

Gmail AI Inbox for Workspace: how to turn it on and use it

Google is rolling Gmail's AI Inbox out to paid Workspace plans from October 15, 2026. It turns your email threads into to-dos and short summaries. How to switch it on, the limits, and Gmail Live voice search.

WHAT THIS ADDS

Most coverage stops at 'Gmail gets an AI inbox'. For an owner the useful part is that it is a to-do list that writes itself from your email: the quote you promised, the invoice waiting on approval, the contract with a date in it. The catch is that it only reads your Primary tab, it needs smart features switched on, and it can take days before the first to-dos appear. Turn it on today, keep using your normal inbox, and check the AI Inbox once a morning until it has caught up.

What Google announced on October 15

On **October 15, 2026** the Google Workspace Updates blog said Gmail's **AI Inbox**, launched earlier this year for consumer Google AI plans, is now rolling out to **paid Google Workspace** editions. Google describes it as a view that "highlights key actionable to-dos and summarizes priority work updates across your emails".

It has two sections:

- **Suggested to-dos:** action items, deliverables and deadlines pulled out of your email conversations.
- **Topics to catch up on:** short summaries of your most important threads, including long back-and-forth discussions.

Three details that matter for a business:

- **There is no admin control** for AI Inbox. Google says so in the post. Admins cannot switch it off for the company; each user shows or hides it in their own Gmail settings.
- It is currently **US only, with the account language set to English (US)**.
- Rollout is gradual. **Rapid Release** domains started on **October 12** and **Scheduled Release** domains start on **October 26**, with up to **15 days** before everyone in a domain sees it.

Google lists these editions: Business Starter, Standard and Plus; Enterprise Starter, Standard and Plus; Frontline Plus; and Google AI Pro for Education. The post also notes that Starter and Education editions are slated for a later rollout in the coming months, so if you are on Business Starter and do not see it yet, that is why.

How to turn AI Inbox on

These steps come from Google's own Gmail Help page:

1. **Turn on smart features.** AI Inbox needs both *Smart features in Google Workspace* and *Smart features in other Google products* switched on in Gmail. If you turned those off at some point, AI Inbox will not appear.
2. In Gmail on your computer, click **Settings (the gear)** → **See all settings**.
3. Open the **Inbox** tab.
4. Tick **Show AI Inbox** and save.
5. Back in Gmail, click **AI Inbox** in the left panel. Click **Refresh** at the top to pull the latest updates.

On mobile, Google says eligible users open AI Inbox from the Gmail app menu.

Be patient after switching it on. Google's help page says setup can take **a few hours**, and your first to-dos and topics may take **up to 7 days** to show up. If the view is empty, it is still learning your inbox, not broken.

What you will see, and what to click

Suggested to-dos lists high-priority items from incoming emails, with the key action (for example a due date) in bold. On each one you can:

- Use the action buttons such as **View** or **Reply**, or open the email it came from.
- Click **Mark done** when it is finished.
- Open **More options** → **Remove to-do** if it should not be there.

Topics to catch up on groups updates across a project or thread. Click **Mark all as read** to clear a topic; that also marks the underlying emails as read in your inbox.

Google says some generated to-dos or topic updates may be held back and not shown. To see everything it found, click **View all** at the bottom of AI Inbox in a web browser.

Under **More options** you can give positive or negative feedback on any to-do or topic. Do it. The feature is in beta and Google says it may change.

The limits you should know before you rely on it

From Google's help page:

- AI Inbox only uses messages in the **Primary** tab. Anything in Social, Promotions or other tabs is ignored.
- It filters out spam and any email you **archive, delete, mute or snooze**.
- It does **not** support attachments, delegated inboxes or encrypted emails.
- It may appear empty if you have not sent or received emails recently.

In practice: if your client mail lands in a tab other than Primary, or you archive aggressively, the to-dos you care about will not be there. Move important senders to Primary (drag the email to the Primary tab and choose *Yes* when Gmail asks) before you judge the feature.

Gmail Live: ask your inbox out loud

The same day, Google announced **Gmail Live** for paid Workspace users. It is a voice search for your inbox on the **Gmail app for Android and iOS**: you ask a question, Gmail answers out loud and shows an **email source card** so you can open the messages it used.

Google's own example questions:

What is the order status for Black Forest Construction Supply?

When is my next mandatory training due?

Show me the latest update from my manager, John.

What gate is my flight leaving from tomorrow?

To use it: open the Gmail app, tap the **Live** entry point in the search bar (the help page calls it *Gmail Live* at the top), allow microphone access the first time, then talk. Tap **End** to leave, or **Mute** to pause the microphone. You can interrupt it and ask follow-ups. It needs the same smart-features settings as AI Inbox, and it is **US English only** for now.

Gmail Live is **on by default** for organisations with Gemini in Workspace access, and admins can manage it through the existing Gemini feature settings in the Admin console. The rollout started on October 15 and can take up to 15 days to reach you. It is available on Business Starter, Standard and Plus, the Enterprise editions, Frontline Plus, Workspace for Nonprofits and the Gemini add-ons.

How a small business should use it this week

- **Morning check:** open AI Inbox once a day, mark done what is done, remove what is wrong. Ten minutes.
- **Quotes and invoices:** any email with 'can you send', 'please approve' or a date in it is what Suggested to-dos is built to catch. Those are the ones that cost you money when they slip.
- **Long threads:** use Topics to catch up on for the supplier or project threads you stopped reading. The summary tells you if a decision changed.
- **On the road:** use Gmail Live for 'did the deposit come in', 'what time is the site visit' and 'what did the client say about the colour', then open the source card to check.
- **Do not trust a deadline blindly.** Open the email before you promise a date to anyone. The source is one tap away.

The free checklist below has the setup steps and 15 questions to ask Gmail Live, ready to print.

How to turn it off

AI Inbox: **Settings** → **See all settings** → **Inbox**, untick **Show AI Inbox**. Your normal inbox is unchanged either way; AI Inbox is an extra view, not a replacement.

Gmail Live: tap **End** to leave a session. Admins who want to remove it company-wide manage Gemini feature access in the Admin console.

DO THIS

In Gmail, make sure smart features are on, then Settings → See all settings → Inbox → tick Show AI Inbox. Click AI Inbox in the left panel and Refresh. Give it up to 7 days, keep client mail in the Primary tab, and check it once a morning. On your phone, tap Live in the Gmail search bar to ask your inbox a question out loud.

What Fynl.io is

One portal a small business runs itself on, instead of five subscriptions that do not talk to each other.

- A CRM and pipeline that shows every lead and where it stopped
- A calendar clients can book straight into
- Quotes, contracts and invoices, with deposits taken up front
- A website and form builder, so the enquiry lands in the same place
- Your Gmail connected, so the whole thread sits on the contact
- Automations for the follow-up you keep forgetting to send

The AI runs on **your own Claude or ChatGPT API key** — no markup on it. No SMS or phone calls yet. \$49/month per business, \$149 Agency, and we move your contacts over for you.

Fynl.io keeps your clients, calendar, quotes, invoices and email in one portal, so the to-do Gmail spots (send that quote, approve that invoice) is one click away from the client record it belongs to. The AI inside Fynl runs on your own Claude or ChatGPT API key, with no markup.

Sources

- Google Workspace Updates: Gmail's AI Inbox is rolling out to paid Workspace users (October 15, 2026) — <https://workspaceupdates.googleblog.com/2026/10/gmails-ai-inbox-is-rolling-out-to-paid-Workspace-users.html>
- Google Workspace Updates: Gmail Live is rolling out to paid Workspace users (October 15, 2026) — <https://workspaceupdates.googleblog.com/2026/10/gmail-live-is-rolling-out-to-paid-Workspace-users.html>
- Gmail Help: Manage to-dos & topics with AI Inbox — <https://support.google.com/mail/answer/16845247>
- Gmail Help: Talk naturally with Gmail Live — <https://support.google.com/mail/answer/17085010>