

Lead Enrichment Waterfall

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What This Is

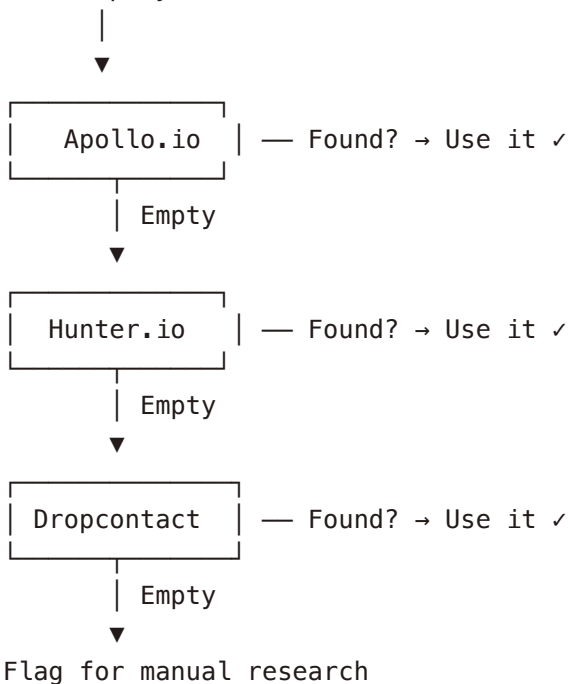
A waterfall enrichment model queries multiple data sources in sequence. If the first source returns empty, you fall through to the next. This avoids paying for expensive APIs when cheaper ones have the answer.

The order matters. Cheaper and faster sources go first. Expensive or rate-limited sources serve as fallbacks. You stop as soon as you get a valid result.

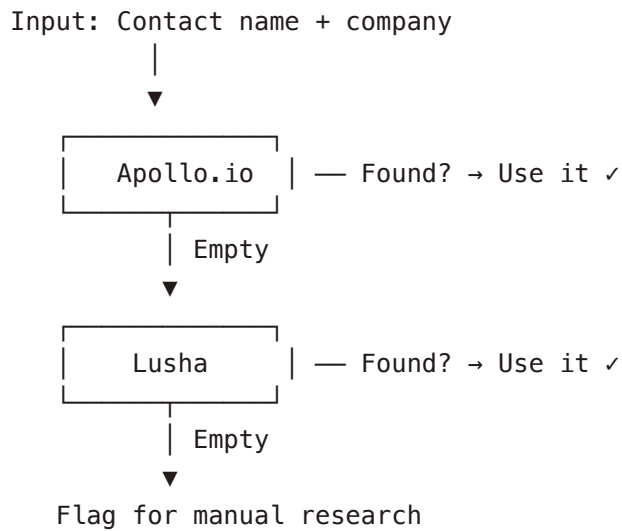
The Waterfall

Email Enrichment

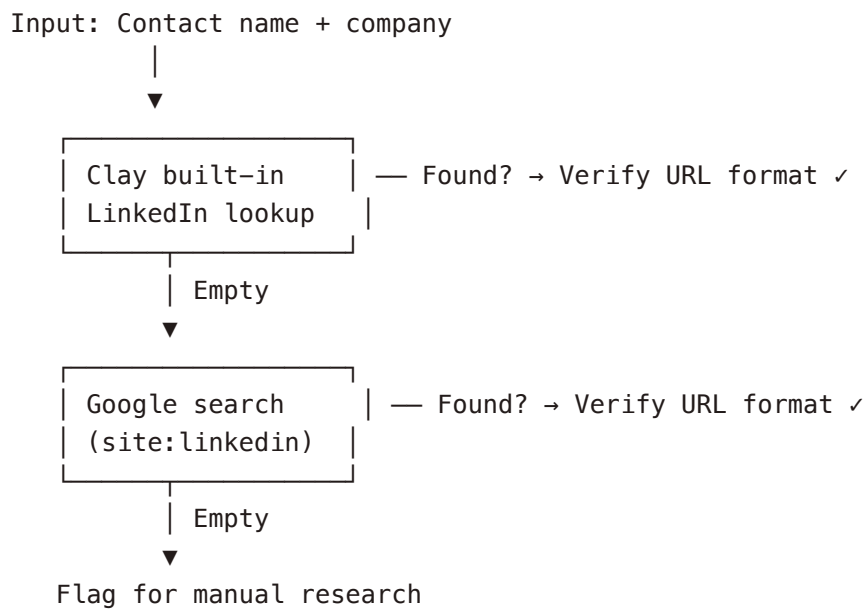
Input: Company domain + contact name/title



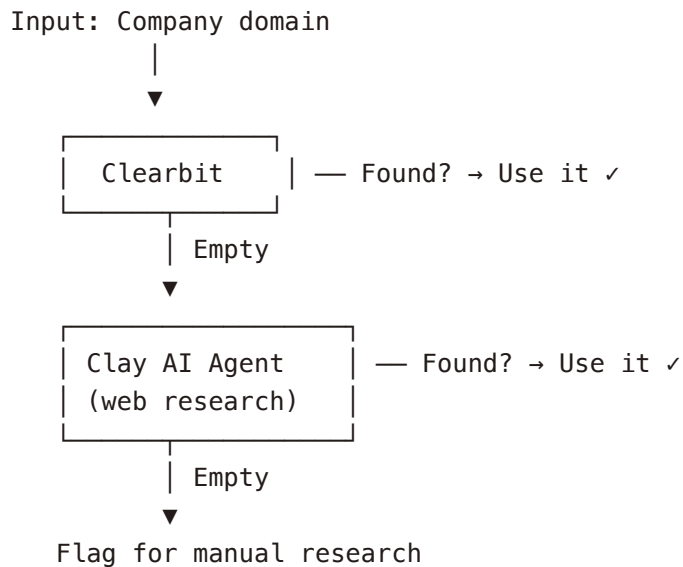
Phone Enrichment



LinkedIn Profile



Company Data



Implementation Notes

In Clay

Build each enrichment step as a separate column. Use conditional logic: only run the next source if the previous column is empty. This prevents unnecessary API calls and keeps costs down.

Column naming convention:

- email_apollo (source 1)
- email_hunter (source 2, runs only if email_apollo is empty)
- email_dropcontact (source 3, runs only if both above are empty)
- email_final (uses the first non-empty value)

Cost Optimization

- Run cheaper sources first. Apollo's free tier covers basic lookups. Hunter charges per verification. Dropcontact is a fallback.
- Batch your enrichment. Running 100 records at once is more efficient than one at a time.
- Set a budget per record. If you spend more on enrichment than the lead is worth, your unit economics break.

Data Quality

- Verify emails before sending. An enriched email is not a verified email.
- Cross-reference phone numbers. Mobile vs. direct line vs. switchboard makes a real difference in connect rates.
- Check LinkedIn URLs for format consistency. Some sources return full URLs, others return just the slug.

When to Skip the Waterfall

Not every field needs a waterfall. If you only care about email, a single high-quality source may be enough. The waterfall adds complexity. Use it when one source consistently returns gaps in your target market.

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