

UNVARNISHED REVIEWS

KnowBe4 vs. Proofpoint vs. Mimecast: The Security Awareness Training Verdict

Unvarnished Reviews Research

Market Position: A Category Shaped by What Else You Already Own

Security awareness training occupies an unusual position in enterprise software purchasing: It is rarely evaluated the way a standalone product is. Most organizations already own an email security platform, and two of the three vendors compared in this report, Proofpoint and Mimecast, sell awareness training primarily as a module attached to that existing relationship rather than as a product competing purely on its merits. KnowBe4 is the structural outlier, the only one of the three built from the start as a vendor-agnostic standalone platform, and it holds the largest market presence and review base in the category as a direct result.

That structural difference drives almost everything else in this comparison. Proofpoint and Mimecast's awareness training pricing only makes sense in the context of whether a buyer already pays for their email security; evaluated in isolation, both products carry standalone pricing that looks uncompetitive against KnowBe4's purpose-built platform. KnowBe4, in turn, faces no such bundling discount to offer, its entire pricing model has to work as a standalone purchase, which is part of why its quote process has drawn the most documented buyer frustration of the three.

KnowBe4: The Upside

KnowBe4 holds the strongest review profile of any platform in this comparison by a wide margin, both in rating and in the size of the review base. Users rate its Security Awareness Training product 4.6/5 across roughly 2,377-2,388 reviews, with 99% of reviewers rating the platform 4 or 5 stars, giving the rating real statistical weight.

The content library and simulation tooling are independently and consistently described as the deepest of the three platforms, and KnowBe4's standalone, vendor-agnostic design means it works identically regardless of which email security platform an organization runs, a real advantage for any buyer not already locked into Proofpoint's or Mimecast's ecosystem.

KnowBe4: The Downside

Quote variance is the most consequential, most consistently reported complaint about this platform; see the Red Flags section for the full pattern. KnowBe4 publishes list prices by seat band, but buyers report negotiated quotes varying significantly by sales channel and by how the discovery call goes, not just by seat count or contract length.

A 25-seat minimum applies. KnowBe4's published price table starts at 25 seats, and buyers report paying for the full minimum on smaller headcounts, such as a 13-employee organization paying for 25 seats. Confirm how the minimum applies before assuming per-seat pricing scales down.

Content repetitiveness is a specific, recurring complaint among multi-year customers, not a one-off dissatisfaction. Reviewers consistently describe recycled scenarios across renewal cycles; one documented reviewer comment, now in a third year of the platform, describes having "watched similar scenarios multiple times," a real consideration for organizations planning a multi-year commitment for content freshness.

Proofpoint: The Upside

Proofpoint's bundling with email security is the most specific value proposition in this comparison, though no source publishes the bundled price. Proofpoint licenses each product individually or bundled, and sources describe large customers negotiating bundled discounts on training alongside email protection. A figure of roughly \$6-\$12 per user per year circulates in comparisons for existing customers, but it could not be confirmed against a published price list or Vendr data, so treat it as a negotiation target rather than a rate.

Users rate Proofpoint Security Awareness Training 4.5/5 across 325 reviews, a strong, well-populated rating second only to KnowBe4's in this comparison. Reviewers cite threat-intelligence integration, training simulations informed by real phishing data captured at the Proofpoint email gateway, as a differentiator unavailable to standalone platforms without that data pipeline.

Proofpoint: The Downside

Standalone pricing is the least transparent and, on one estimate, the highest. Proofpoint publishes no per-user rate. Third-party estimates run from \$15-\$30 per user per year to a \$48 list rate for its ZenGuide training product with a 500-seat minimum, a wide spread. Buying training without the rest of the Proofpoint stack means paying enterprise pricing for a product that has lost its main cost advantage over KnowBe4.

Proofpoint sells by quote, and training is often negotiated as part of a broader suite contract. Request an itemized awareness-training line item rather than accepting a bundled suite quote that obscures the training cost.

Mimecast: The Upside

Mimecast's core value proposition mirrors Proofpoint's: meaningful cost savings and unified reporting for organizations already standardized on Mimecast email security, with training recommendations informed by the same threat-exposure data the email security platform already collects. For an existing Mimecast customer, adding awareness training avoids a new vendor relationship and a separate procurement cycle entirely.

Mimecast's micro-learning content format, shorter, more frequent training modules rather than longer sessions, is independently noted as a distinct pedagogical approach from KnowBe4's and Proofpoint's more traditional video-and-quiz structure, a real format difference worth evaluating against your organization's training-completion patterns.

Mimecast: The Downside

Mimecast's dedicated awareness-training product carries the smallest review base and the lowest rating of the three platforms, and the gap is consistent across more than one independent review source. Users rate it 3.9/5 from just 18 reviews, against Proofpoint's 4.5/5 from 325 and KnowBe4's 4.6/5 from roughly 2,380. Independent comparisons show Mimecast's awareness-training product scoring meaningfully below Proofpoint's across multiple head-to-head listings.

This rating gap is consistent with Mimecast's positioning: The product is most valuable, and most reviewed, inside the Mimecast ecosystem, and is documented as less differentiated as a standalone training library. An organization evaluating Mimecast's training product on its technical merits, separate from the email-security bundling discount, should weigh this rating gap seriously rather than assuming parity with Proofpoint or KnowBe4.

Platform Ratings at a Glance

Platform	G2 Rating	G2 Reviews	Trustpilot	Note
KnowBe4	4.6 / 5	~2,377-2,388	No meaningful Trustpilot presence identified	Largest review base and highest rating of the three; top-ranked in G2's Grid Report for the category
Proofpoint Security Awareness	4.5 / 5	~325	No meaningful Trustpilot presence identified	Strong rating; bundled pricing with Proofpoint email security is the category's clearest value proposition
Mimecast Awareness Training	3.9 / 5	~18	No meaningful Trustpilot presence identified	Smallest review base and lowest rating of the three, consistent across multiple independent platforms

KnowBe4's review base is an order of magnitude larger than either competitor's, a signal of market presence, not just rating quality. Mimecast's small sample (18 reviews) means its 3.9/5 carries statistical uncertainty, but its consistent underperformance against Proofpoint on G2 and TrustRadius alike suggests a pattern, not noise.

Pricing (October 2026)

Platform	Published or Estimated Pricing	Minimums and Terms	Pricing Model
KnowBe4	Published list, per seat per month on a three-year term; SAT Foundation \$2.40 (25-50 seats) falling to \$1.63 (501-1,000); SAT Advanced \$3.75 falling to \$2.79; 1,001+ seats by quote	Lowest published band is 25 seats; add-ons such as Compliance Plus and PhishER Plus priced per seat	Published list with seat bands; third-party trackers still list Silver through Diamond tiers
Proofpoint	Quote-only; third-party estimates \$15-\$30 per user per year, with a \$48 list estimate for ZenGuide at a 500-seat minimum	Minimums vary by source	Custom quote, frequently bundled or discounted alongside Proofpoint email protection
Mimecast	Quote-only; third-party estimates \$22-\$35 per user per year, with a \$30 list estimate and a 100-seat minimum	Minimums vary by source	Custom quote, typically bundled with Mimecast email security

Vendr purchase data puts the median KnowBe4 buyer at \$7,799 a year (range \$1,936-\$19,500, from 684 purchases), with average savings near 20%, 15%-30% lower per-user pricing on multi-year terms, and renewals that rise 15%-30% above the initial contract if not negotiated. KnowBe4's published prices are list; Proofpoint and Mimecast figures are third-party estimates, not rates.

TCO Comparison: 500-Employee Organization, One Year

Scenario	KnowBe4	Proofpoint	Mimecast
Standalone purchase, license	Foundation $500 \times \$1.80 \times 12 = \$10,800$; Advanced $500 \times \$2.96 \times 12 = \$17,760$ (published list, three-year term)	$500 \times \$15-\$48 = \$7,500-\$24,000$ (third-party estimates)	$500 \times \$22-\$35 = \$11,000-\$17,500$ (third-party estimates; \$15,000 at the \$30 list estimate)
Bundled with that vendor's email security	Not applicable; no email security product	Discounted, but no verified bundle price; request an itemized training line	Discounted, but no verified bundle price; request an itemized training line
Renewal exposure	Reported 15%-30% uplift if not negotiated	Reported 7%-10% in one source	Reported 6%-8% in one source
Year 1 standalone range	\$10,800-\$17,760	\$7,500-\$24,000	\$11,000-\$17,500

At list, the three standalone ranges overlap heavily, so the standalone sticker price does not separate them. The decision-changing variable is bundling: An organization already paying Proofpoint or Mimecast for email security can negotiate training into that contract, which can make an otherwise more expensive product the cheaper choice, while KnowBe4 has no bundle to offer. KnowBe4's own range is the narrowest, but buyer reports of quotes well above list make a written quote the number to budget against.

Costs the Pricing Table Misses

- **KnowBe4's published list is a starting point.** Buyer reports describe variance between resellers and direct sales, and between budgets built on competitor research (around \$3,000) and actual quotes above \$10,000. Get a written, itemized quote at your seat count.
- **KnowBe4's 25-seat minimum.** Organizations below that headcount pay for unused capacity, and published prices assume a three-year term.
- **KnowBe4's renewal uplift.** Vendr reports renewals rising 15%-30% above the initial contract if not negotiated, and premium support reportedly adds 10%-20%.
- **Bundle contingency at Proofpoint and Mimecast.** Bundled pricing only holds while you stay on that vendor's email security, so a planned migration returns training to standalone pricing at the next renewal.
- **Unpublished prices.** Neither Proofpoint nor Mimecast publishes standalone training prices, so compare their quotes against KnowBe4's list only after getting an itemized quote from each.
- **Content refresh.** No vendor prices content freshness separately, but repetitiveness complaints about KnowBe4 suggest lost engagement over a multi-year term. Ask how often core content is refreshed.

Complexity Comparison

Dimension	KnowBe4	Proofpoint	Mimecast
Implementation	Documented as straightforward for a standalone platform; works identically regardless of existing email security vendor, with no integration dependency	Fastest and most integrated for existing Proofpoint email security customers, since the training platform shares the same data pipeline; a separate implementation project for non-Proofpoint customers	Similarly fastest for existing Mimecast customers; a separate, standalone implementation for organizations not already on Mimecast email security

Dimension	KnowBe4	Proofpoint	Mimecast
Admin dependency	Moderate; campaign creation and content assignment are independently described as easy to use, though the broader platform's pricing-tier structure itself requires ongoing attention to avoid renewal surprises	Lower for existing Proofpoint customers due to unified console and reporting; a distinct admin surface for standalone customers	Lower for existing Mimecast customers for the same unified-console reason; a separate admin surface for standalone customers
Learning curve	Gentle; reviewers consistently describe the interface as intuitive, with gamification elements aiding engagement	Gentle for existing Proofpoint admins already familiar with the broader console; a real, if modest, learning curve for net-new Proofpoint customers	Gentle for existing Mimecast admins for the same reason; a distinct curve for net-new Mimecast customers

The pattern across all three platforms confirms the structural story at the center of this report. Proofpoint's and Mimecast's complexity profile is defined largely by whether a buyer is already in that vendor's ecosystem, implementation, admin burden, and learning curve are all meaningfully lower for existing customers and meaningfully higher for net-new ones. KnowBe4's complexity profile doesn't move based on an organization's existing vendor relationships, since it has none to leverage, a real tradeoff for its pricing-transparency problems.

Red Flags

Every finding below is independently documented and material enough to influence a purchasing decision.

KnowBe4	Proofpoint	Mimecast
• Quote variance between channels is documented. One reported case describes a reseller and a direct representative quoting the same organization different per-seat prices on the same day. Request quotes through more than one channel. • Quotes can land far above budgets built on research. Buyers describe budgeting around \$3,000 and receiving quotes above \$10,000 for comparable seat counts. Get a written quote before building a budget around list. • The 25-seat minimum and three-year pricing term apply. Smaller organizations pay for unused seats. Confirm the minimum and the term your quote assumes.	• No published price and a wide estimate spread. Third-party estimates run \$15-\$48 per user per year. Request training costed as its own line item. • The bundled discount has no verified rate. A \$6-\$12 figure circulates but is unconfirmed. Treat it as a negotiation target. • The bundle depends on staying on Proofpoint email. A migration away returns training to standalone pricing at the next renewal.	• The training product has the smallest review base and lowest rating. 3.9/5 from 18 reviews, consistent across sources. Ask for reference customers using the standalone training product. • Standalone pricing is the least documented. Third-party estimates run \$22-\$35 per user per year. Get an itemized quote for training alone. • The bundled discount carries the same contingency. Factor in renewal pricing if a move away from Mimecast email is plausible.

The Decision Framework

Choose KnowBe4 if:

- You are not already locked into Proofpoint's or Mimecast's email security ecosystem, and want the deepest content library and largest review base in the category.
- You have gotten a written, itemized quote from more than one sales channel and compared them, rather than accepting a single initial quote as representative of list pricing.

- Your organization has at least 25 users, or you have confirmed how the minimum-seat commitment applies at your specific headcount.

Choose Proofpoint if:

- You are already a Proofpoint email security customer and can negotiate training into that contract, which is the strongest value proposition in this comparison.
- Threat-intelligence-informed training simulations, built on real phishing data from your existing Proofpoint email gateway, are a specific priority.
- You have requested training costed as its line item, not folded into a broader suite negotiation that obscures the actual training-specific cost.

Choose Mimecast if:

- You are already a Mimecast email security customer and want unified reporting and a single procurement relationship.
- You have requested reference customers using the standalone training product, and have weighed its smaller review base and lower rating against Proofpoint's and KnowBe4's stronger review profiles.
- Micro-learning, shorter and more frequent training modules, fits your organization's training-completion patterns better than longer-format content.

Key Decision Factors

Design decides where training lives. KnowBe4 is a standalone platform with the deepest content library and the same behavior on any email stack. Proofpoint and Mimecast embed training in their email security platforms, using that data for simulations and unified reporting, and Mimecast favors shorter micro-learning modules.

Audience decides which one fits. KnowBe4 fits organizations not tied to either email vendor. Proofpoint and Mimecast fit existing customers of their email products, with Mimecast's smaller review base and lower rating worth weighing.

Price follows what you already own. Standalone, the three overlap at roughly \$7,500-\$24,000 a year for 500 employees, with KnowBe4's published list at \$10,800-\$17,760. The largest lever is bundling with an existing email security contract, which no source prices reliably, and KnowBe4's reported quote variance means a written quote from more than one channel is the number to budget against.

The bottom line:

- An organization on Proofpoint or Mimecast email security should request bundled training pricing, itemized, before evaluating KnowBe4.
- An organization on neither should evaluate KnowBe4 and compare written quotes from more than one sales channel against its published list.
- Any buyer should confirm seat minimums, renewal uplift, and the term the quote assumes before signing.