

Generic vs. Purpose-Built: A Golf Data Showdown

A head-to-head benchmark of three approaches to sourcing accurate, contactable General Manager data across 200 U.S. private golf clubs.

"The question is not whether a generic tool can help everyone. It is whether a purpose-built tool can do something great for one industry."

200 PRIVATE CLUBS SAMPLED	158 GMS VERIFIED BY RESEARCHERS	3 TOOLS COMPARED	5 EVALUATION LENSES	93.4% TOP GM ACCURACY
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Figure 1. Study snapshot. Two professional B2B researchers spent 10+ hours and made hundreds of calls to establish a near-perfect ground truth of General Managers across the sample.

THE PREMISE

For a decade, prospecting came down to a single question: who had the best data provider? It was a "you get what you pay for" market, with enterprises paying top dollar for the incumbents and startups settling for cheaper, thinner alternatives.

Artificial intelligence has unsettled that order. Large language models (LLMs) now put enormous capability at the fingertips of go-to-market teams, answering hard questions in seconds and surfacing data to anyone with a keyboard. These are powerful but **generic** tools, built to serve hundreds of industries at once. This paper asks a sharper question: can a tool built for a single industry outperform the generalists on their own terms?

THE INCUMBENT A Leading Sales Intelligence Tool A leading generic sales-intelligence platform housing hundreds of millions of B2B contacts across every industry.	THE GENERALIST AI Claude A leading LLM able to query the live web on demand and reason over a vast diversity of pages.	THE SPECIALIST Downgrain The first modern intelligence tool custom-built for golf, combining facility-first tracking, AI, web crawling, and human research.
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THE TEST

For 200 randomly selected U.S. private clubs — from the most prestigious names to remote nine-hole golf courses — each tool was asked a single question: who is the General Manager, and what contact data exists for them?

THE GROUND TRUTH

Because some small clubs have no GM at all, an apples-to-apples answer required knowing the truth first. Two professional B2B researchers separately verified GMs at 158 of the 200 clubs with near-perfect confidence.

How Each Tool Sources Its Data

A Leading Sales Intelligence Tool

Enterprise-grade scrapers monitor company websites, press releases, and online directories to amass one of the world's largest B2B databases. Millions have been invested in infrastructure, data partnerships, and cleansing tools, supplemented by user-contributed emails and phone numbers.

Claude

Claude dispatches lightweight agents across the open web at query time, reading golf course websites, directories, and news pages to assemble an answer on demand — trading a fixed database for live, up-to-the-moment retrieval.

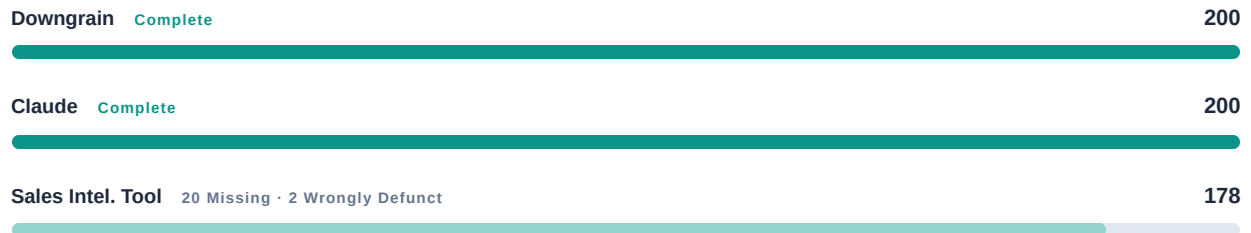
Downgrain

Downgrain maintains a dedicated profile for every golf facility in America, a facility-first method that ensures no golf course goes untracked. It monitors golf course websites, the PGA directory, and social profiles, then layers on proven email-verification techniques and data partnerships purpose-built for golf.

LENS 1 — COMPANY COVERAGE

To know a club's GM, a tool must first know the club exists. Because this study named each specific golf course when querying, both Downgrain and Claude recognized all 200. A leading sales intelligence tool missed more than one in ten and mislabeled two active facilities as defunct.

CLUBS RECOGNIZED WHEN NAMED (OF 200)



Recognition vs. enumeration: Claude reliably identifies a golf course when you name it, but cannot list a market in full. Asked to name every public golf course in a given state, it omits an estimated 25–30%. Downgrain's facility-first model is built to enumerate every golf course, not merely recognize one on request. [Read the full real-world evaluation ↗](#)

Figure 2. Coverage is the gate that precedes every other metric. A facility-first methodology eliminates the recognition gap and, unlike a query-driven tool, can enumerate an entire market rather than confirm one golf course at a time.

The Heart of the Test: Who Is the GM?

Coverage only opens the door. The decisive questions are how often a tool offers a GM, how often that guess is right, and whether the person can actually be reached. The remaining lenses take each in turn.

LENS 2 — GENERAL MANAGER COVERAGE

Claude returned the most GM guesses, with Downgrain close behind and a leading sales intelligence tool well back. Notably, that platform often listed several people as the current GM — 122 names across just 103 facilities — leaving the user to decide who to call first.

TOOL	Facilities with a GM Guess	Total GM Guesses
Claude	141	141
Downgrain	135	136
Sales Intel. Tool	103	122*

*19 of a leading tool's 122 guesses fall at companies with multiple General Managers listed (only one can be correct).

Figure 3. Raw coverage favors Claude — but a guess is only as useful as it is correct, which the next lens tests.

LENS 3 — GENERAL MANAGER ACCURACY

More guesses help only if they are right. Here the order reverses. Downgrain identified the correct GM 93.4% of the time. Claude, despite live web access, was wrong on roughly one in six. A leading tool's habit of listing multiple GMs dragged its accuracy lowest of all.

TOOL	Total GMs Returned	CORRECT GMS	ACCURACY RATE
Downgrain	136	127	93.4%
Claude	141	117	83.0%
Sales Intel. Tool	122	87	71.3%

Figure 4. Accuracy is where specialization pays off. Though Claude offered the most guesses, Downgrain surpasses it on how often the correct GM is actually delivered.

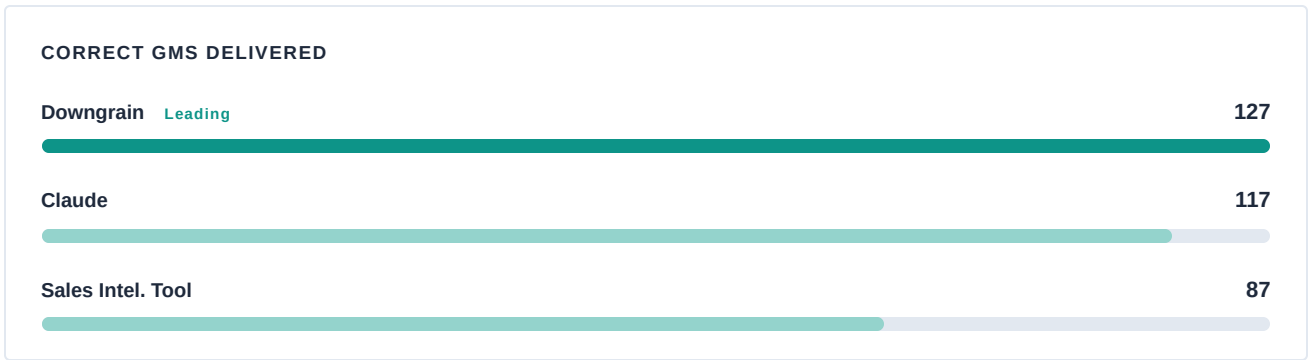


Figure 5. Volume without precision is noise. The most actionable dataset belongs to the tool that pairs broad coverage with the highest hit rate.

Reaching the GM: Phone & Email

Knowing who the GM is only matters if you can reach them. The final two lenses test contactability — first by phone, then by email — and they tell a more nuanced story than accuracy alone.

LENS 4 — PHONE COVERAGE

On raw phone coverage, a leading sales intelligence tool leads. Across the GMs it returned, it carried a direct phone number 86.1% of the time — ahead of Downgrain and far ahead of Claude. This is a real, earned strength of a mature contact database, and an area where Downgrain trails.

TOOL	Total GMs Returned	GMS WITH DIRECT PHONE	% WITH DIRECT PHONE
Sales Intel. Tool	122	105	86.1%
Downgrain	136	100	73.5%
Claude	141	32	22.7%

Figure 6. On phone coverage rate alone, a leading sales intelligence tool is the clear winner — a genuine advantage of its proprietary contact data.

But a phone number is only useful if it belongs to the **correct** GM. Counting only the phone numbers attached to a verified GM — a dialable line for the right person — reverses the ranking. Downgrain delivered 94 such numbers to a leading tool's 74, despite that tool's higher coverage rate, because it identifies the correct GM far more often.

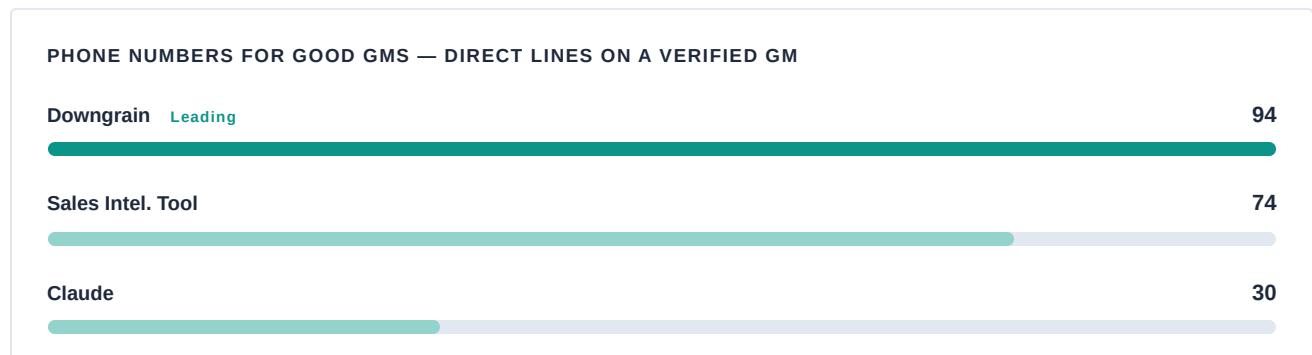


Figure 7. Phone numbers attached to a verified GM. Despite a lower coverage rate, Downgrain puts more dialable, correct GMs in a user's hands than a leading tool — because it is reaching the right person far more often.

LENS 5 — EMAIL COVERAGE

Email reverses a leading tool's phone advantage. Claude rarely returned a confirmed address — it routinely reported that the email was hidden behind anti-scraping obfuscation on the club's site and so could not be retrieved in plain text. In place of a real address, it then fell back to a pattern-based guess 63% of the time. With its GMs already wrong about 17% of the time, those guessed addresses likely bounce well north of 20% — enough to wreck deliverability. Downgrain led decisively on confirmed GM email.

TOOL	Total GMs Returned	CONFIRMED EMAIL	% CONFIRMED	Guessed Email	% Guessed
Downgrain	136	122	89.7%	0	0.0%
Sales Intel. Tool	122	90	73.8%	0	0.0%
Claude	141	28	19.9%	89	63.1%

Figure 8. Confirmed emails are the currency of outreach. Guessed addresses inflate coverage on paper while quietly destroying deliverability in practice.

Strengths & Trade-Offs

This is an honest, evenhanded comparison, and no tool wins on every axis. A leading sales intelligence tool owns the deepest contact database and the best raw phone coverage; Claude offers unmatched freshness and breadth of awareness. Downgrain's edge is narrower but decisive where it counts: it most often identifies the correct GM and most often pairs that person with a confirmed, deliverable way to reach them.

TOOL	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Claude	Live, up-to-date retrieval direct from golf course websites; broad page diversity; aware of every golf course.	GM accuracy; little confirmed contact data; pattern-guessed emails; weakest phone coverage.
Sales Intel. Tool	Breadth of company and contact databases; highest raw phone coverage; proprietary data sources.	Too broad to focus on golf; stale periodic scrapes; duplicate GMs; lower GM accuracy; no golf expertise.
Downgrain	Golf-specific expertise; human review of key records; highest GM accuracy, most confirmed emails, and most accuracy-adjusted phone reach.	Still partly scrape-based (not fully live); lower raw phone coverage rate than a leading tool.

Figure 9. No tool wins on every axis — but only one pairs accuracy with confirmed contactability, the two metrics that make a record usable.

"More data is not the goal. The goal is the right person, reachable today — and that is where specialization wins."

Across all five lenses, a consistent story emerges. Claude casts the widest net but cannot confirm who it catches. A leading sales intelligence tool brings industrial-scale breadth and the highest raw phone coverage, yet its database is too large to keep any single industry clean — surfacing missing clubs, duplicate GMs, and lower GM accuracy. Downgrain gives up a little raw volume and trails a leading tool on phone coverage rate, but because it identifies the correct GM far more often, it ultimately delivers more good phone numbers, more confirmed emails, and the most reliable answer to the only question that matters: who do I call, and how do I reach them?

The Verdict

THE BOTTOM LINE

93.4%

GM Accuracy — Confirmed Email on 9 in 10 Records, Most Good Phone Numbers

A tool built for one industry beat the generalists on the metrics that matter most. The future of go-to-market data is not simply bigger — it is sharper, verified, and built for the industry it serves.

Figure 10. The defining result: specialization converts coverage into actionable, deliverable contact data.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR GO-TO-MARKET TEAMS

1. Volume Is Not Value

The tool with the most guesses was not the most accurate. Counting records overstates readiness; what converts is the correct contact, verified.

2. Coverage Must Be Adjusted for Accuracy

A high phone or email coverage rate on the wrong person is wasted reach. A leading tool leads on raw phone coverage, yet Downgrain's superior accuracy yields more dialable, correct GMs in practice.

3. Specialization Compounds

Facility-first tracking, human review, and golf-specific verification stack into an accuracy advantage that generic breadth cannot replicate.

For teams selling into golf, the choice is no longer simply who has the most data. It is who has the right data — the correct decision-maker, with a confirmed way to reach them — and on that measure, a purpose-built solution leads.

[Learn how Downgrain builds golf-specific intelligence ↗](#)

The complete raw dataset behind this study is available on request — reach out and we'll share it.

Methodology: 200 randomly selected U.S. private golf clubs, studied in late May and early June 2026; ground truth established by two professional B2B researchers via 10+ hours of manual research and hundreds of calls.

The full underlying dataset is available on request to anyone who would like to review it. Research and analysis by Downgrain.