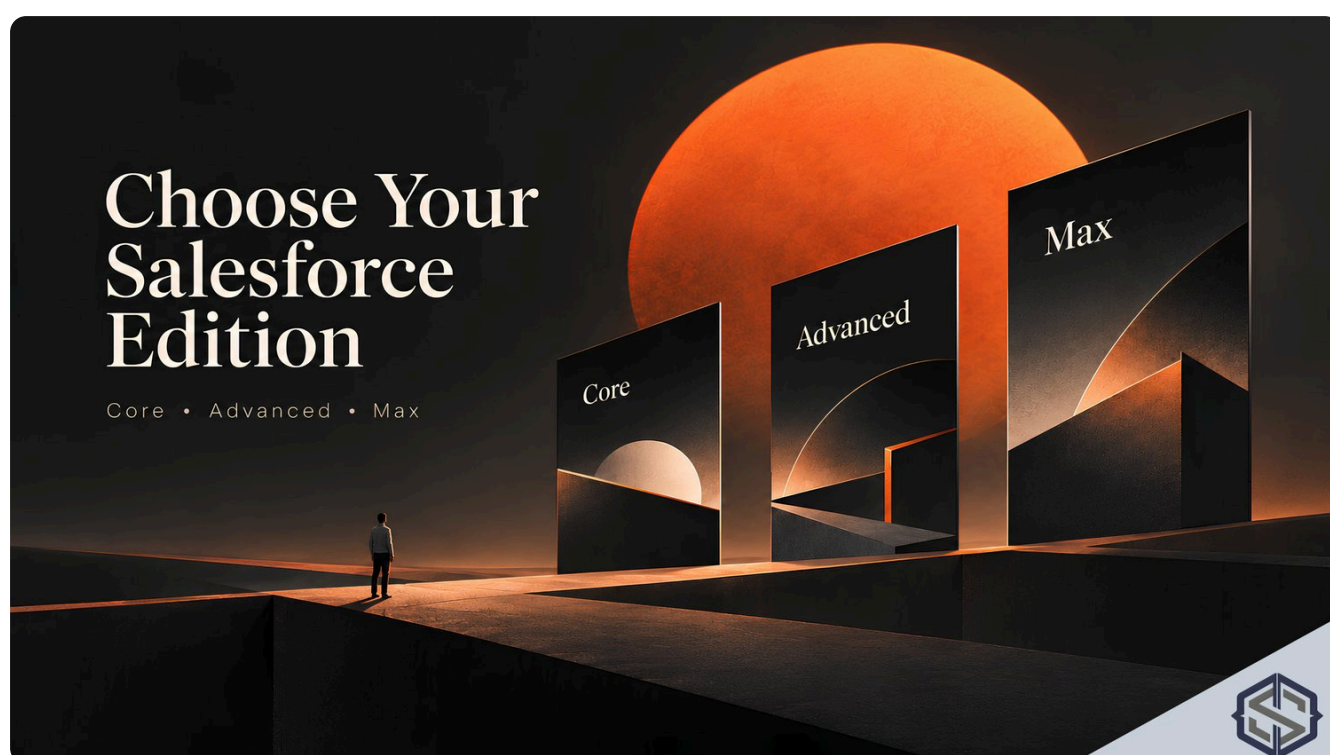


Edition Comparison

Salesforce Core vs Advanced vs Max: Which Edition Do You Need?

Salesforce replaced its old two-step Enterprise and Unlimited choice with five tiers in September 2026. For most buyers the real decision is among the middle three: Core, Advanced and Max. They differ by hundreds of dollars per user per month, so picking the wrong one is the most expensive mistake available on the price list.



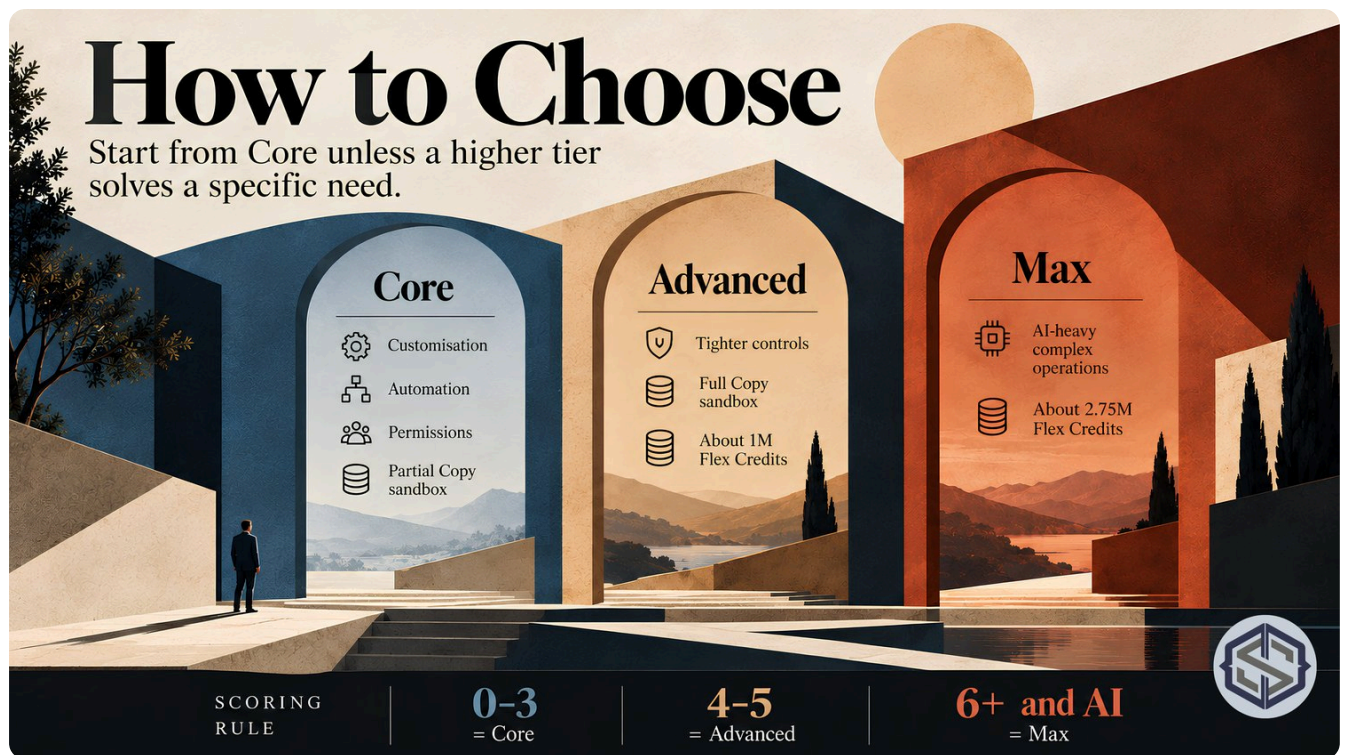
Key takeaways

- Core is \$195, Advanced \$395 and Max \$550 per user per month at list. For 50 users that is \$117,000, \$237,000 and \$330,000 a year.
- Core, Advanced and Max all bundle Slack, Tableau Next, Premier Success and Agentforce with Flex Credits (500K, 1M and 2.75M a year). If a quote lists those separately, challenge it.
- A Full Copy sandbox is included from Advanced up. On Core you pay 30% of net licences to add one.
- Start from Core unless you can name the specific capability that Advanced or Max adds for you.

What changed in September 2026

Until this autumn, most commercial buyers chose between Enterprise (\$175) and Unlimited (\$350). The new lineup launched on 3 September 2026 and places five tiers on one ladder: Starter Suite (\$25), Pro Suite (\$100), Core (\$195), Advanced (\$395) and Max (\$550). Legacy editions still exist for renewals, which is why anyone with an existing contract has a second decision to make.

Starter and Pro Suite are aimed at very small teams, and we cover them in Salesforce pricing for small business. This article is about the three tiers a typical growing team will actually weigh.



The price ladder, for a team of 50

The per-user gap looks abstract until it is multiplied by a team. Here is the annual list cost for 50 users, with benchmark pricing at the 20% discount we use for deals of 50 to 149 seats.

Edition	List per user / month	List, 50 users / year	Benchmark, 50 users / year
Core	\$195	\$117,000	\$93,600
Advanced	\$395	\$237,000	\$189,600
Max	\$550	\$330,000	\$264,000
Legacy Enterprise	\$175	\$105,000	n/a
Legacy Unlimited	\$350	\$210,000	n/a

Licence cost only. Industry clouds, marketing, commerce and add-ons are excluded. Benchmark factors are indicative for the new tiers.

Moving a 50-person team from Core to Advanced adds \$120,000 a year at list. Moving on to Max adds another \$93,000. Neither is a rounding error, so each step has to be justified by something your team will do.

What each tier gives you

Core: the real starting point

Core is where Salesforce stops being a template and becomes configurable: custom objects, automation and permission design. It also bundles Slack, Tableau Next, Premier Success and Agentforce with a Flex Credit allowance of about 500K a year, so the things people used to buy separately are already in the price. A Partial Copy sandbox is included, which is enough for testing realistic data on most projects.

Advanced: tighter control and a Full Copy sandbox

Advanced adds tighter security controls and a larger AI allowance of about 1M Flex Credits. The sandbox entitlement is the practical difference many teams feel: a Full Copy sandbox, a complete replica of production data, is included. On Core, a Full Copy would cost an extra 30% of net licence fees. For a 50-user team at the benchmark price that is about \$28,000 a year, which is worth knowing before you decide Advanced is "too expensive".

Max: the AI-heavy, high-complexity tier

Max carries the largest Flex Credit allowance, about 2.75M a year, and is the right answer when AI-driven agents are central to how you operate and your processes are complex enough to need the other top-tier entitlements. For nonprofits Max is \$285 and is the single tier available for Nonprofit Cloud for Grantmaking.

How the estimator decides

We built the recommendation as a simple score so it can be inspected. Points are added for each of these: 50 or more users, 150 or more users, processes that are somewhat custom, processes that are truly unique (two points), AI selected, five or more outcomes selected, and several or enterprise-grade integrations. Then:

Complexity score	Recommended tier
0 to 3	Core (Starter or Pro Suite if the team is tiny and standard)
4 to 5	Advanced
6 or more, and AI selected	Max
6 or more, no AI	Advanced

From the estimator rules, September 2026. You can override the recommendation in the results.

Notice what the score does not do. It does not push you up a tier because you have more people. Headcount is already priced per seat. Complexity and AI are what justify a more capable edition.

Core against a legacy renewal

If you hold Enterprise licences, the comparison is not Core against \$175. Legacy editions carry a Premier Success Plan at about 30% of net licences, whereas Premier is bundled in the new tiers. For 50 users: Enterprise at \$175 is \$105,000 a year; add Premier at 30% and the real figure is \$136,500. Core at \$195 is \$117,000 with Slack, Tableau Next and Agentforce credits included. Your own discount will move these

numbers, so run it with your contract, but the headline price of the old edition is rarely the whole story. We cover the renewal side in how to negotiate a Salesforce renewal.

Three expensive mistakes

- **Buying for headcount, not complexity.** A 100-person team with standard sales processes may be perfectly served by Core.
- **Buying Max for AI you have not scoped.** Flex Credits are an allowance. Credits you do not consume are money you did not need to spend.
- **Paying separately for bundled items.** If a quote lists Slack, Tableau or Agentforce as extra lines on Core or above, ask why.

The next step is to put your own numbers in. Use the guided estimator if you want a recommendation, or the express calculator to price a tier you have already chosen.

Frequently asked questions

What is the difference between Salesforce Core, Advanced and Max?

They are the three main tiers of the new Salesforce lineup. Core (\$195) is the entry point for real customisation. Advanced (\$395) adds tighter security controls, a Full Copy sandbox and a larger AI allowance. Max (\$550) carries the biggest Flex Credit allowance for AI-heavy, complex organisations.

Is Core enough for a mid-sized business?

Often, yes. If your processes are close to standard and you do not need a Full Copy sandbox for testing against production-sized data, Core covers customisation, automation and permissions for a team of 50 or more. Complexity, not headcount, is the usual reason to move up.

Do Core, Advanced and Max include Agentforce?

Our pricing data treats Agentforce with Flex Credits as bundled in all three: roughly 500K credits a year in Core, 1M in Advanced and 2.75M in Max. A separate Agentforce add-on on top is usually unnecessary, so check any quote that adds one.

Should I stay on Enterprise or Unlimited?

Run both costs side by side before renewal. Legacy editions carry a Premier Success Plan at about 30% of net licences, which the new tiers bundle. Depending on your discount, the new tier can cost less than legacy plus Premier.

Can I start on Core and move up later?

Yes, and for most buyers that is the safest path. Buying Max on day one to cover AI plans you have not scoped usually means paying for credits you do not use.

Prices are Salesforce list prices in USD as verified on 29 September 2026. Estimator figures are estimates, not quotes.

Run your own numbers. Try the free TwinStack Salesforce Cost Estimator at twinstack.net/cost-estimator, or book a free 45-minute call with our team.