

UNVARNISHED REVIEWS

Profound vs. Conductor: The AI Visibility Platform Priced Like a Rounding Error, and the One Priced Like Enterprise SEO

Market Position: The Category Everyone Is Suddenly Buying Into

AI visibility, tracking how a brand appears, ranks, and gets cited inside ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity, and Google's AI Overviews, is one of the fastest-forming buying categories in B2B marketing software. Profound raised a \$96M Series C at a \$1B valuation in February 2026, on top of roughly \$155M in total funding, real, serious institutional money validating that this category isn't a passing trend. Dozens of vendors have launched in the past two years alone, ranging from \$17/month self-serve trackers to enterprise platforms with fully custom, sales-negotiated pricing.

Profound and Conductor sit at opposite ends of that spectrum, and buyers compare them constantly anyway: Both companies maintain dedicated "vs." pages targeting each other directly, and independent comparison sites have published head-to-head breakdowns treating them as real alternatives. That comparison volume is real evidence of overlapping consideration sets, but it obscures a structural difference worth naming up front. Conductor is a decade-old enterprise SEO platform, used by SAP, FedEx, Mastercard, and e.l.f Cosmetics, that added AI-visibility tracking on top of an existing organic-search intelligence engine. Profound was built from the ground up as an AI-visibility specialist, with no SEO foundation underneath it at all. They genuinely compete for the same budget line in some organizations; in many others, only one of them is a realistic option before price is even discussed.

Profound: The Upside

Users consistently identify real user prompt data as Profound's core differentiator: The platform draws from 1.5B+ actual user conversations with answer engines, breaking down demand by intent, age, income, and region, rather than generating synthetic prompts from a keyword database. Reviewers describe this as surfacing behavioral signals "traditional SEO tools couldn't capture." Ease of use for the platform's core function, translating GEO/AEO concepts into actionable visibility tracking, is a consistently cited strength, and setup is fast: self-serve signup with data available immediately, no sales call required to start on Starter or Growth.

Profound: The Downside

The interface itself draws a real, recurring complaint distinct from the ease-of-use praise above: Multiple reviewers describe it as "data-heavy" and "overwhelming for new users," with one G2 review comparing it to "a luxury car that was amazing to drive but had a few buttons and switches" a new user wouldn't immediately know what to do with. Pricing structure creates real friction: the \$99/month Starter plan tracks ChatGPT only, a narrow window into a category that is otherwise multi-engine by definition, and meaningful multi-platform coverage doesn't start until the \$399/month Growth tier. Conductor's competitive materials, unsurprisingly self-interested but pointing at something real, note that Profound launched without an SEO data foundation and has no technical SEO monitoring layer underneath its AI-visibility metrics; a citation-share drop shows up on the dashboard without necessarily explaining why.

Conductor: The Upside

Conductor's core strength is breadth: one unified platform spanning traditional SEO, content workflows, technical site monitoring, and AI-visibility tracking, built on what the company describes as a decade of proprietary search data. Data collection runs through official APIs (direct connections to ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Google AI Overviews) rather than browser-based scraping, a real technical distinction Conductor's competitive materials emphasize against scraping-dependent competitors. The platform was named a Leader in the 2025 Forrester Wave for AI-integrated SEO and was SoftwareReviews' Gold Medalist in its SEO Data Quadrant for four consecutive years, external validation independent of the vendor's claims. G2 and TrustRadius ratings are strong and consistent (4.5-4.6/5 across both), with particularly high marks for quality of support and onboarding.

Conductor: The Downside

Pricing is completely opaque: no published tiers, no self-serve option at any level, every buyer goes through a custom sales quote. Real transaction data shows this isn't just enterprise-standard discretion, contracts range from \$26,800 to over \$500,000 annually, a spread wide enough that the number a given company lands on has more to do with negotiation and deal structure than with clearly scoped feature tiers. A steep learning curve and 2-4 month implementation timeline are consistently documented, and the platform has no programmable automation layer, a real limitation for teams wanting to build custom workflows on top of the data rather than working within Conductor's fixed module structure. Sales practices are a real, recurring complaint distinct from product quality: Reddit threads and Trustpilot reviews describe unwanted cold calls to personal cell phones continuing after explicit rejection, and unconfirmed meeting invites sent without the recipient's agreement.

Platform Ratings at a Glance

Platform	G2	TrustRadius	Trustpilot	Notes
Profound	4.6 / 5 (~335)	Not independently confirmed at time of publication	Unclaimed profile; sample too thin to be meaningful	Newest platform of the two; review volume still growing
Conductor	4.5-4.6 / 5 (~710-765)	9.2 / 10 (~269-393)	2.5-2.6 / 5 (4 reviews)	Trustpilot sample is statistically insignificant; complaints skew toward sales process, not product

Neither platform has a Trustpilot sample large enough to support a strong conclusion, a real, notable gap for a category this well-funded and this actively compared. Where Conductor's 4 Trustpilot reviews do exist, they align with the sales-practice complaints documented independently on Reddit rather than describing the core product; treat this column as a data point worth watching as review volume grows, not as a settled finding the way it is for larger, more mature platforms elsewhere on this site.

Pricing (September 2026)

Platform	Entry Tier	Mid Tier	Enterprise
Profound	\$99/month (ChatGPT only, 50 prompts, 1 seat)	\$399/month (3 engines, 100 prompts, 3 articles/mo)	Custom; independently estimated \$2,000-\$5,000+/month
Conductor	No published tier	No published tier	Custom only; real contracts \$26,800-\$500,000+/year, median ~\$48,950

TCO Comparison: Mid-Market Marketing Team, One Year

This scenario models a 50-100 person marketing organization evaluating AI-visibility tracking as a new, standalone budget line, the buyer profile most likely to be torn between these two categories.

Platform	Realistic Tier	Annual Cost	What's Included
Profound	Growth	\$4,788	3 AI engines, 100 tracked prompts, basic content workflows
Conductor	Entry-level custom	\$26,800-\$45,000	Full SEO + AEO intelligence, unlimited users/keywords, standard support

At this scale, Conductor's entry-level contract runs 5.6x to 9.4x Profound's Growth plan, and that's before comparing either to Conductor's median deal size (~\$48,950), which runs over 10x. This gap doesn't close as company size increases in Profound's favor, Profound's Enterprise tier (independently estimated \$24,000-\$60,000/year) overlaps with Conductor's lower range, but Conductor's enterprise deployments run past \$150,000-\$500,000+ for organizations with 10+ domains and dedicated customer success requirements, a scale most Profound buyers are never pricing against in the first place.

Costs the Pricing Table Misses

- **Profound's Starter tier tracks ChatGPT only, a narrower window than the category name implies.** A buyer signing up expecting multi-engine AI visibility at \$99/month will need to upgrade to Growth (\$399/month) before Perplexity and Google AI Overviews appear at all; budget for the real starting price, not the headline one.
- **Conductor's quoted price depends heavily on deal structure, not just scope.** The \$26,800-\$500,000+ documented range reflects negotiation outcomes as much as feature differences; get comparable quotes from at least one other enterprise SEO/AEO vendor before treating a first Conductor number as fixed.
- **Neither platform's Enterprise/custom tier pricing is vendor-confirmed.** Every dollar figure above the published Profound tiers comes from independent transaction data (Vendr) and third-party reporting, not either company's disclosure; confirm current numbers before budgeting.
- **Implementation time is a real, uncoded line item for Conductor.** A documented 2-4 month setup timeline means real internal time from an SEO/marketing team before the platform delivers value, a cost that doesn't appear on any invoice but shows up in headcount-hours regardless.

Complexity Comparison

G2, TrustRadius, Trustpilot, and Reddit each capture a different slice of how these platforms actually operate day to day; synthesized together, they show a real, structural complexity gap that maps directly onto the pricing gap above.

Dimension	Profound	Conductor
Implementation	Instant self-serve setup on Starter/Growth; no sales call required to begin tracking	2-4 months documented setup timeline for enterprise deployments
Learning curve	Interface described as data-heavy and overwhelming for new users specifically; core reporting is otherwise straightforward	Steep learning curve consistently documented; rigid module structure adds to onboarding time
Admin/staffing dependency	Not required at Starter/Growth scale; a single marketer can operate the platform	Effectively requires a dedicated SEO/content team (Conductor's target buyer profile is "5+ SEO/content practitioners")

Dimension	Profound	Conductor
Technical foundation	No underlying technical SEO monitoring; visibility metrics without a diagnostic layer explaining why a metric moved	Full technical SEO audit and monitoring layer underneath AI-visibility tracking
Automation/extensibility	Agent-based automation credits included on paid tiers	No programmable automation layer; fixed module structure documented as a real limitation for teams wanting custom workflows

The pattern is consistent, not contradictory: Conductor's complexity buys real breadth (SEO, technical monitoring, content workflow, all in one system), while Profound's simplicity reflects real narrowness (AI-visibility tracking, and not much else). Neither is a complexity-free choice; a buyer is trading one kind of complexity (Conductor's implementation and learning curve) for another (Profound's lack of a technical diagnostic layer to explain its metrics).

Red Flags

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

Profound	Conductor
• The Starter plan's single-engine limitation is easy to miss at signup. \$99/month buys ChatGPT tracking only; a buyer who needs Perplexity or Google AI Overviews coverage, both major answer engines, will hit this immediately and need to upgrade before the platform delivers on the category's actual promise.	• Zero published pricing at any tier means every buyer starts from an information disadvantage. Real contracts span a 20x range (\$26,800 to \$500,000+); get multiple comparable quotes before treating a first number as close to fixed.
• No underlying SEO or technical monitoring layer means the platform can show a problem without explaining its cause. A citation-share drop appears on the dashboard with no diagnostic path to why; teams without a separate technical SEO capability may not be able to act on what Profound surfaces.	• Aggressive, boundary-crossing sales practices are independently documented, not a single complaint. Reddit and Trustpilot both describe unwanted cold calls to personal cell phones continuing after explicit rejection, and meeting invites sent without confirmation.
• Interface complexity is a repeated, specific complaint, not vague dissatisfaction. Multiple independent reviewers describe the same pattern: powerful once learned, difficult for a new user's first sessions.	• A 2-4 month implementation timeline is a real cost before any value is delivered. Budget internal team time accordingly; this is not a same-week or same-month platform to stand up.
	• No programmable automation layer is a documented, structural limitation, not a minor gap. Teams wanting to build custom workflows on top of Conductor's data are working within a fixed module structure, not an extensible one.

The Decision Framework

Choose Profound if: AI-visibility and answer-engine citation tracking is a new, standalone need, not an extension of an existing enterprise SEO program; you want to start tracking this month, not this quarter; and your budget for this specific capability is measured in hundreds of dollars a month, not tens of thousands a year.

Choose Conductor if: You already have, or are building, a real enterprise SEO program with a dedicated team of 5+ practitioners; AI visibility is one signal you want unified with technical SEO and content workflow data, not tracked in isolation; and a six-figure annual software commitment is a normal, budgeted category for your organization already.

The question to ask first:

Does your organization already have a funded, dedicated SEO/content team of five or more people, or a real enterprise SEO platform budget in place? If no: Start with Profound, or a cheaper self-serve tracker, and revisit Conductor once (and if) that team and budget exist. If yes: evaluate Conductor's full quote against at least one comparable enterprise alternative before signing, given the documented 20x spread in real contract values.

Key Decision Factors

Cost, technical complexity, and customer experience all matter here, and none should be waved away in favor of the others. Cost is the more decisive factor for most companies actually choosing between these two: Profound's entire self-serve range sits below Conductor's lowest documented contract, so for a large share of potential buyers, affordability alone resolves the choice before technical fit is even compared. For the smaller set of organizations able to afford either, the real tradeoff is depth versus breadth, and vendor behavior: Profound's focused, fast-to-start tracking against Conductor's broader, slower, more expensive platform, weighed alongside Conductor's documented, unusually aggressive sales conduct, a real factor in evaluating any vendor relationship you're about to sign a six-figure, likely multi-year contract with.