

FREE CHEAT SHEET

The 2026 AI Tool *Stack*.

The best AI tool for every task, ranked bad, good, and great. Save this so you stop wasting time on the wrong one.

Every task has a tool that's bad for it, one that's fine, and one that's genuinely great. Here's what I actually reach for, task by task. My own working stack, not a sponsored list.

Writing

BAD

Meta AI

GOOD

ChatGPT

GREAT

Claude

Why Claude: it holds a voice better than anything else I've tried. Feed it real examples of how you write and it stays consistent across a long piece instead of drifting back to generic AI phrasing.

Building a website

BAD

Base44

GOOD

Lovable

GREAT

Emergent

Why Emergent: it gets you from a plain description to a working, good-looking site with the fewest rounds of fixing. Less wrestling with the tool, more time on the thing you're actually selling.

Content creation

BAD

Grok

GOOD

Canva

GREAT

Blotato

Why Blotato: it's the only one built for actually running a content operation, not just making one post. I use it to get the same content out across every platform without doing the upload five separate times.

Coding

BAD

Cursor

GOOD

Codex

GREAT

Claude

Why Claude: it reads back what it's about to build before it builds it, and it catches its own mistakes more often than it makes new ones. That matters most when you don't code yourself.

Making money

BAD

Perplexity

GOOD

ChatGPT

GREAT

Claude

Why Claude: everything above, the writing, the site, the content, the code, runs through it. It's the one tool doing the actual work across all the others.

Automation

BAD

Zapier

GOOD

Make

GREAT

Claude

Why Claude: Zapier and Make still make you build the workflow by hand, node by node, before it can run. Claude just does the automation when you ask it to. No diagram required.

Presentations

BAD

PowerPoint

GOOD

Canva

GREAT

Gamma

Why Gamma: point it at a rough outline and it builds a deck that looks done, not just started. PowerPoint still wins for full manual control, but most decks don't need that level of fuss.

More from *my stack*.

These aren't ranked bad, good, great. They're just what I use, one tool per job. I haven't tested enough alternatives on these to fairly call a winner, so I'm not going to pretend I did.

Research

Sandcastles

Finds what's actually breaking out on TikTok and IG this week, so I stop guessing what to post.

Images & video

Higgsfield

My go-to for AI-generated visuals and short video, when a real photoshoot isn't worth the time.

Finding leads

Origami

Points at a city and a business type, pulls the shops, owners, and contact details in minutes.

Cold email

Smartlead

Warms up new inboxes on its own, then sends and tracks the actual campaign.

Email
marketing

Kit

Where my list lives. Sequences, automations, and the emails you're reading this from.

Booking calls

TinyCal

The link I send when someone's ready to talk. No back-and-forth on times.

The tool doesn't matter until you know the task. Pick the task first, then pick great, not just familiar.

This list will look different in six months. AI tools move fast, and this one changes with them. Check back before you commit to a paid plan on any of these.

THE BIGGER PLAY

Knowing the tools is easy now. Running the system is the job. That's what I install for small business owners.

The Leverage Diagnostic. 60 minutes, I find your #1 client leak, you leave with a 30-day plan. \$497, credited toward the install if you upgrade.

Book your Leverage Diagnostic → tinycal.net/b/cole-shihan/leverage-diagnostic-60-min

These are my own opinions from my own daily use, not independent benchmarks. Tools and pricing change fast; check current features before you commit to a paid plan. I have no paid sponsorship with any tool named here.

More free tools: leveragemethod.ai/resource