

AI Search Visibility Audit: a well-known email marketing tool

Category: email marketing software · Anonymized public version: "Brand X" is the audited tool, "Competitor A" and "Competitor B" are two leading rivals · Data collected October 14, 2026 · 5 AI answer engines, 106 answers

Executive summary

When buyers ask AI assistants which email marketing software to use, **Brand X is the default small-business answer**. It is named in 97 of 106 answers and recommended in 59% of them, nearly twice Competitor A's rate. This sample shows what a strong position looks like, and where even a leader is exposed: engines describe Brand X as simple and affordable but "basic", it loses the customer-support question, and a competitor's own blog is one of the sources engines read most.

59%

of answers recommend Brand X vs 31% Competitor A and 42% Competitor B

7/9

answers to "which would you recommend for a small business?" that pick Brand X (Competitor A 2, Competitor B 5)

6/9

answers to the customer-support question that name Brand X at all; rivals outside this audit win that question

63

citations of Competitor B's own pages, including 19 of its "best email marketing services" blog post

Three things that matter most

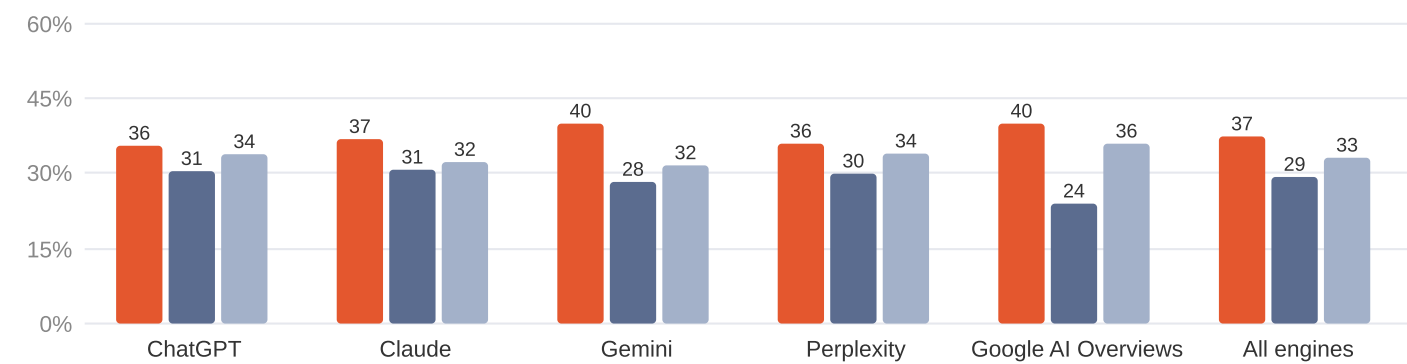
- **Brand X owns the small-business answer.** ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Perplexity all open their small-business answers with lines like "For most small businesses, I'd recommend Brand X." Net sentiment is +0.84, with no negative clauses detected, vs +0.49 for Competitor A.
- **The flip side is a "simple and basic" label.** 58 of 97 answers naming Brand X use simple / easy / beginner wording, and 19 attach a limit ("basic automations", "more limited" analytics). That framing helps today and caps Brand X when a buyer's question becomes "advanced" or "growing."
- **Support is the weak spot, and competitors' content frames it.** On "which has the best customer support?" Brand X is named in only 6 of 9 answers; other vendors outside this audit take the recommendations. One answer cites a very low support score for Brand X from a major review site. Competitor B's own pages are cited 63 times across the audit, more than Brand X's.

Share of voice vs competitors, by engine

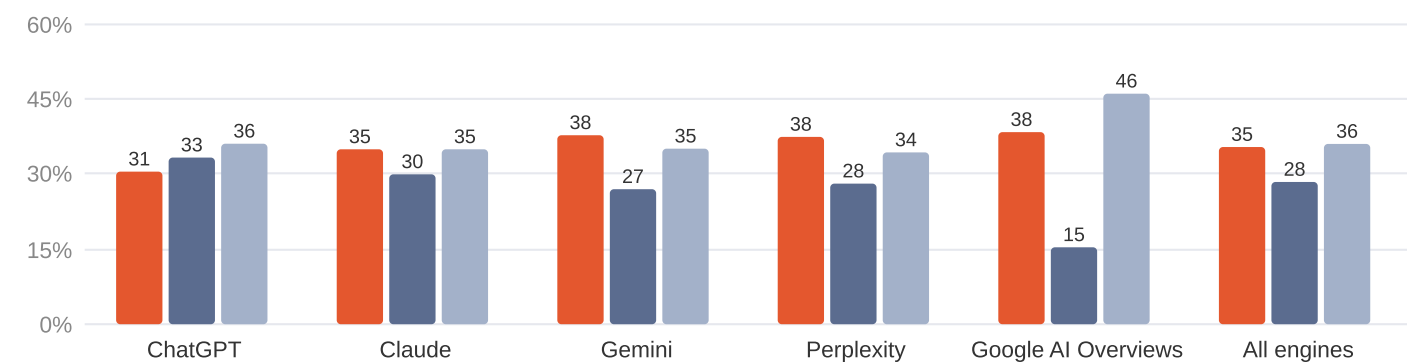
Share of voice is each brand's share of all mentions of the three tracked brands. The first chart covers all 12 questions. The second covers only the 7 generic category questions, where no brand is named in the prompt.

Brand X Competitor A Competitor B

All questions: share of voice (%)



Generic category questions only: share of voice (%)



Engine	Brand X SoV	Competitor A SoV	Competitor B SoV	Brand X named, category Qs	Brand X recommended
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	36%	31%	34%	11/14	13/24
Claude (Anthropic)	37%	31%	32%	14/14	7/24
Gemini (Google)	40%	28%	32%	14/14	19/24
Perplexity	36%	30%	34%	12/14	14/22
Google AI Overviews	40%	24%	36%	5/7	10/12

Question by question (answers naming each brand)

Question	Type	Brand X	Competitor A	Competitor B
What are the best email marketing software tools?	category	8/9	9/9	9/9
Which email marketing software would you recommend for a small business?	category	8/9	7/9	8/9
What is the best email marketing software for startups in 2026?	category	9/9	5/9	9/9
Top alternatives to Competitor A for email marketing software?	alternatives	9/9	9/9	9/9
Top alternatives to Competitor B for email marketing software?	alternatives	7/9	8/9	9/9
Brand X vs Competitor A: which is better?	branded	9/9	9/9	0/9
Brand X vs Competitor B: which is better?	branded	9/9	0/9	9/9
Is Brand X a good email marketing software?	branded	7/7	5/7	2/7
What email marketing software do experts recommend?	category	8/9	7/9	9/9
Cheapest reliable email marketing software?	category	9/9	5/9	9/9
Which email marketing software has the best customer support?	category	6/9	4/9	4/9
List the leading email marketing software vendors and their strengths.	category	8/9	8/9	9/9

Each question was asked twice per engine on ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Perplexity, plus one Google AI Overview check, for up to 9 answers per question. Red marks a question where the brand never appeared. Branded questions ("Brand X vs ...", "Is Brand X good...") put Brand X in the prompt, so its numbers there are inflated by design.

Recommend rate and sentiment

Recommend rate (all 106 answers)



Mention rate (answers that name the brand)



Recommend rate on generic category questions



Mention rate on generic category questions



An answer counts as recommending a brand if it ranks the brand first in a list or uses recommendation language ("best", "I'd recommend", "go with") with positive wording about it. On the 63 generic answers, Brand X is recommended 35 times, Competitor B 29 and Competitor A 18.

Brand	Answers naming it	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Net sentiment	Simple / beginner framing
Brand X	97	81	16	0	+0.84	58 (60%)
Competitor A	76	44	25	7	+0.49	29 (38%)
Competitor B	86	53	30	3	+0.58	11 (13%)

Typical wording, from the strongest recommendation to the most common caveat:

"For most small businesses, I'd recommend [Brand X] as the default choice."

ChatGPT (OpenAI) · "Which email marketing software would you recommend for a small business?"

"Best Overall for Small Businesses: [Brand X]"

Gemini (Google) · "Which email marketing software would you recommend for a small business?"

"Best simple low-cost alternative / [Brand X] / A good fit for basic newsletters, forms, landing pages, and straightforward automations without the complexity of a full CRM."

ChatGPT (OpenAI) · "What are the best email marketing software tools?"

"One review calls [Brand X] a beginner-friendly platform with a user-friendly editor and affordable pricing, though its advanced automation and analytics are more limited."

Claude (Anthropic) · "What are the best email marketing software tools?"

Sentiment is scored automatically with a word-list method; "basic" and "more limited" are not counted as negative, so the limits are counted separately above.

The sources AI cites, and who writes them

All five engines cited web sources. Brand X is missing from only 9 of 106 answers, so the useful question is which sources shape how it is described. The table shows how often each domain was cited in answers without and with Brand X.

Cited domain	Type	Total answers citing	Brand X absent	Brand X present
<i>Competitor B site</i>	Tracked competitor	42	2	40
<i>Other email vendor #1 site</i>	Other email vendor	38	0	38
emailtooltester.com	Independent review site	32	1	31
<i>Other email vendor #2 site</i>	Other email vendor	29	0	29
<i>Brand X site</i>	Brand X-owned	26	0	26
forbes.com	Media	24	3	21
emailvendorselection.com	Independent review site	23	0	23
ventureharbour.com	Media / review publisher	22	1	21
techradar.com	Media / review publisher	19	2	17
<i>Competitor A site</i>	Tracked competitor	18	3	15
zapier.com	Software blog (not an ESP)	18	1	17
capterra.com	Review site	16	2	14
g2.com	Review site	15	4	11
hostinger.com	Web-host blog	15	3	12
<i>Other email vendor #5 site</i>	Other email vendor	15	1	14
<i>Other email vendor #4 site</i>	Other email vendor	14	2	12

What this shows

- **A competitor is one of the main sources.** Competitor B's site is the most-cited domain in the audit. Its "best email marketing services" post (19 citations), its pricing help article, its "cheap email marketing" and "Competitor A alternatives" posts, and a dedicated page comparing itself with Brand X are all cited. Engines notice some of this:

"[Competitor B] is a vendor, so that ranking is self-interested."

Claude (Anthropic) · "Which email marketing software has the best customer support?"

- **Independent review sites carry weight.** The Forbes Advisor best email marketing software list is the most-cited single page (24 citations), followed by emailtooltester.com, emailvendorselection.com, Venture Harbour, TechRadar and PCMag UK. Other email vendors' blogs are cited heavily too.
- **Brand X's own cited pages are mostly about price.** The pricing page (21), free-plan page and billing help pages lead. Its llms.txt file is cited 6 times, a sign that engines do read files made for them. Its own "best email marketing platforms" post is cited only 3 times.

Most-cited individual pages (all engines)

URL (tracking parameters removed)	Citations
forbes.com/advisor/business/software/best-email-marketing-software/	24
[Brand X]/pricing	21
[Competitor B]/blog/best-email-marketing-services/	19
hostinger.com/tutorials/best-email-marketing-platforms/	15
[Competitor A]/pricing/marketing/	12
[Other email vendor #1]/blog/best-email-marketing-software-in-2026	12
ventureharbour.com/email-marketing-software-tools-one-best/	11
uk.pcmag.com/email-marketing/3708/the-best-email-marketing-software	11
[Competitor B help]/hc/en-us/articles/208589409-About-[competitor-b]-s-pricing-plans	11
g2.com/categories/email-marketing	10

Gemini citations are recorded by source domain. YouTube video URLs are excluded from the page list.

Engine-by-engine notes

ChatGPT (OpenAI, gpt-5.6-luna, web search on)

Recommends Brand X in 13 of 24 answers. It frames Brand X as the “simple, inexpensive” choice for “small list and simple newsletters” and points growing or ecommerce teams elsewhere.

“For most early-stage startups in 2026, [Brand X] offers the best balance of price, ease of use, automation, landing pages, and scalability.”
ChatGPT (OpenAI) · “What is the best email marketing software for startups in 2026?”

Claude (Anthropic, claude-haiku-5-5, web search on)

Brand X’s weakest engine on recommendations: 7 of 24 answers, fewer than Competitor A (9). Claude names Brand X in every answer but often puts Competitor A first for beginners and adds the “more limited” caveat.

Gemini (Google, gemini-3.5-flash-lite, Google Search grounding)

Brand X’s strongest engine: recommended in 19 of 24 answers, against 5 for Competitor A. Gemini’s segmented lists give Brand X the “best overall for simplicity and budget” slot.

“If you just want a simple, budget-friendly newsletter tool: Go with [Brand X].”
Gemini (Google) · “Which email marketing software would you recommend for a small business?”

Perplexity (perplexity/sonar)

Perplexity recommends Brand X in 14 of 22 answers and leads its “quick picks” with it:

"Quick picks: [Brand X] for value, [Competitor B] for low-cost email plus SMS, [Competitor A] for an easy start, [another vendor] for ecommerce, [another vendor] for sophisticated automation, and [another vendor] if your team already uses its CRM."

Perplexity · "What are the best email marketing software tools?"

Google AI Overviews (via Google Search, US English)

An AI Overview appeared for all 12 queries. Brand X is named in 10 of 12 and recommended in 10; Competitor A appears in only 2 of 7 category overviews.

"Best Overall for Beginners and General SMBs: [Brand X]"

Google AI Overviews · "Which email marketing software would you recommend for a small business?"

Prioritized fix list

P1 Fix the customer-support story. Brand X is missing from a third of the support answers, and a very low support score from a major review site is being quoted. Publish a crawlable support page with channels, hours, response-time data and support-related review scores, and ask the cited review sites (the review sites cited above) to re-check support details.

P1 Grow out of “basic” without losing “simple.” Engines repeat “basic automations” and “more limited analytics.” Add specific, plain-text pages on advanced automation, ecommerce and deliverability, with numbers and customer examples, so engines have evidence for “simple *and* capable.” Update the comparison pages engines already cite.

P1 Answer the “best email marketing software” question with your own fair guide. Competitor B’s version is cited 19 times; Brand X’s is cited 3 times. Refresh it with clear “best for” segments, sources and dates, and publish a page that responds to Competitor B’s comparison page.

P2 Work on Claude’s view. Claude recommends Brand X least often. Its answers lean on roundup consensus, so placements in the independent lists above, plus consistent “best for small businesses” wording across the site, matter most.

P2 Keep the llms.txt and pricing pages current. Engines cite both. Make sure plan names, limits and prices match across pricing, help-center and llms.txt, and add a short “who each plan is for” section.

P3 Technical baseline. Make sure AI crawlers (GPTBot, OAI-SearchBot, ClaudeBot, PerplexityBot, Google-Extended) can reach pricing, feature and comparison pages. Add Organization, SoftwareApplication/Offer and FAQPage structured data.

Methodology and limits

- **Date and scope:** collected October 14, 2026 (ET), US English. 12 buyer questions in three groups: 7 generic category, 2 “alternatives to [competitor]” and 3 Brand X-branded. Tracked brands: the audited tool (Brand X) and two of its best-known direct competitors (Competitor A, Competitor B). Names, domains and identifying details are withheld in this public version.
- **Engines and models:** OpenAI gpt-5.6-luna with web search (max 1 search per answer); Anthropic claude-haiku-5-5 with web search (max 1); Google gemini-3.5-flash-lite with Google Search grounding; Perplexity perplexity/sonar with web search; Google AI Overviews collected from Google Search results via DataForSEO.
- **Sample size:** 2 samples per question per engine for the four chat engines, plus 1 Google AI Overview per question: 106 answers in total (2 Perplexity requests failed with rate-limit errors and were not retrieved). This is a small sample. AI answers vary from run to run, so differences of a few points aren’t meaningful; the support gap and the recommend-rate lead are robust in direction.
- **Analysis:** mentions, list position, recommendations, citations and sentiment were extracted with deterministic rules applied to the saved answers. No AI model was used to score or summarize. Quotes are verbatim (formatting removed). Share of voice counts only the three tracked brands; several other vendors appear often but were not tracked.

- **Known limits:** word-list sentiment misses caveats like “basic”. List-position metrics are unreliable for answers formatted as tables. The audit asked no “advanced automation” or “ecommerce” questions, so Brand X’s position there is not measured. API answers can differ from the consumer apps (which add personalization, location and history).

Prepared by Answerweight as a sample audit using publicly available AI answers. The audited company and its competitors were not contacted and did not take part. In this public version, brand names, domains and other vendor names have been replaced; quotes are otherwise verbatim, and replaced words are shown in [brackets].