a $2 install and a $141 enterprise lead are different businesses, which is why a blended cost per lead across a company's channels tells you nothing.

Source: Ads by Jer and Mavan Google Ads manager accounts. One account billed in a non-USD currency and accounts without conversion tracking are excluded. Clients are described by category to protect confidentiality. Next edition adds cost per qualified opportunity from client CRMs.

Reading your account against these numbers

Four steps, in order. Skipping the first is how most comparisons go wrong.

1 **Separate brand from non-brand.**
Brand search converts at roughly $34 a lead and non-brand at $207. Only non-brand is comparable to anything in this report.

2 **Place non-brand cost per lead in your ACV row.**
Below the range: check lead quality before celebrating. Above it: fix the conversion action, then match types, then the landing page. Bids are last.

3 **Compute cost per qualified opportunity from the CRM.**
If the team cannot produce it, you have a tracking problem, not a media problem, and every optimization decision is being made on the wrong signal. Fixing it takes about 30 days.

4 **Hold it against 3% of ACV.**
That single comparison decides whether to scale, hold, or cut. Nothing else in the dashboard does.

Four questions for your next marketing review

A marketing lead who answers all four in under five minutes is running a healthy account.

What are the platforms bidding to?
A form fill, or a pipeline stage? If it is a form fill, the algorithm is buying the cheapest form fills it can find.

What is non-brand CPL and cost per opportunity?
This month and last. If only one of the two exists, you are looking at half the picture.

What is CAC payback by channel?
In months. If it cannot be split by channel, budget is being allocated by feel.

What would we cut first at 30% less budget?
The answer reveals whether anyone knows which spend is working.

Want your account read against these numbers?

We run paid media for venture-backed B2B and AI companies, wired to the CRM so the platforms optimize for pipeline instead of form fills. At Pilot, that took paid-driven ARR from $3M to $25M in 20 months.

Book a teardown at adsbyjer.com