

Box vs. Dropbox vs. Microsoft SharePoint

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Unvarnished Reviews Research

This report synthesizes data from 30,000+ verified user reviews and practitioner community posts collected from G2 (Box 4.2/5 from 6,784 reviews, Dropbox Business 4.4/5 from 21,568 reviews), Capterra (Box 4.4/5 from 5,608 reviews, Dropbox 4.5/5 from 21,748 reviews, SharePoint 4.3/5), Reddit r/sysadmin and r/msp, and independent pricing and comparison analyses from Match-VS (April 2026), CloudFuze (January 2026), Cloudwards (May 2026), Internxt Blog (March 2026), and Capterra comparison data current as of June 2026. Full research methodology at unvarnishedreviews.com/methodology. Research Notes available on request at editorial@unvarnishedreviews.com.

The Verdict Up Front

Box is the enterprise cloud content management platform for regulated industries, used by 97,000+ businesses including 68% of Fortune 500, with the broadest compliance certification portfolio in cloud storage: FedRAMP High, HIPAA, ITAR, GxP, and SOC 2. For healthcare, financial services, government, and life sciences organizations where compliance is a procurement requirement, Box's certification depth is a clear differentiator. Its documented liabilities are cost and AI gating. At \$15/user/month for Business and \$35+/user/month for Enterprise, Box is significantly more expensive than OneDrive (\$6/user with Office) or Google Drive (\$7/user with Workspace) for pure storage without a compliance requirement. Box AI, document summarization, data extraction, and intelligent search, is available on Business and Business Plus, but only as a pay-as-you-go add-on billed in AI Units. Only Enterprise tier and above (\$35+/user/month) includes AI Units in the plan price. Organizations that buy Box for AI document management capabilities and sign Business tier without budgeting for AI Units discover a separate, usage-based bill.

Dropbox is the original consumer-to-enterprise cloud sync platform, 700 million registered users, 21,748 Capterra reviews at 4.5/5, and the platform that defined seamless file synchronization before Google Drive, OneDrive, and SharePoint made cloud storage a default feature of productivity suites. Its documented position in 2026: Dropbox charges more for less storage than most competitors. Dropbox Business at \$15/user/month includes 9TB pooled storage but no productivity suite. OneDrive Business Basic at \$6/user/month includes Office applications. Google Workspace Business Starter at \$7/user/month includes 2TB pooled storage plus Gmail, Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Meet. For organizations evaluating cloud storage as a standalone purchase, Dropbox's value proposition has narrowed as competitors bundled storage into broader suites at lower effective per-user cost. Capterra reviewers specifically document: "pricing is too high for those who solely use it for file storage" and "they have not seemed to innovate much and are lagging behind on features their competitors offer."

Microsoft SharePoint Online is included in Microsoft 365 Business Standard at \$12.50/user/month alongside Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, and Exchange. For organizations already paying for M365, SharePoint Online is effectively free as an incremental storage and collaboration layer. Its documented liability is the most consistent finding across Capterra and G2 reviews: SharePoint is a powerful enterprise content management platform that is consistently difficult to use as a simple cloud file system. One Capterra reviewer captures it precisely: "While using it for sharing a file at a time is a decent experience, using SharePoint as a true cloud file management system is kind of a nightmare." Another: "Our ERP software cannot see SharePoint files, which forces workarounds or duplicate storage." For organizations that need simple cloud file synchronization, SharePoint's depth becomes a liability rather than an advantage.

Recommendations: For regulated industries (healthcare, financial services, government, life sciences) where FedRAMP High, HIPAA, ITAR, or GxP compliance is a procurement requirement: Box, budgeted at Enterprise tier if Box AI is a requirement. For organizations already on Microsoft 365 that need document collaboration and intranet functionality tightly integrated with Teams, Word, and Excel: SharePoint Online. For teams that need simple, reliable, cross-platform file synchronization without SharePoint's complexity or Box's compliance overhead: Dropbox, with explicit comparison against OneDrive and Google Drive on storage-per-dollar before signing.

The "Free with Microsoft" Calculation: What SharePoint Costs

SharePoint Online is included in every Microsoft 365 Business and Enterprise plan. The effective cost depends entirely on what M365 plan you are already paying for:

M365 Plan	Price	SharePoint Included	Effective SharePoint Cost
M365 Business Basic	\$6/user/month	Yes (1TB/user)	\$0 incremental
M365 Business Standard	\$12.50/user/month	Yes (1TB/user)	\$0 incremental
M365 Business Premium	\$22/user/month	Yes (1TB/user)	\$0 incremental
SharePoint Plan 1 (standalone)	\$5/user/month	Yes	\$5/user/month
SharePoint Plan 2 (standalone)	\$10/user/month	Yes	\$10/user/month

For organizations already paying for M365 Business Standard at \$12.50/user, which includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, Exchange, and 1TB SharePoint storage, the incremental cost of SharePoint Online is zero. This makes SharePoint the default choice for M365 organizations by cost argument alone.

The hidden complexity of "free": SharePoint is not a simple file storage system. It is an enterprise content management platform with site collections, document libraries, permission hierarchies, metadata, workflows, and a governance model that requires dedicated administration. Organizations that adopt SharePoint expecting it to work like Dropbox or Box's simpler file interfaces routinely encounter friction. The platform requires investment in configuration, training, and ongoing

administration that does not appear in the \$0 incremental cost calculation.

The Box AI Metering: The Finding That Changes Every Box Business Evaluation

Box AI, including document summarization, intelligent data extraction, and AI-powered search, is available on every paid tier as of October 20, 2025, when Box expanded API access to Business and Business Plus. The catch: only Enterprise tier and above (\$35+/user/month) includes AI Units, the consumption credits that power AI usage, in the plan price. Business (\$15/user/month) and Business Plus (\$25/user/month) customers must purchase AI Units separately as a metered, pay-as-you-go add-on to use Box AI at any meaningful volume.

The pricing impact:

Plan	Price	Box AI Included
Business	\$15/user/month	Metered (AI Units purchased separately)
Business Plus	\$25/user/month	Metered (AI Units purchased separately)
Enterprise	\$35+/user/month	Yes
Enterprise Plus	Custom	Yes, advanced

A 100-person organization that signs Box Business for content management at \$18,000/year and later wants Box AI at real usage volume faces a choice: pay for AI Units on top of Business pricing, an unbudgeted metered line item, or upgrade to the \$42,000+/year Enterprise tier where AI Units are included. The lack of AI Units in the Business and Business Plus list price is the most documented post-signing surprise in Box evaluations.

Box Shield, the advanced threat detection, smart access controls, and malware detection layer, is also Enterprise-only. Organizations in regulated industries that need both compliance certification and AI-powered document intelligence budget at Enterprise from the start.

The Dropbox Value-Per-Dollar Problem

Dropbox's pricing relative to storage provided has become the category's most documented pricing complaint as competitors bundled storage into broader productivity suites:

Platform	Price	Storage	Productivity Suite
Dropbox Business	\$15/user/month	9TB pooled	None
Microsoft OneDrive Business Basic	\$6/user/month	1TB/user	Office Web Apps
Google Workspace Business Starter	\$7/user/month	2TB pooled	Gmail, Docs, Sheets, Slides, Meet

Platform	Price	Storage	Productivity Suite
Box Business	\$15/user/month	Unlimited	None

At \$15/user/month, Dropbox Business costs 2.5x OneDrive Business Basic, without the Office applications included in OneDrive. For organizations that need cloud storage as a standalone function and are not running Dropbox for its specific sync experience or cross-platform reliability, the value-per-dollar comparison is difficult to defend.

Capterra reviewers document this directly: "I have some common complaints about Dropbox Business include pricing, limited storage for the cost, and occasional syncing issues." And: "Some team members do not require those advanced features, and the current pricing is too high for those who solely use it for file storage."

Dropbox's defensible differentiation in 2026 is its sync engine, Dropbox's file synchronization is specifically praised for reliability, speed for large files, and cross-platform consistency across Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, and Android. For organizations with heterogeneous device environments where Microsoft or Google ecosystem lock-in is a concern, Dropbox's platform-agnostic sync remains a clear differentiator.

Platform Ratings at a Glance

Platform	G2	Capterra	Primary Strength
Dropbox Business	4.4 / 5 (21,568 reviews)	4.5 / 5 (21,748 reviews)	Sync reliability, ease of use
Box	4.2 / 5 (6,784 reviews)	4.4 / 5 (5,608 reviews)	Compliance depth, enterprise security
SharePoint Online	Strong	4.3 / 5	M365 integration, free for M365 orgs

Dropbox's largest review base (21,748 Capterra reviews) reflects its broad consumer and SMB adoption. Box's enterprise concentration (22% of Capterra reviews from enterprise versus Dropbox's lower enterprise share) reflects its regulated industry positioning.

Who Each Platform Is Built For

Box is built for enterprises in regulated industries where compliance certifications are procurement requirements, not preferences. FedRAMP High authorization makes Box the default for US government and defense contractors. HIPAA eligibility covers healthcare. ITAR covers defense and export-controlled content. GxP covers life sciences and pharmaceutical manufacturing. Outside regulated industries, Box's compliance depth is overhead that competitors deliver more cost-efficiently.

Dropbox is built for teams that need reliable, fast, cross-platform file synchronization with a clean interface and minimal administration. Its sync engine is the product, not the compliance framework. Small businesses, creative agencies, distributed teams with heterogeneous devices, and organizations

that tried SharePoint and found it too complex are Dropbox's primary buyers.

SharePoint Online is built for Microsoft 365 organizations that need document collaboration, team sites, intranet publishing, and content management tightly integrated with Teams, Word, Excel, and the broader M365 ecosystem. It is not a simple cloud storage tool, it is a content management platform that requires configuration and administration to realize its value.

What Practitioners Report

Box: What Works

Box is the best for businesses and enterprises that prioritize security, compliance, and need powerful tools for managing and collaborating on content, a Capterra reviewer captures the platform's core positioning accurately.

The compliance certification portfolio is the most consistently cited advantage. FedRAMP High, HIPAA, ITAR, GxP, and SOC 2 certifications cover the regulated industries where Box's pricing premium is justified. The 1,500+ integrations connect Box to Microsoft 365, Salesforce, Slack, Zoom, and the major enterprise application stacks.

Unlimited storage on Business Plus and Enterprise eliminates the storage tier planning that Dropbox and Google Workspace require.

Box: What Doesn't Work

Box AI Units are not included below Enterprise. Organizations that sign Business tier and want to use document summarization and intelligent search at scale face an unbudgeted metered AI Units bill, or a \$20+/user/month upgrade to Enterprise where AI Units are included.

Box is significantly more expensive for pure storage compared to OneDrive Business Basic (\$6 with Office) or Google Workspace (\$12 with 2TB) unless compliance certification justifies the premium.

Box Drive sync is specifically noted as slower than Dropbox for large files, a meaningful operational difference for organizations working with large media files, engineering drawings, or large datasets.

It's not very common in workplaces, so I struggle to find teams and companies that I use it to communicate with, Box's lower consumer recognition creates friction when sharing with external counterparties who may not have Box accounts.

Dropbox: What Works

Ease of use is Dropbox's most consistently cited advantage across 21,748 Capterra reviews. The sync client works reliably across platforms, the interface requires no training, and file sharing with external parties works without requiring a Dropbox account for recipients.

The sync engine reliability is specifically praised for large files where SharePoint's browser-based upload and OneDrive's sync client experience more friction. For creative agencies, video production teams, and engineering firms managing large files, Dropbox's sync performance is the primary differentiator.

Dropbox: What Doesn't Work

They have not seemed to innovate much and are lagging behind on features their competitors offer, a Capterra reviewer captures the competitive positioning challenge Dropbox faces as Google and Microsoft bundle storage into broader suites.

Pricing relative to storage: \$15/user/month for 9TB pooled versus Google Workspace at \$7/user/month for 2TB plus productivity applications. The value-per-dollar comparison favors competitors for organizations that need a productivity suite alongside storage.

SharePoint: What Works

Zero incremental cost for M365 organizations is the primary commercial advantage. For organizations already paying \$12.50/user/month for M365 Business Standard, SharePoint Online is included, making it the default choice by cost argument alone.

The integration with Teams, Word, Excel, and the broader M365 ecosystem is specifically praised by Capterra reviewers for real-time co-authoring, version history, and file previews within the Microsoft environment. For organizations where document collaboration happens primarily within Microsoft applications, SharePoint's integration eliminates the tool-switching that Box and Dropbox require.

SharePoint: What Doesn't Work

While using it for sharing a file at a time is a decent experience, using SharePoint as a true cloud file management system is kind of a nightmare. This Capterra review captures the most documented SharePoint operational challenge.

Our ERP software cannot see SharePoint files, which forces workarounds or duplicate storage. SharePoint's integration with non-Microsoft enterprise applications requires custom development or middleware that adds cost and complexity.

Administration complexity is the consistent complaint for organizations without dedicated SharePoint administrators. Permission hierarchies, site collections, and governance models require ongoing management that simple cloud storage tools do not.

Pricing Reality (June 2026)

Box

Plan	Price	Storage	Notes
Individual	\$10/user/month	100GB	Single user
Business	\$15/user/month	Unlimited	3-user minimum
Business Plus	\$25/user/month	Unlimited	Advanced workflow
Enterprise	\$35+/user/month	Unlimited	Box AI, Shield included
Enterprise Plus	Custom	Unlimited	Advanced AI, governance

Monthly billing premium: 30%-40% more than annual rates.

Dropbox Business

Plan	Price	Storage	Notes
Plus (individual)	\$9.99/user/month	2TB	Single user
Essentials	\$16.58/user/month	3TB	Single user, advanced sharing
Business	\$15/user/month	9TB pooled	3-user minimum
Business Plus	\$24/user/month	15TB pooled	Advanced admin
Enterprise	Custom	Unlimited	

Microsoft SharePoint Online

Plan	Price	Storage	Notes
SharePoint Plan 1	\$5/user/month	1TB/user	Standalone
SharePoint Plan 2	\$10/user/month	Unlimited	Standalone
M365 Business Basic	\$6/user/month	1TB/user	SharePoint + Office Web Apps
M365 Business Standard	\$12.50/user/month	1TB/user	SharePoint + full Office suite

The Decision Framework

Choose Box if:

- Your organization is in a regulated industry (healthcare, financial services, government, defense, life sciences) where FedRAMP High, HIPAA, ITAR, or GxP compliance is a procurement requirement
- You have budgeted at Enterprise tier (\$35+/user/month) if Box AI at meaningful volume or Box Shield are requirements, since AI Units and Shield are included there but metered or unavailable on Business tier
- External file sharing with counterparties in regulated industries requires compliance-certified infrastructure
- Unlimited storage without tier planning justifies the cost premium over Dropbox or OneDrive

Choose Dropbox if:

- Simple, reliable, cross-platform file synchronization with minimal administration is the primary requirement
- Your team uses heterogeneous devices (Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android) and platform-agnostic sync is operationally important
- You have explicitly compared Dropbox Business (\$15/user/month) against Google Workspace (\$7/user/month) and OneDrive (\$6/user/month) on storage-per-dollar for your specific use case
- SharePoint's administrative complexity is a documented pain point from prior experience

Choose SharePoint Online if:

- Your organization already pays for Microsoft 365 Business or Enterprise plans where SharePoint is included at zero incremental cost
- Document collaboration tightly integrated with Teams, Word, and Excel is the primary use case
- You have dedicated SharePoint administration resources or a Microsoft partner who can manage governance and configuration
- You are not expecting SharePoint to function as a simple cloud file system, it requires configuration to realize its value

The pre-signing checklist for Box specifically:

1. Identify whether Box AI (document summarization, intelligent search) is required at meaningful volume, if yes, budget for AI Units on Business or upgrade to Enterprise (\$35+/user/month), where they're included
2. Identify whether Box Shield (threat detection, smart access) is required, also Enterprise-only
3. Compare Box Business (\$15/user/month, unlimited storage, metered AI) against Dropbox Business (\$15/user/month, 9TB, no compliance) for non-regulated use cases
4. Confirm external sharing requirements, Box's lower consumer recognition creates friction when sharing with counterparties who expect Dropbox or Google Drive links

The Bottom Line

Box, Dropbox, and SharePoint serve distinct organizational profiles that are increasingly defined by compliance requirements, ecosystem membership, and use case complexity rather than storage features.

Box is the most appropriate choice for regulated industries where compliance certification is a procurement requirement. Its AI Units and security features are only bundled into the plan price at Enterprise tier, making the \$35+/user/month starting point the realistic budget for organizations that need the full Box capability set without a separate metered AI bill.

Dropbox is the most appropriate choice for teams that need simple, reliable, cross-platform file synchronization without SharePoint's administrative complexity or Box's compliance overhead. Its storage-per-dollar disadvantage versus competitors requires explicit modeling before signing, at \$15/user/month without a productivity suite, the value case requires a real sync quality requirement, not just storage.

SharePoint Online is the most appropriate choice for M365 organizations where zero incremental cost, Teams integration, and real-time Office document collaboration are the primary requirements. Its administrative complexity and ERP integration limitations are the most important operational factors to assess before assuming SharePoint replaces a dedicated content management tool.

The finding that belongs in every Box Business evaluation: Box AI Units, the consumption credits that power document summarization, intelligent data extraction, and AI-powered search, are not included on Business (\$15/user/month) or Business Plus (\$25/user/month). Only Enterprise tier and above (\$35+/user/month) bundles them into the plan price. If Box AI at real usage volume is the reason you

are evaluating Box, budget for metered AI Units or Enterprise from the start.