

The Cost Predictability Checklist

25 questions to ask before a SaaS or AI tool becomes more expensive than expected.

Why this checklist exists

Most pricing pages show the monthly price. Fewer explain what the product will actually cost once seats, usage, add-ons, integrations, support, limits, and contract terms are included.

This checklist helps you slow down before buying. Use it to review a pricing page, compare vendors, and identify questions to ask before a tool becomes part of your workflow.

Who this is for

- Founders comparing SaaS or AI tools
- Operators managing software spend
- Small business owners buying workflow tools
- Finance or ops teams reviewing vendors
- Consultants helping clients choose software
- Anyone trying to avoid surprise software costs

How to use it

1. Open the vendor's pricing page.
2. Score each question from 0 to 3.
3. Mark anything unclear.
4. Ask the vendor about missing details.
5. Compare vendors using the same worksheet.
6. Keep written answers for anything involving limits, add-ons, billing, support, or contract terms.

Scoring system

0 = Not explained 1 = Mentioned but unclear 2 = Mostly clear 3 = Clear and specific

Section 1 - Base Plan Clarity

1

Is the starting price easy to find?

2

Does the page explain what is included in each plan?

3

Are plan names easy to understand?

4

Is the recommended plan clearly marked?

5

Does the page explain who each plan is for?

Section 2 - Seat and User Costs

6

Does the page explain how user seats are billed?

7

Are guest, viewer, admin, or read-only roles explained?

8

Does pricing change when the team grows?

9

Are minimum seat requirements listed?

10

Are role-based permissions tied to specific plans?

Section 3 - Usage and Limit Triggers

- 11** Are usage limits clearly explained?
- 12** Does the page explain what happens when limits are reached?
- 13** Are overage fees listed?
- 14** Are API, automation, storage, AI, or message limits explained?
- 15** Does the page show when a buyer is likely to need a higher plan?

Section 4 - Add-ons and Hidden Costs

- 16** Are add-ons clearly listed?
- 17** Are premium integrations included or priced separately?
- 18** Is support included or sold as an upgrade?
- 19** Are onboarding, setup, migration, or training costs mentioned?
- 20** Are security, compliance, or admin features locked behind higher plans?

Section 5 - Billing, Contracts, and Cancellation

21

Does the page explain monthly vs annual billing?

22

Are discounts or annual savings clearly stated?

23

Are contract requirements explained?

24

Is cancellation or downgrade policy easy to find?

25

Does the page explain whether pricing can change after signup?

Score worksheet

Question	Score 0-3	Notes / Ask vendor
Q1 Starting price	[]	
Q2 Included features	[]	
Q3 Plan names	[]	
Q4 Recommended plan	[]	
Q5 Who each plan is for	[]	
Q6 Seat billing	[]	
Q7 Guest/viewer roles	[]	
Q8 Team growth cost	[]	
Q9 Minimum seats	[]	
Q10 Role permissions	[]	
Q11 Usage limits	[]	
Q12 Limit behavior	[]	
Q13 Overage fees	[]	
Q14 API/storage/AI limits	[]	
Q15 Upgrade trigger	[]	
Q16 Add-ons	[]	
Q17 Premium integrations	[]	
Q18 Support cost	[]	
Q19 Setup/migration cost	[]	
Q20 Security/admin features	[]	
Q21 Monthly vs annual	[]	
Q22 Discounts	[]	
Q23 Contracts	[]	
Q24 Cancellation/downgrade	[]	
Q25 Pricing changes	[]	

Example score

Example Vendor: Acme Workflow App

- Starting price is clear: 3
- Seat billing is unclear: 1
- API usage limits missing: 0
- Add-ons partly explained: 2
- Cancellation unclear: 1

How to read the example

This does not mean the vendor is bad. It means the buyer should ask follow-up questions before committing.

Questions to ask the vendor

- What costs usually surprise new customers?
- What usage limits should we watch?
- Which features are most commonly upgraded?
- Are integrations included in our plan?
- What happens if our team grows mid-cycle?
- Are support, onboarding, or migration included?
- Can we downgrade or cancel without penalty?
- Can you confirm the pricing details in writing?

Final checklist summary

Before buying, make sure you understand:

- Base price
- Seat rules
- Usage limits
- Upgrade triggers
- Add-ons
- Support costs
- Contract terms
- Cancellation rules

Want more pricing teardown notes?

Join PricingPage DB for weekly breakdowns of real pricing pages, offer clarity, plan structure, CTAs, trust signals, and monetization patterns.

<https://pricingpage-db.beehiiv.com/>

This checklist is for educational and planning purposes only. It is not legal, financial, procurement, or accounting advice. Review contracts and pricing terms carefully and consult qualified professionals when needed.