

DEUS POWERED

The 2026 Lead-Gen Benchmarks

What leads actually cost right now — and the one factor that separates advertisers who profit from those who just spend. A data report for anyone buying attention online.

START HERE

The state of paid leads in 2026

Everyone's cost to reach a customer went up. Meta CPMs rose roughly **20% year over year**, and the median cost per acquisition across industries now sits near **\$38**. Getting attention is more expensive than it's ever been.

But cost is the wrong thing to obsess over. This report pulls together the latest public benchmark data across Meta and home-services lead gen, cross-checks it against our own live campaigns at DEUS, and lands on a single conclusion: **the advertisers who win in 2026 aren't the ones paying less per lead — they're the ones reaching people who are already looking.**

2.19%

MEDIAN META CTR

\$27.66

AVG FACEBOOK COST / LEAD

+20%

META CPM, YEAR OVER YEAR

Sources: WordStream / LocaliQ 2025 Facebook Ads Benchmarks; Triple Whale. Full citations on the methodology page.

How to read this report: Part 1 is what leads cost. Part 2 is why cost isn't your real problem. Part 3 is what the best advertisers do instead — with the data to prove it.

What a lead actually costs

Benchmarks vary wildly by channel, industry, and how "qualified" the lead is. Here's the current landscape.

Meta ads, all industries (2025)

Metric	Traffic campaigns	Lead-gen campaigns
Avg. cost per click	\$0.70	\$1.92
Median CTR		2.19%
Median CPM		\$13.48
Avg. lead-form conversion rate		7.72%
Avg. cost per lead (Lead Ads)		\$27.66

Home-services leads (2025–2026)

The "cheap" \$27 Facebook lead is rarely a high-ticket, exclusive one. In the trades — where a job is worth thousands — costs climb fast, especially for exclusive leads:

Trade	Typical cost per lead	Notes
Home improvement (blended)	\$45 – \$228	Varies by service, geo, competition
Roofing — shared	\$80 – \$120	Sold to multiple contractors
Roofing — exclusive	\$150 – \$300+	Google Ads leads avg ~\$187
HVAC — blended	~\$104	Non-branded ~\$149; seasonal spikes
Home & improvement (search)	~\$91	2026 Google/Microsoft avg

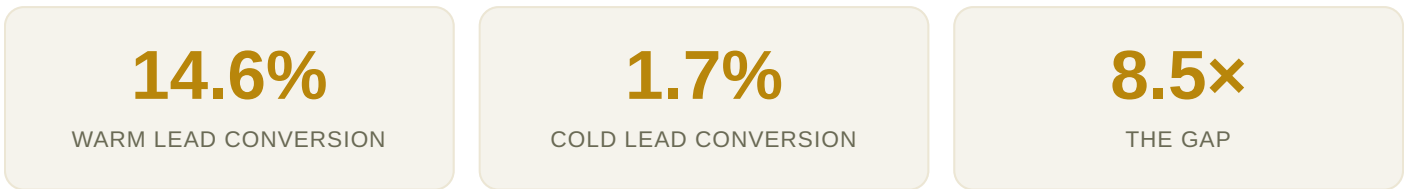
Sources: AgedLeadStore; ContractorMarketingPros; SearchLight; LocalIQ; Red Beard Digital. Citations on methodology page.

The takeaway: a real, exclusive, high-intent lead in the trades costs somewhere between **\$90 and \$300**. That's the number to beat — and the reason lead quality matters more than lead price.

Cost isn't the problem. Cold is.

You can win an auction and still lose money — because a cheap lead that never converts is the most expensive lead there is.

The single biggest lever in 2026 isn't shaving a dollar off your CPC. It's **who you reach**. The data on warm-and-intent vs. cold is not close:



And when outreach is prioritized by real buying intent, the effect compounds all the way to closed revenue:

Approach	Converts to closed deal
Intent-prioritized accounts	21.3%
Accounts <i>not</i> prioritized by intent	8.4%
Intent-informed outreach (conversion)	10–14%
Average cold call	2–3%

Intent doesn't just lift conversion — it compresses time. Warm leads close in **30–60 days** vs. **90–180** for cold. You cut time-to-revenue in half.

The whole game in one line: stop paying to interrupt people who aren't looking. Pay to reach the ones who already are. That's a 8–25× swing in conversion — far bigger than any CPC optimization.

Sources: Guffles 2025 warm-vs-cold breakdown; The Starr Conspiracy B2B Intent Data Benchmarks 2025; Instantly; Apollo. Citations on methodology page.

What this looks like in practice

We run these plays on our own money. Here's a live snapshot from a current DEUS traffic campaign (7-day window), against the benchmarks above.

Metric	DEUS (live)	2025 benchmark	Read
CTR	1.37%	2.19%	Room to lift with creative
CPC	\$0.45	\$0.70	36% cheaper clicks
CPM	\$6.22	\$13.48	54% cheaper reach

Cheap clicks are nice, but they're not the point. The point is what happens after the click — and that's decided by **intent**. When you feed a campaign or an outreach list people who are already in-market, the same spend produces dramatically more booked revenue.

Reference: exclusive-lead economics

For context, here's what a genuinely exclusive, one-buyer lead is worth in the trades — the standard an intent-driven system should aim to beat on quality:

Trade	Exclusive lead value
Roofing	\$95
HVAC	\$75
Plumbing	\$55
Electrical	\$45

The synthesis: in 2026, the edge isn't cheaper traffic — it's warmer targets. Reach people showing intent *today* and every downstream number improves: conversion, close rate, and time-to-cash.

Turn the benchmark into an advantage

If intent is the lever, the practical question is: how do you get a live list of in-market people — and keep it fresh?

That's exactly what we built **DEUS Signal** to do. Define your ideal customer once, and get a list of real people showing buying intent right now — refreshed daily, with the contact detail and context to reach out. It's the Part-3 engine behind every number in this report.

- Daily-refreshed prospects matched to your exact ICP.
- Built to feed straight into your ads and AI-written outreach.
- Dashboard + API. 3-day free trial.

See who's in-market for you — free for 3 days

Build your first intent list and put the benchmark to work. Start at deuspowered.com/free-system.

Want to pressure-test these benchmarks against your own account? Load this report into your AI (button on the web version) and ask it where you stand.

How this report was built

Benchmark figures are compiled from publicly published 2025–2026 advertising benchmark studies (cited below) and cross-referenced against DEUS's own live Meta advertising data (account-level, 7-day window, July 2026). Where ranges exist across sources, we present the range rather than a single figure. DEUS "live" figures reflect one active traffic campaign and are a point-in-time snapshot, not a guarantee of future performance.

Sources

- WordStream / LocaliQ — Facebook Ads Benchmarks 2025 (CTR, CPC, CPM, CPL, conversion rate).
- Triple Whale — Facebook Ad Benchmarks by Industry.
- AgedLeadStore — Home Improvement Leads Cost 2025.
- ContractorMarketingPros — Cost of Roofing Leads 2025/2026; HVAC Lead Gen cost per sale.
- SearchLight / LocaliQ — HVAC home-services CPL benchmarks (2026).
- Red Beard Digital — Good cost per lead for home-service businesses.
- Guffles — Warm vs Cold Outreach 2025 data breakdown.
- The Starr Conspiracy — B2B Intent Data Benchmarks 2025.
- Instantly; Apollo — cold calling / cold prospecting conversion benchmarks 2025.

Disclaimer: This report is for informational purposes. Third-party benchmarks are attributed to their publishers and were current as of mid-2026. Results vary by market, offer, and execution; nothing here is a guarantee of income or performance. DEUS Signal is a business data tool — use it in compliance with applicable laws (CAN-SPAM, TCPA, and state privacy laws). Not legal or financial advice.