



B2B VENDOR DIFFERENTIATION SURVEY

How buyers evaluate vendors in a market where everything sounds the same

June 2026

N = 100 B2B SaaS Marketing Leaders · 73% VP & Above

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

100

Respondents

10Questions -- scale, single-select,
multi-select, open-ended**5**CRM value props tested, names
removed

AUDIENCE

All respondents are B2B SaaS marketing leaders who have evaluated competing vendors. Seniority: 33% CMO / Chief, 40% VP, 27% Director / Head of (73% VP and above).

COMPANY SIZE

Mid-Market 200–999 (45%) · Medium 50–199 (33%) · Small 10–49 (12%) · Enterprise 1,000+ (10%)

THE VALUE-PROP TEST (Q6)

Respondents were shown 5 real, unedited value props from well-known CRMs -- Salesforce (Agentforce), HubSpot, Zoho, Pipedrive, Oracle -- with company names removed, and asked to match each to its brand. Random guessing scores 1.0 of 5.

DATA QUALITY NOTES

Open responses (Q4) were coded into themes; one answer can carry multiple themes, so totals exceed 100%. A small number of multi-answer responses on single-select questions were folded to the primary answer. Fielded on the Wynter panel of 80,000+ verified B2B professionals, June 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BUYERS CAN'T TELL VENDORS APART. NEITHER CAN THE PEOPLE WHO WRITE THE COPY.

We surveyed 100 B2B SaaS marketing leaders (73% VP and above) on how they evaluate competing vendors, and ran a blind test on the category's own messaging.

1.86

Avg score (of 5) matching five CRMs' value props to the brand. Guessing scores 1.0.

98%

At least sometimes feel "these all basically do the same thing"

87%

Get to a vendor through a peer recommendation, not messaging

The pattern held across every question. Sameness is the default buying experience: 64% found vendors hard to tell apart, and even the 56% who dug deep mostly came out feeling everyone was the same. The difference that closed the deal showed up everywhere except the messaging: use-case fit (32%) and the sales experience (31%) led, with reps explaining what websites couldn't.

Messaging didn't open the door either: peer recommendation (87%) and prior awareness (72%) dominate shortlisting, with "messaging stood out" 4th at 29%. And when vendors feel interchangeable, buyers demand proof: 41% push for a trial, while brand recognition finishes last at 15%.

THE BOTTOM LINE

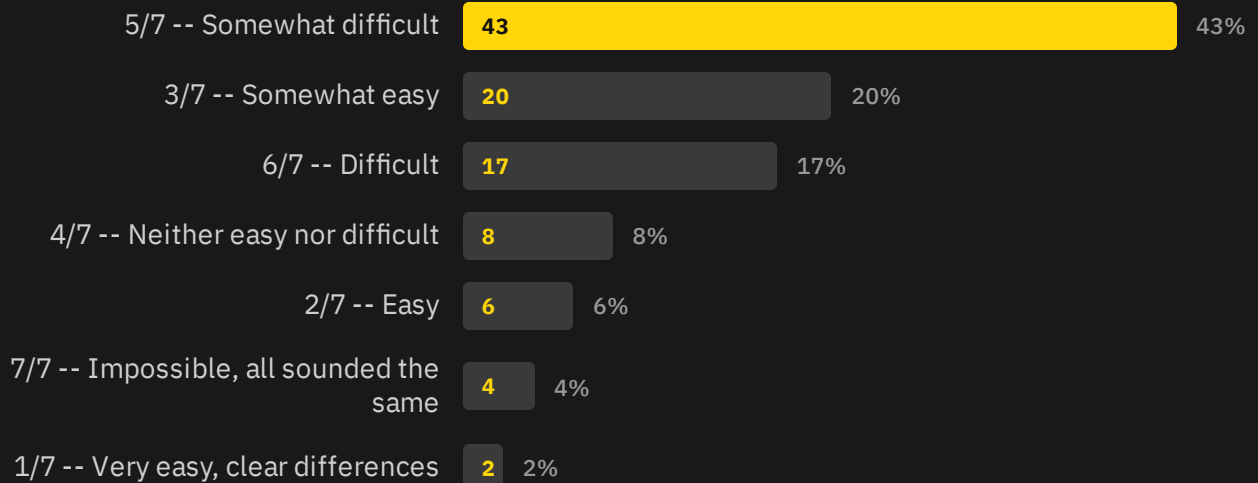
Buyers aren't lazy or irrational. They operate in a market where vendors have failed to build, or failed to prove, a real difference. **Differentiation isn't a copywriting problem. It's a positioning and proof problem.**

QUESTION 1

TELLING VENDORS APART IS HARD FOR NEARLY EVERYONE.

"Think about the last time you evaluated 2 or more vendors in the same category. Based on their websites and messaging, how easy was it to tell them apart?" Scale of 1 (very easy) to 7 (impossible).

RESPONSES · N=100 · MEAN 4.51 / 7



KEY FINDING

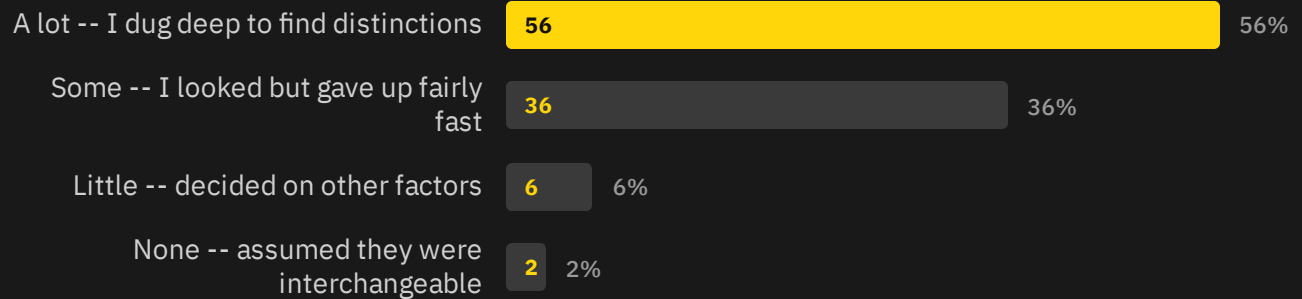
64% leaned difficult (5–7). Only 8% found it easy. For most senior marketers, vendor websites and messaging fail at their most basic job: making the difference legible.

QUESTION 2

BUYERS DON'T GIVE UP. THEY DIG.

"When vendors seemed similar, how much effort did you put into finding the real differences between them?"

RESPONSES · N=100

**KEY FINDING**

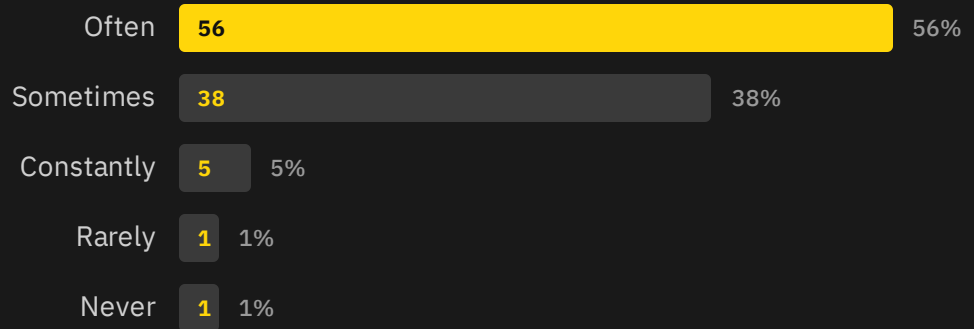
92% put in real effort. Sameness isn't met with apathy -- buyers respond by researching harder. The next question shows what that effort buys them.

QUESTION 3

"THEY ALL DO THE SAME THING" IS THE DEFAULT THOUGHT.

"While comparing vendors, how often did you think 'these all basically do the same thing'?"

RESPONSES • N=100



KEY FINDING

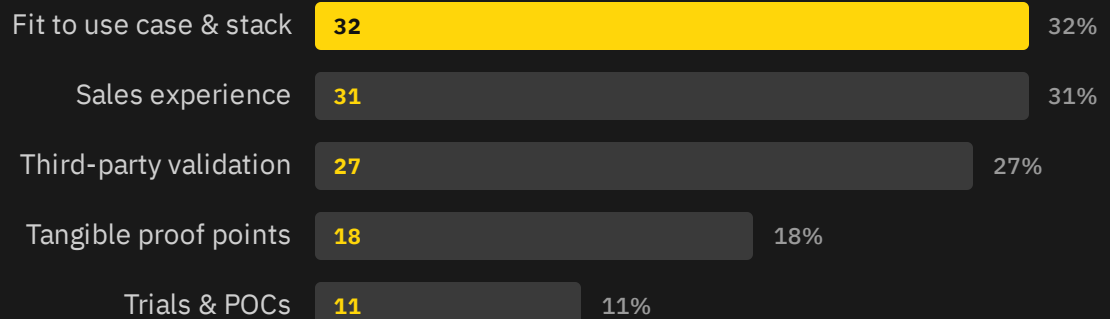
98% felt it at least sometimes; 61% often or constantly. Just 2% rarely or never did. Combined with Q2: half of the deep diggers still came out feeling everyone was the same. Effort doesn't surface a difference that isn't communicated.

QUESTION 4 • OPEN RESPONSE

FIT AND THE SALES EXPERIENCE MADE THE WINNER DIFFERENT.

"Think about the vendor you ultimately chose. In your own words, what made them different from the others on your shortlist?" Themes coded across all 100 responses; one answer can carry multiple themes.

THEMES • N=100 • MULTI-CODED



"Their sellers were able to do a good job of explaining the differences that the website by itself was not able to do."

Chief Marketing Officer

"I stopped reading and using their info and looked to my peers for insights and recommendations. That was far more informative than anything I got from the vendors."

Chief Marketing Officer

KEY FINDING

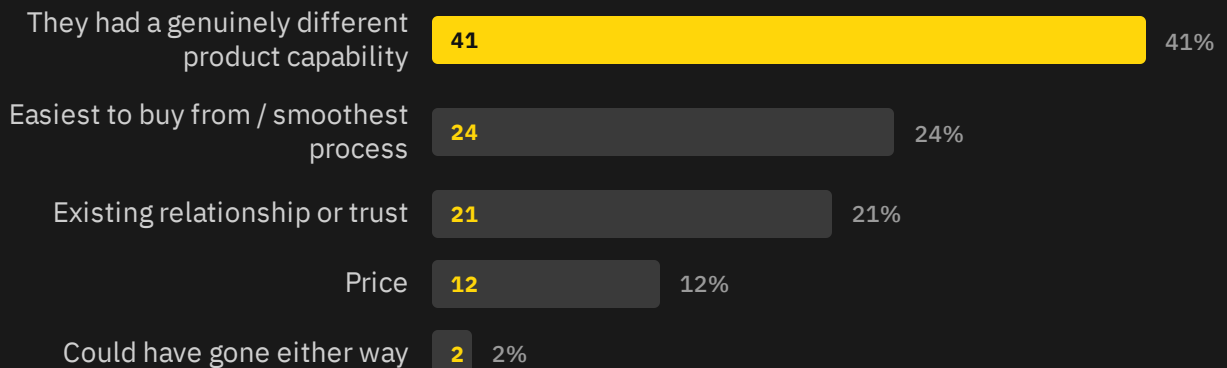
Differentiation was **proven in the process, not read on the website**. A rep, a requirements match, a reference, a trial -- humans and evidence did the job the messaging didn't.

QUESTION 5

PRODUCT LEADS -- BUT IT'S STILL THE MINORITY.

"What was the single biggest reason you picked them?"

RESPONSES · N=100



KEY FINDING

Product capability is the single most-cited reason at **41%** -- yet **57% decided on ease, trust, or price**. When buyers conclude the products are at parity, those are the only levers left.

QUESTION 6

MARKETERS COULDN'T MATCH THE COPY TO THE BRAND.

"Below are 5 real value props from well-known B2B SaaS companies, with the company names removed. Match each tagline to the company you think it belongs to." Brands tested: Salesforce (Agentforce), HubSpot, Zoho, Pipedrive, Oracle. Random guessing scores 1.0 of 5.

1.86

Average correct out of 5

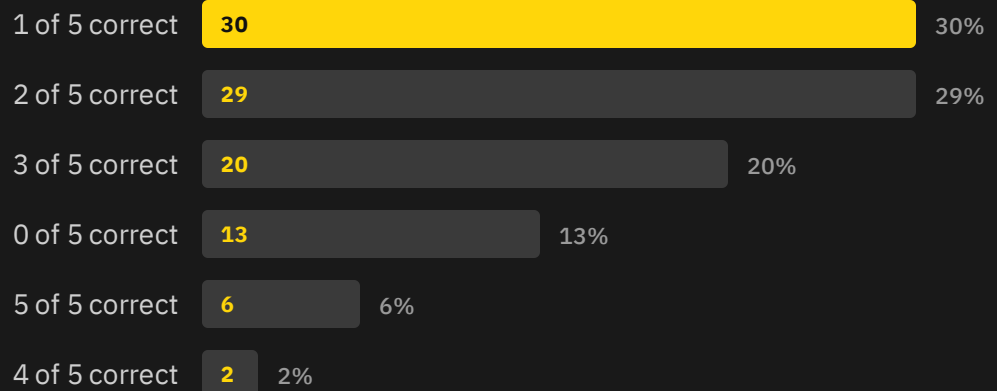
43%

Got 0 or 1 of 5 right

8%

Got 4 or 5 right

SCORE DISTRIBUTION · N=100



KEY FINDING

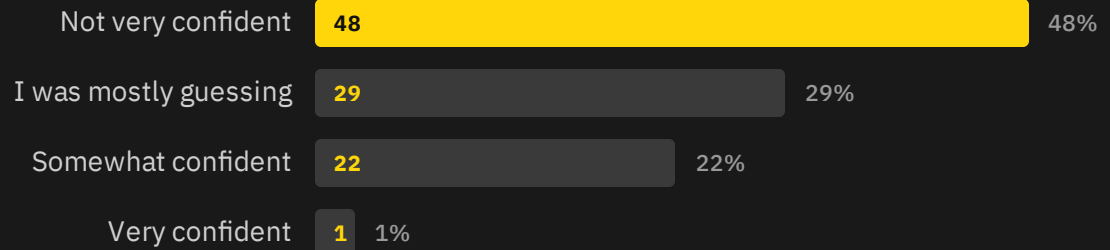
The people who write this kind of copy for a living landed **barely above random chance** identifying five of the best-known brands in software. The copy is real; the names are interchangeable.

QUESTION 7

THEY KNEW THEY WERE GUESSING.

"How confident were you in those matches?"

RESPONSES · N=100

**KEY FINDING**

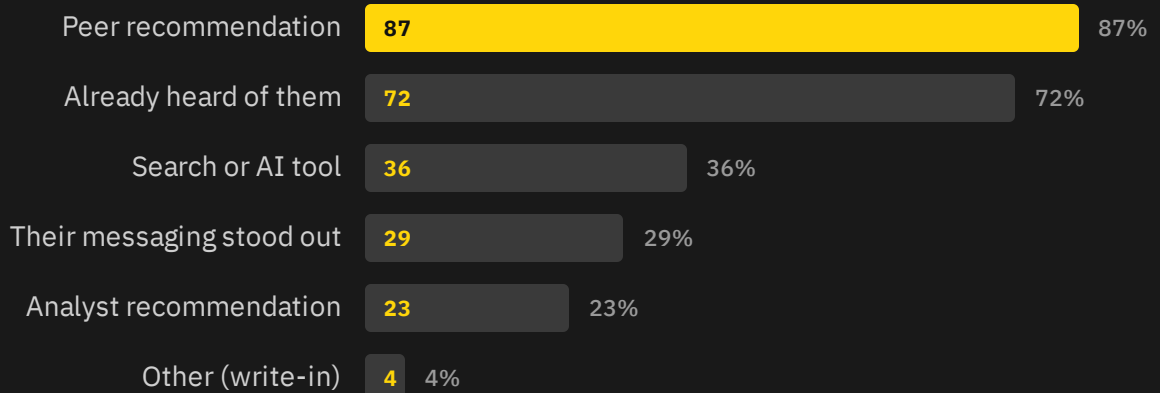
78% said they were guessing or not confident -- and the measured 1.86 / 5 score confirmed it. Self-perception and performance aligned: the copy genuinely is indistinguishable.

QUESTION 8 · SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

PEER RECOMMENDATION IS THE FRONT DOOR.

"What usually gets a vendor onto your shortlist in the first place?" Respondents could select multiple answers; totals exceed 100%.

RESPONSES · N=100 · MULTI-SELECT



KEY FINDING

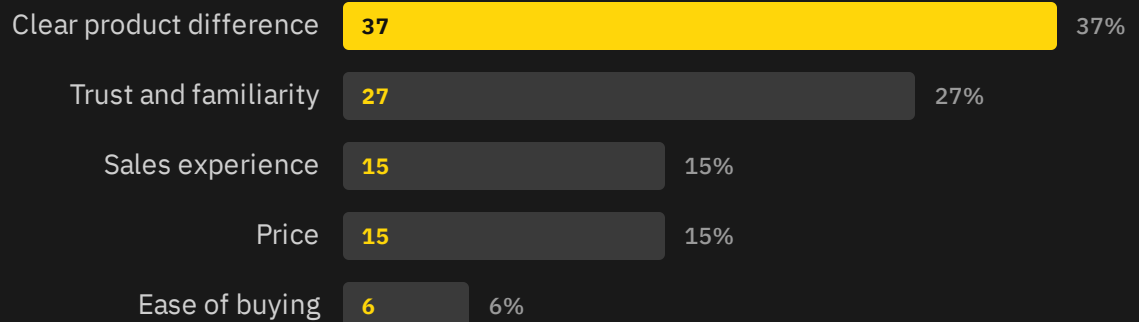
87% get to a vendor through a peer recommendation. "Their messaging stood out" ranks 4th at 29% -- behind even prior awareness and search. The front door to consideration is a conversation the vendor wasn't in.

QUESTION 9

63% PICK ON SOMETHING OTHER THAN PRODUCT.

"Once vendors are on your shortlist, what most often makes you pick one over another?"

RESPONSES • N=100



KEY FINDING

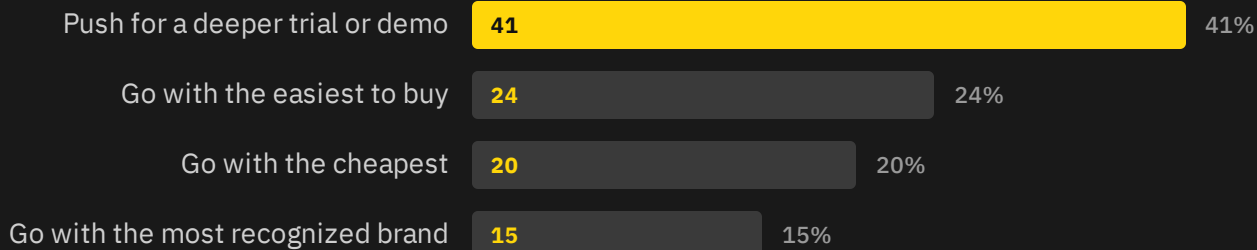
A clear product difference leads at **37%**, but the majority decides on trust, sales, price, or ease. Consistent with Q5: when differentiation isn't evident, human and commercial factors fill the vacuum.

QUESTION 10

WHEN IT'S A TIE, BUYERS DEMAND PROOF.

"When the vendors on your shortlist feel interchangeable, what do you typically do?"

RESPONSES · N=100



KEY FINDING

The #1 move is to **make the vendor prove it** (41%). A combined 44% default to price and friction. Brand recognition finishes last at **15%** -- being known doesn't win a tie; being demonstrably different does.

CROSS-CUTS

EVERY CUT OF THE DATA POINTS THE SAME WAY.

1.63**"Product-driven" buyers couldn't spot products**

Respondents who said they chose on a genuinely different product capability scored 1.63 on the value-prop test -- below the 1.86 average. Believing product is the differentiator doesn't mean you can recognize it in the copy.

50%**Digging deep didn't dissolve the sameness**

Of the 56 respondents who dug deep for differences, half still often or constantly felt everyone was the same. Effort and clarity were uncorrelated.

1.70**Seniority didn't help**

CMOs and chief marketers (n=33) scored 1.70 on the test -- slightly below the full sample. The most senior, most accountable people were no better at telling the category apart.

78%**Confidence matched reality**

78% said they were guessing or not confident, and the measured score confirmed it. The sameness isn't imagined -- it's verifiable.

4.7**The problem spans every company size**

Mid-market buyers found differentiation hardest (4.7 / 7 mean difficulty), with mid-size close behind. No segment found it easy.

TOP 5 TAKEAWAYS

SAMENESS IS THE MARKET. PROOF IS THE WAY OUT.

01 Sameness is the default buying experience.

98% of buyers at least sometimes feel vendors all do the same thing. Even the marketers writing the category's copy score barely above chance telling it apart (1.86 / 5).

02 Buyers respond with effort, and the effort fails.

92% genuinely look for differences; 56% dig deep. Half the diggers still come out feeling everyone is the same. The difference isn't on the website to find.

03 Humans and evidence close what messaging doesn't.

Use-case fit (32%) and the sales experience (31%) are what actually made winners different. Reps are doing the differentiation work homepages should have done.

04 Messaging doesn't get you shortlisted either.

87% of buyers arrive via peer recommendation; only 29% via messaging that stood out. Word of mouth and familiarity are the front door -- and in a tie, brand recognition finishes last (15%).

05 When nothing is different, price wins by default.

57% of final decisions came down to ease, trust, or price. The parity tax is real: undifferentiated vendors compete on margin and friction, not value.

FIND OUT WHAT YOUR BUYERS ACTUALLY THINK.

This entire study was fielded on Wynter, our own on-demand B2B research platform, with results in under 48 hours.

Message testing. Find out if your positioning lands, or sounds like everyone else's.

ICP surveys. Ask your exact buyer profile what they think. Answers in days, not weeks.

Brand tracking. Measure awareness, perception, and preference over time.

Qualitative interviews. Go deep with the people who actually buy.

80,000+ verified B2B professionals • Results in under 48 hours

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