

UNVARNISHED REVIEWS

GA4 vs. Mixpanel vs. Amplitude vs. Adobe Analytics: Free, Cheap, and \$100,000 Are Not the Same Category

Market Position: Four Tools, Three Real Budget Tiers

Google Analytics 4 is used by roughly half of the top million sites on the internet, effectively the default web analytics layer for any business with a website, and it's free with no credit card required for the standard tier. Mixpanel and Amplitude occupy the "product analytics" category one tier up, event-based platforms built for product and growth teams asking questions GA4 was never designed to answer, funnels, cohorts, and retention at the user level, not just traffic. Adobe Analytics sits at the top as a fully custom-quoted enterprise suite with no free tier at all, positioned for organizations already inside the Adobe Experience Cloud ecosystem.

These four get compared constantly in buyer research, but the comparison obscures a real structural point: A team choosing between GA4 and Adobe Analytics is rarely also choosing between Mixpanel and Amplitude, and vice versa. The real question this report answers isn't "which of the four is best," it's which tier a given team actually belongs in, and what each tier actually costs once free-tier confusion and enterprise quote ranges are cleared away.

GA4: The Upside

Standard GA4 has no license fee for any business, regardless of size, no trial that quietly converts to paid, and includes ecommerce tracking, audience reports, and native Google Ads and Search Console integration. Setup is fast: a tracking snippet or Google Tag Manager container, and event collection starts immediately. For the vast majority of businesses, under roughly 10 million events per property per month, GA4 covers the core need entirely for \$0.

GA4: The Downside

GA4's event-and-session hybrid data model is a real limitation for anything beyond marketing attribution and traffic reporting; cohort analysis, retention curves, and path exploration exist but are shallower than in a purpose-built product analytics tool, and heavier analysis typically requires a BigQuery export, a real, if often small, additional cost and setup step most teams don't budget for at signup. GA4 360, the enterprise tier, publishes no pricing page at all; independently documented quotes start around \$50,000/year and scale to \$150,000-\$250,000+ for large accounts, a real enterprise-scale jump from a product most people know as "the free one."

Mixpanel: The Upside

Mixpanel's free tier is the most generous entry point among the paid product-analytics tools: 1 million events per month with unlimited seats, a real, no-credit-card starting point. Reviewers consistently cite the fastest time-to-insight of the category, one independent 60-day instrumented test measured under 3 minutes from question to chart, versus roughly 4 minutes for Amplitude on comparable queries. G2 reviewers rate it highest of the product-analytics platforms in this comparison.

Mixpanel: The Downside

A specific pricing myth about Mixpanel circulates widely enough to need direct correction. Several analytics-comparison sites state that Mixpanel's free tier covers 20 million events a month. It doesn't. Mixpanel's documentation and pricing page confirm the real free-tier cap is 1 million events; the 20-million figure is where the Growth tier's typical paid-volume conversation begins, a fundamentally different number describing a fundamentally different thing. A team budgeting around the wrong figure would be planning for 20x more free capacity than actually exists. Beyond the free tier, Growth pricing runs \$0.28 per 1,000 events, which compounds quickly: 10 million monthly events lands around \$2,520/month (\$30,000+/year), and Enterprise, custom-quoted, is independently documented averaging \$22,000/year for SMB customers and \$120,000/year for enterprise accounts.

Amplitude: The Upside

Amplitude's Growth and Enterprise tiers include native A/B testing (Amplitude Experiment), session replay, and a built-in CDP, capabilities that require separate tools alongside Mixpanel. Independent testing rates it strongest for governance and experimentation at scale once multiple teams share the same behavioral data, and it powers analytics for Zoom, DocuSign, Twilio, and Walmart. A startup program offers a free year on the Growth tier for eligible early stage companies.

Amplitude: The Downside

Amplitude's Trustpilot rating requires real care to interpret correctly, not just cite. The headline number, 1.7/5 from 46 reviews, is dramatically lower than its 4.5/5 G2 rating, but reading the actual reviews shows a real complication: A meaningful share describe patterns, cryptocurrency withdrawals, "invest more to unlock funds," unrelated job schemes, that have nothing to do with the analytics product and appear to reflect scam-review pollution or brand confusion on Trustpilot's platform, not genuine Amplitude Analytics customers. Simply repeating "1.7/5" without that context would be misleading in the other direction.

Underneath that noise, a smaller number of reviews describe a real, distinct, and independently corroborated pattern: difficulty exiting a contract, and billing that continued after the product had stopped being used. A separate, independent deep-dive review reached the same conclusion from its own reporting, describing "a poor commercial experience" tied to contract exit and account management, distinct from complaints about the product itself. Treat the Trustpilot score's raw number with real skepticism, but treat the underlying contract-exit complaint as genuine and worth a specific question in the sales process. Beyond that, event-data governance is a repeated complaint: Teams report discovering six to twelve months in that inconsistent event naming and broken user IDs have quietly undermined their funnels, a real implementation risk distinct from pricing.

Adobe Analytics: The Upside

Adobe Analytics provides unsampled data at scale, advanced segmentation, and deep integration with the broader Adobe Experience Cloud, real advantages for large enterprises already operating inside that ecosystem, with a dedicated implementation and analytics function to run it. G2 reviewers rate it competitively at 4.2/5, and it remains the reference standard cited across enterprise-analytics buyer guides for organizations that have outgrown what GA4 360 provides.

Adobe Analytics: The Downside

There is no free tier and no public trial at any level; every engagement starts as a custom enterprise sales quote. Independently documented entry contracts start around \$100,000/year, with complex implementations reaching \$200,000-\$350,000+ annually, roughly 2x GA4 360's entry point for a platform serving a meaningfully overlapping use case. Setup requires a dedicated implementation specialist, and the learning curve is consistently described as steep relative to GA4's self-serve model.

Platform Ratings at a Glance

Platform	G2	Trustpilot	Notes
Google Analytics 4	4.5 / 5 (~6,840)	Not independently confirmed at time of publication	Largest review base of the four; reflects the broad Google brand, not GA4 specifically
Mixpanel	4.5-4.6 / 5 (~1,280-1,365)	3.4 / 5 (8 reviews)	Trustpilot sample is too thin to be statistically meaningful
Amplitude	4.5 / 5 (~2,800-2,937)	1.7 / 5 (46 reviews)	Real sample size, but reviews show meaningful scam/brand-confusion pollution, see Amplitude: The Downside for the actual, corroborated complaint underneath
Adobe Analytics	4.2 / 5 (~1,217)	Not independently confirmed at time of publication	Lowest G2 rating of the four, consistent with steep-learning-curve complaints

Pricing (September 2026)

Platform	Free Tier	Entry Paid	Enterprise
GA4	Yes, ~10M events/property/month	N/A	GA4 360: \$50,000-\$250,000+/year
Mixpanel	Yes, 1M events/month (not 20M, see Downside)	\$0.28/1,000 events above free tier	Custom; ~\$22,000-\$120,000/year documented average
Amplitude	Yes, 10K MTUs	Plus: ~\$49/month for 1,000 MTUs	Custom; ~\$30,000-\$150,000+/year documented range
Adobe Analytics	None	None; custom quote only	~\$100,000-\$350,000+/year documented range

TCO Comparison: 10 Million Monthly Events, One Year

This scenario models a mid-size product with meaningful traffic, the scale where the category choice starts to matter financially, not just functionally.

Platform	Monthly Cost	Annual Cost
GA4 (standard)	\$0	\$0 (within free event cap)
Mixpanel (Growth)	~\$2,520	~\$30,240
Amplitude (Growth, MTU-dependent)	~\$3,300-\$6,700	~\$40,000-\$80,000
Adobe Analytics	~\$8,300+	~\$100,000+

At this scale, GA4 remains free, Mixpanel and Amplitude land in the same order of magnitude as each other but with real spread depending on billing model (events versus tracked users), and Adobe Analytics runs 3x-4x Mixpanel's cost for a structurally different, broader product. None of these numbers are interchangeable with each other; the right comparison for a given team is almost always within one tier, not across all four.

Costs the Pricing Table Misses

- **The "Mixpanel free tier is 20M events" myth is repeated widely enough to cost a real team real money.** Verify against Mixpanel's current pricing page before budgeting; the actual free cap is 1M events, not 20M.
- **GA4's BigQuery export is a real, separate cost most teams don't budget for at signup.** Streaming export runs roughly \$0.05/GB, and storage/query costs scale above Google's free tier, small individually, a real ongoing line item at volume.
- **Amplitude's MTU-based pricing is less predictable than event-based billing during a growth spurt.** A viral spike in unique users, not total events, can push a bill up faster than an event-based model would; model your worst-case user-growth scenario, not just average traffic.
- **Adobe Analytics implementation cost is separate from and often comparable to the license itself.** A dedicated implementation specialist is effectively required; budget professional services as a real line item alongside the quoted license fee, not as a rounding error.
- **None of the three paid platforms' Enterprise tier pricing is vendor-published.** Every enterprise figure in this report comes from independent transaction data and third-party reporting, not vendor disclosure; confirm current numbers before budgeting.

Complexity Comparison

G2, Trustpilot, and independent instrumented testing each capture a different slice of these four platforms; synthesized together, they show a real complexity gradient that tracks closely with the price gradient.

Dimension	GA4	Mixpanel	Amplitude	Adobe Analytics
Setup	Minutes, self-serve tag	Hours to days	Days; engineering involvement typically required	Requires a dedicated implementation specialist
Learning curve	Low for standard reports	Low-medium; consistently rated easiest of the paid tools	Steep; interface described as overwhelming by multiple independent reviewers	Steep; consistently the most technical of the four
Data governance risk	Low at small scale; sampling issues above free cap	Moderate; event taxonomy discipline required	Real, documented risk: Inconsistent event naming and broken user IDs surface 6-12 months in	Low; built for governed, unsampled data by design
Admin/staffing dependency	None required at standard tier	Minimal; self-serve by design	An analyst to own the data layer is effectively required at real scale	A dedicated analytics function is effectively required

Red Flags

Every finding below is independently documented and recurring, not a single reviewer's isolated complaint.

Mixpanel	Amplitude
• The "20 million free events" figure repeated across multiple comparison sites is wrong. The real free tier is 1 million events; verify against Mixpanel's current pricing page before budgeting around a number that may be 20x too generous.	• Amplitude's Trustpilot rating (1.7/5) is real but requires interpretation, not a face-value citation. A meaningful share of the 46 reviews describe cryptocurrency or job-scams patterns unrelated to the analytics product; treat the raw score with skepticism, but not the underlying, separately corroborated complaint about contract exit difficulty and billing continuing past cancellation.

Mixpanel	Amplitude
• Costs escalate quickly once the free tier is exceeded. At \$0.28 per 1,000 events, 10 million monthly events runs roughly \$2,520/month; high-traffic products can hit this scale faster than a team expects.	• Event data governance is a documented, recurring implementation risk, not a one-off complaint. Teams report discovering six to twelve months in that inconsistent event naming and broken user IDs have quietly undermined funnels and segmentation; budget for a governance process from the start, not as a later fix.
	• MTU-based pricing can escalate faster than event-based billing during rapid user growth. Independent reviewers describe pricing changes and renewal increases applied with limited notice; get the renewal terms in writing before signing.

The Decision Framework

Choose GA4 if: Your primary need is marketing attribution and web traffic reporting, you're under roughly 10 million events/month, and you don't yet have a dedicated analytics function to own a more specialized tool.

Choose Mixpanel if: You need real product analytics, funnels, cohorts, retention, want the fastest self-serve time-to-insight, and your team doesn't have a dedicated data analyst to own a more complex platform.

Choose Amplitude if: You need native experimentation and session replay bundled with analytics, have the data governance discipline (or are willing to build it) to keep event taxonomy clean, and are budgeting for an analyst to own the data layer.

Choose Adobe Analytics if: You're already inside the Adobe Experience Cloud ecosystem, need unsampled enterprise-scale data, and have a funded, dedicated analytics function, this is not a platform to adopt without one.

The question to ask first:

How many monthly events does your product or site actually generate today, and what will that look like in 12 months? Under roughly 10 million events, GA4 alone likely covers marketing needs, and Mixpanel's free tier covers early product-analytics needs, before any paid commitment is necessary at all. Above that, the real comparison is within a tier, Mixpanel versus Amplitude, or GA4 360 versus Adobe Analytics, not across all four.

Key Decision Factors

Cost, complexity, and data reliability all matter here, and the four platforms don't actually compete on all three at once the way a single comparison table implies. Cost separates cleanly by tier: GA4 is free for most real use cases, Mixpanel and Amplitude are five-figure-to-low-six-figure specialist tools, and Adobe Analytics is a six-figure enterprise commitment from the first contract. Complexity tracks the same gradient, GA4's low floor, Mixpanel's self-serve simplicity, Amplitude's governance and analyst requirement, Adobe's dedicated-function requirement. The one factor that cuts across all four regardless of price: Verify the specific pricing figures your team is planning around against each vendor's current page, not against the first comparison article that turns up in search, since at least one of those figures (Mixpanel's real free-tier cap) is documented as wrong across multiple independent sources this report found.

No analytics platform in this comparison is free of real tradeoffs once you're past the free tier. GA4's simplicity is real, and so is its shallow depth beyond marketing attribution. Mixpanel's self-serve speed is real, and so is the cost escalation once free-tier volume is exceeded. Amplitude's experimentation depth is real, and so is the documented data-governance risk and the contract-exit friction underneath its Trustpilot complaints. Adobe Analytics's enterprise depth is real, and so is its six-figure floor. Choose based on which tier your actual event volume and team structure put you in, not which platform has the most feature checkboxes.