The Real Cost of Approval-Ready Time Tracking

A Capability-Adjusted Pricing Comparison of 14 Software Platforms

Ankur Shrestha

Honest Day, United States

ORCID: 0009-0009-6036-5849

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Abstract

Small service businesses that bill clients for time need more than a timer: people submit time, a manager approves it, project profit is reported and invoices come from the same entries. This working paper compares what the cheapest published plan that natively does all of this costs across 14 time tracking products, using list prices read from the vendors' own pages on 14 November 2026. Vendors were chosen by a rule fixed before collection, from competitor domains observed in a US search study. For four nested capability bundles, four team sizes (5, 10, 20 and 50 paid users) and two billing periods, we computed the cost of 12 months in US dollars, with every price and capability tied to an archived vendor page. Among the 9 vendors with a published plan covering the complete bundle, the 12-month cost for 10 users on annual billing ranged from $190 to $1,920 (median $960). The producer of the study, Honest Day, is the lowest-priced option in 24 of 24 scenarios that require approvals, but not for time tracking and reporting alone, where other vendors' free plans cost less in 6 of 8 scenarios. When every contested classification was resolved in competitors' favour, Honest Day remained lowest in 22 of 24. The study measures list prices for four capabilities. It does not measure product quality, fit or total cost of ownership.

Keywords: time tracking software; software pricing; timesheet approval; price comparison; SaaS pricing; project profitability; small business

1 Introduction

Time tracking software is sold at a headline price per user per month, and most comparison pages quote that price. A service business that bills clients for time rarely needs only a timer. It needs people to submit timesheets, a manager to approve them, a report that relates the revenue on a project to its labour cost, and invoices that come from the same time entries. Vendors often place some of these capabilities on higher plans or add-ons, so the price a team pays to run the whole workflow can differ from the price that attracted it.

This paper measures that difference for a defined workflow. We ask what the cheapest published plan that natively supports each of four nested capability bundles costs, for teams of 5, 10, 20 and 50 people on monthly and annual billing, at 14 vendors chosen by a pre-set rule. We then ask how much the answer depends on the choices we made: the team sizes, the treatment of promotions, ambiguous vendor documentation and billing period.

The study has three features that readers should weigh. First, it is company-produced working research. The author's company, Honest Day, sells a time tracking product that is one of the 14 studied, and Honest Day ran and paid for the study (Section 11). Second, the rules were fixed and hashed before competitor data were collected, and every price and capability points to an archived

vendor page, so a reader can check any figure or re-run every calculation. Third, results that do not favour the producer are required outputs, not optional ones: the paper reports the scenarios in which Honest Day is not the cheapest option and a stress test in which every contested call is resolved against it.

The paper makes no claim that any product is better, that any vendor is overpriced, or that price predicts value. It describes published list prices on one day for four capabilities.

2 Related research

Price comparisons for software products frequently rely on headline entry plans, which can differ substantially from the price of a more capable configuration. The following studies bear on this paper's approach.

Brynjolfsson and Smith documented substantial price dispersion among online retailers selling identical goods [1]. Ellison and Ellison studied online markets in which sellers present a low headline price alongside add-ons, examining how such fee structures affect price comparison [2]. Blake and co-authors conducted a field experiment on a ticket marketplace studying how the timing of price presentation affects purchase decisions [3]. Lehmann and Buxmann survey the pricing strategies available to software vendors [4]. These works inform this study's approach of comparing the full capability-bundle price rather than the entry-plan price.

The primary sources for this paper are the vendors' own pricing pages, plan comparison pages and help documentation, listed in the Data availability section.

3 Research questions

The study answers the following questions, descriptively. It tests no hypotheses.

1. **RQ1.** Which published plan is the cheapest one that natively supports each capability bundle, for each team size and billing period?
2. **RQ2.** How much does the cost of the same scenario vary between vendors?
3. **RQ3.** How does cost change with team size?
4. **RQ4.** How far apart are a vendor's entry price and its approval-ready price?
5. **RQ5.** How much of that gap comes from plan tier restrictions or add-ons?
6. **RQ6.** How does monthly versus annual billing change the result?
7. **RQ7.** Which platforms cannot support each complete bundle on a published plan?
8. **RQ8.** In which scenarios is Honest Day not the cheapest or not the most capable option?

4 Sampling and inclusion criteria

The candidate pool is the set of competitor domains observed in a US search study of 40 "Harvest alternative" and time tracking cost queries, run on 15 October 2026 with a commercial SERP data provider. It records products that buyers meet when they search for alternatives. It is an observed, reproducible list, not a market census. Domains classed as direct competitors were candidates. Review sites, listicle publishers, video, app stores, accounting suites, project management suites, professional services automation suites and workforce suites were not (criterion I1).

A candidate was included only if all five criteria held on the collection date: **I1**, time tracking or timesheets is the vendor's core product, sold on its own price list; **I2**, at least one paid plan has a list price in US dollars on an official vendor page; **I3**, teams of at least 10 users can be bought or trialled without contacting sales; **I4**, time tracking and time reporting are natively available on at least one published plan; **I5**, the product is sold and its official pricing page was fetched successfully on the collection date.

The selection rule required Honest Day, Harvest, Toggl Track and Clockify, then took candidates in descending order of the number of the 40 queries in which their domain appeared (ties broken by lower median position) until ten others passed all criteria, for 14 in total. The order was fixed in a file before extraction. A failed candidate was logged and the next was used. The study substituted no vendor for any other reason, including a vendor's price being high or low.

Table 1. Candidate vendors in selection order, with the number of the 40 queries in which each domain appeared and its median position. Honest Day was required and is not in the search-derived order.

Order	Vendor	Queries (of 40)	Median position	Outcome
1	Clockify	22	3	included (required)
2	TimeCamp	19	16	included
3	My Hours	16	9	included
4	Toggl Track	16	9	included (required)
5	Apploye	16	10	included
6	Jibble	15	31	excluded (fails I2, I5)
7	Everhour	15	39	included
8	actiTIME	14	48	included
9	Harvest	12	8	included (required)
10	TMetric	12	17	included
11	Desklog	12	21	included
12	TimeTrak (TimeTrakGO)	12	60	excluded (fails I4)
13	Hubstaff	11	27	included
14	DeskTime	11	31	included
15	TrackingTime	10	9	included

Two candidates were excluded. Jibble fails I2 and the pricing-page limb of I5: no official page publishes a US dollar list price for its paid plans on the collection date. TimeTrak (TimeTrakGO) fails I4: its self-serve plans track clock-ins by employee and list no projects or clients. Candidates ranked below the tenth passing vendor (for example Timesheets.com, Timely and Paymo) were not reached, so products that serve this buyer but fall outside the rule are not in the sample. The sample is therefore a rule-based one, not the market.

5 Frozen methodology

The methodology, the data schema and the candidate order were fixed and hashed before competitor pages were retrieved. The methodology file's SHA-256 at the time of the freeze, `1c7de6432d9d7d94` (first 16 hexadecimal characters; the full hash is in the dataset), is unchanged at the time of writing. This section summarises the rules. The full text is in the dataset.

5.1 Scenarios and cost basis

Team sizes are 5, 10, 20 and 50 paid users. Every user, including managers and approvers, takes a paid seat. Where a vendor lets approvers or viewers use the product free, that is recorded as a note

but not applied, because applying it would require an assumption about the ratio of managers to staff that the study does not make. Billing periods are monthly (month-to-month list price) and annual (list price for an annual commitment); they are never mixed. The cost compared is the cost of 12 months in US dollars at list price before tax: 12 times the monthly total for monthly billing, and 12 times the per-month equivalent for annual billing. Each plan therefore has 32 scenarios (4 sizes, 4 bundles, 2 billing periods). Free trials are not costs and are not modelled. A promotion is never part of the base calculation.

5.2 Price rules

Each plan has one price rule per billing period. A per-user rule multiplies a unit price by the billed users. A block rule gives a price for a first block of users and a price for each further block, as Honest Day publishes. A tiered rule is applied only if the vendor states whether a band's price applies to every user or only to the users in that band; if the vendor does not say, the cost is recorded as unknown instead of choosing a reading. Billed users are the larger of the team size and the vendor's published minimum. A plan whose published user cap is below the team size is not eligible for that size. Add-ons are priced by the same rules and added when a required capability is available only as an add-on. Where a vendor charges usage fees that cannot be computed from published numbers, the total is flagged as a lower bound. An unpublished or unclear price is recorded as missing and is never converted to zero.

5.3 Evidence rules

Only primary sources are used: official pricing pages, plan comparison pages, help centre and documentation. Every price, minimum, plan limit and capability status points to at least one evidence record. A record has the page URL, the retrieval time, the retrieval method, the HTTP status, the SHA-256 of the archived copy, the archive path and a verbatim excerpt. A validation script checks that every excerpt is a substring of its archived copy. The dataset has 372 such records for the 14 included vendors and the two excluded candidates. Anything the collector could not see, such as JavaScript-rendered, geo-priced or login-gated content, is recorded as missing information, not guessed. Each vendor file also carries a confidence rating of high, medium or low.

5.4 Analysis plan

The analysis is descriptive: the minimum, median, maximum, interquartile range and max/min ratio across vendors with an eligible price in a scenario, and Honest Day's rank. With at most 14 vendors and a non-random sample, there are no hypothesis tests, and no claim is made about why prices differ. Findings are observations about published list prices on the collection date.

5.5 Timeline and deviations

The methodology was hashed at 2026-11-14 08:21:42 UTC. The first competitor page was retrieved at 2026-11-14 08:22:17 UTC, after the freeze. The 16 evidence records for Honest Day's own pricing page and repository files carry a nominal retrieval time of 2026-11-14 08:20:00 UTC, which is before the freeze; the producer already knew its own prices and the freeze constrained the rules, not the producer's own price list. Readers who require every record to post-date the freeze should treat these records as an exception.

One schema addendum (D1) was logged after the freeze. It added three descriptive fields (the period of an amount, a promotional flag and a note on billed users) and changed no methodology rule.

After a separate review pass that did not collect the data, 11 corrections were made and are listed with their effects in Appendix D. None changed a headline conclusion. Post-hoc analyses added after seeing results are labelled as such: sizes just above a block boundary, a stricter definition of approvals for one vendor, a stress test that resolves every contested call against the producer, statistics that exclude the producer, and a tie-aware rank.

6 Capability bundles

A capability counts as native only if the vendor's own documentation or pricing page states that it is included in that plan, inside the product, with no third-party app, integration, API work or spreadsheet. The four bundles are nested: each includes the one before it.

Table 2. The four capability bundles and the capabilities a plan must natively support.

Bundle	Name	A plan must natively provide
A	Time tracking and reporting	A timer or manual time entry by project or client, and a report of tracked time by at least project, client or person.
B	Time tracking with manager approvals	A, and a workflow in which people submit time and a manager or approver accepts or rejects it. Approving time-off requests does not count, and a lock or approved state without a submit and approve step does not count.
C	Approvals and project profitability reporting	B, and a report that relates revenue (billable amount, invoiced amount or budget fee) to cost (labour cost rate times hours, or recorded expenses) to give profit or margin per project or client. Budget versus actual alone does not count, and billable versus non-billable hours alone does not count.
D	Approvals, project profitability and native client invoicing	C, and creating a client invoice from tracked time inside the product, with the invoice document produced there. Pushing time to an external invoicing tool does not count.

Each capability on each plan has one of six statuses. **Native**: documented as included. **Add-on**: available for a separate published price, which is added; if the add-on price is unpublished, the cost is unknown. **Integration only**: available only through a third-party tool, so the bundle is partial. **Partial**: part of the definition is met. **Not offered**: the vendor's plan comparison or documentation states it is absent from the plan, which requires positive evidence. **Not documented**: nothing was found; absence is not asserted, the bundle is indeterminate, and the plan is excluded from the lowest-eligible comparison and listed separately.

7 Vendor comparison

Table 3. Whether each vendor has a published plan that natively supports each bundle, and the confidence rating of the vendor's data file. Partial and not documented are not claims that the vendor lacks the capability.

Vendor	A	B	C	D	Confidence
actiTIME	yes	yes	yes	yes	medium
Apploye	yes	yes	partial	partial	medium
Clockify	yes	yes	yes	yes	high
Desklog	yes	partial	partial	partial	medium

Vendor	A	B	C	D	Confidence
DeskTime	yes	not documented	partial	not offered	medium
Everhour	yes	yes	yes	yes	high
Harvest	yes	yes	yes	yes	medium
Honest Day	yes	yes	yes	yes	medium
Hubstaff	yes	yes	partial	partial	medium
My Hours	yes	yes	yes	yes	medium
TimeCamp	yes	yes	yes	yes	medium
TMetric	yes	yes	not documented	not documented	medium
Toggl Track	yes	yes	yes	yes	medium
TrackingTime	yes	yes	yes	yes	medium

All 14 vendors support bundle A. 12 support B on a published plan, 9 support C and 9 support D. The remaining results, and the reason in each case, are these.

Table 4. Vendors without a complete published plan for every bundle, and the basis in each case.

Vendor	Result	Basis
Apploye	C and D partial	Budget screens were found, but no profit or margin report.
Desklog	B, C and D partial	Only manual time requests and leave approvals are documented, with no submit and approve timesheet.
DeskTime	B not documented; C partial; D not offered	Approvals are documented only for offline time. The vendor's own blog describes invoicing as not offered.
Hubstaff	C and D partial	Budgets and activity reports were found, but no profit report.
TMetric	C and D not documented	The vendor's pages do not say which plan carries the profitability report.

These results mean that the study could not find documentation meeting the definitions fixed before collection. A free trial or a question to the vendor could change a result. Each is listed as missing information in the dataset. Appendix A gives, for each vendor, the plans that carry approvals and the complete bundle at 10 users on annual billing and the price rule behind each.

8 Pricing results

8.1 Lowest eligible plan per scenario

For the three bundles that need manager approvals (B, C and D), Honest Day's standard-price Premium plan has the lowest 12-month cost in 24 of 24 scenarios (4 team sizes, monthly and annual billing, 3 bundles). At 10 users on annual billing it costs $190 for each of B, C and D. The next lowest at 10 users for B is Apploye Elite at $540, which does not reach C or D, and for C and D it is actiTIME at $720.

The same is not true for time tracking and reporting alone. For bundle A, Honest Day costs more than the cheapest option in 6 of 8 scenarios, because other vendors publish free plans that cover the team: Apploye Starter (up to 10 users), TimeCamp Free and TrackingTime Free. We found no published user cap on the last two, but a cap could exist that we did not find. At 5 users, 7 vendors, Honest Day among them, have a $0 plan for bundle A. Across all 32 base scenarios, Honest Day

costs more than the cheapest option in 6 and ties or wins in 26. Honest Day's rank for bundle A at 10, 20 and 50 users is 4 of 14, 3 of 14, 3 of 13 respectively, on annual billing.

Table 5. Twelve-month cost in US dollars for 10 users on annual billing, cheapest plan that natively supports each bundle (free plans included for bundle A; bundle C equals bundle D wherever both are priced and is omitted). None means no plan supports the bundle natively, partial means part of the definition is met, not doc. means a required capability is not documented, and an asterisk marks a lower bound because the vendor charges usage fees it does not publish.

Vendor	A: tracking and reporting	B: A and approvals	D: complete
Honest Day	$190	$190	$190
actiTIME	$720	$720	$720
TrackingTime	$0	$780	$780
Clockify	$478.80	$658.80	$958.80
My Hours	$480	$960	$960
Everhour	$1,020	$1,020	$1,020
TimeCamp	$0	$1,198.80	$1,198.80
Harvest	$1,080*	$1,680*	$1,680*
Toggl Track	$1,080	$1,920	$1,920
Apploye	$0	$540	partial
TMetric	$699.60	$900	not doc.
Hubstaff	$598.80	$1,200	partial
Desklog	$378	partial	partial
DeskTime	$770.40	not doc.	none

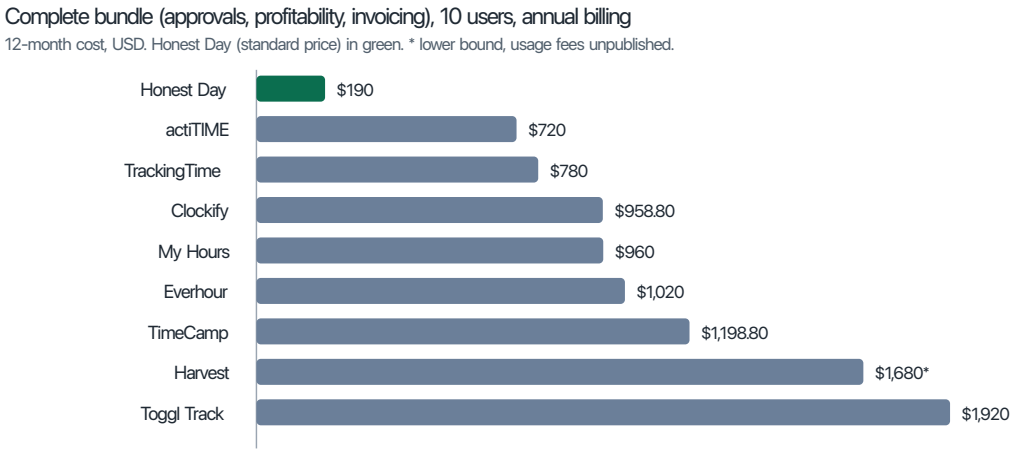

Figure 1. Complete bundle (D), 10 users, annual billing: twelve-month cost of the cheapest paid plan that natively supports it, for the 9 vendors with a published price. Honest Day at its standard price is shown first. An asterisk marks a lower bound.

8.2 Spread between vendors

Table 6. Spread of 12-month cost across vendors, 10 users, annual billing, paid plans only. The last column is the max/min ratio without Honest Day.

Bundle	Vendors priced	Min	Median	Max	Max/min	Max/min without Honest Day
A	14	$190	$569.40	$1,080	5.68	2.86
B	12	$190	$930	$1,920	10.11	3.56
C	9	$190	$960	$1,920	10.11	2.67
D	9	$190	$960	$1,920	10.11	2.67

Honest Day sets the minimum in B, C and D, so the max/min ratio in the table is driven by the producer. Without Honest Day, the ratio for the complete bundle is 2.67, and among the 8 other vendors with a complete-bundle plan the cheapest costs 38% of the dearest. Honest Day's list price at 10 users is 26% of the cheapest other complete plan ($190 against $720).

8.3 Team size

Table 7. Complete bundle (D), annual billing, paid plans: twelve-month cost by team size, and cost per person per month.

Users	Vendors priced	Lowest	Median	Highest	Median per person per month	Honest Day	Honest Day per person per month
5	9	$190	$480	$960	$8	$190	$3.17
10	9	$190	$960	$1,920	$8	$190	$1.58
20	9	$290	$1,920	$3,840	$8	$290	$1.21
50	8	$590	$4,950	$9,600	$8.25	$590	$0.98

Across vendors the median cost rises in step with headcount, from $480 at 5 users to $4,950 at 50, so the median cost per person per month stays between $8 and $8.25. At 50 users 8 vendors are priced because actiTIME's band pricing is unclear on its own pages and its cost for 50 users is reported as unknown. Honest Day's cost does not rise in step: $190 at 5 and at 10 users, $290 at 20 and $590 at 50. This describes Honest Day's published block pricing, which charges for the first 10 people and then for each further block of 10. It is also why the study's sizes favour block pricing, since 10, 20 and 50 each fill a block exactly. Section 9 repeats the comparison just above block boundaries.

8.4 Entry price versus approval-ready price

Table 8. Entry price versus approval-ready price, 10 users, annual billing, paid plans, in order of the approvals multiple. The multiples divide the approvals cost (B) and the complete cost (D) by the cost of the cheapest paid plan with time tracking and reporting (A). A dash means no complete plan.

Vendor	Entry (A)	Approvals (B)	Complete (D)	B / A	D / A
TimeCamp	$478.80	$1,198.80	$1,198.80	2.5	2.5
Hubstaff	$598.80	$1,200	-	2	-
My Hours	$480	$960	$960	2	2
Toggl Track	$1,080	$1,920	$1,920	1.78	1.78
Harvest	$1,080	$1,680	$1,680	1.56	1.56
TrackingTime	$540	$780	$780	1.44	1.44

Vendor	Entry (A)	Approvals (B)	Complete (D)	B / A	D / A
Clockify	$478.80	$658.80	$958.80	1.38	2
TMetric	$699.60	$900	-	1.29	-
actiTIME	$720	$720	$720	1	1
Apploye	$540	$540	-	1	-
Everhour	$1,020	$1,020	$1,020	1	1
Honest Day	$190	$190	$190	1	1

For 12 vendors we can price both the cheapest paid plan with time tracking and reporting and the cheapest paid plan that also has approvals. For 8 of them, approvals cost more than the entry plan at 10 users on annual billing. For 4 (actiTIME, Apploye, Everhour and Honest Day) the two are the same plan. For Honest Day that is one paid plan, so its multiple is 1 by construction and is not evidence that its plan is better. Where the complete bundle has a price, it costs between 1 and 2.5 times the entry plan across 9 vendors (median 1.56). TimeCamp has the widest gap, from Starter at $478.80 to Ultimate at $1,198.80. Honest Day's Free plan covers up to 5 members, so for teams of 5 the entry price is $0.

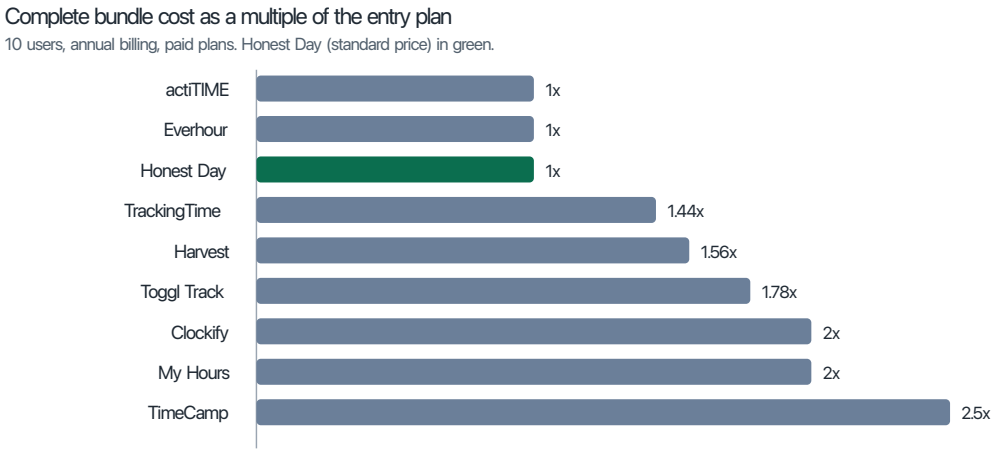

Figure 2. Complete bundle cost as a multiple of each vendor's entry plan, 10 users, annual billing, paid plans.

8.5 Tier restrictions

At 12 of 14 vendors, approvals can be bought on a published plan, and at 8 of those the plan with approvals is a higher tier than the cheapest paid plan with time tracking and reporting. Among vendors with a complete-bundle plan, the approvals plan and the complete plan are the same plan everywhere except Clockify, where approvals start on Standard ($658.80 for 10 users on annual billing) and the complete bundle needs Pro ($958.80). The plans that carry the complete bundle are Toggl Premium, Clockify Pro, TimeCamp Ultimate, Harvest Enterprise (which carries a usage-based charge whose size is unpublished), Everhour Team, My Hours Pro, TrackingTime Pro, actiTIME Online and Honest Day Premium.

8.6 Monthly versus annual billing

Table 9. Complete bundle (D), 10 users: twelve-month cost under monthly and annual billing for the cheapest eligible plan under each period, and the annual saving.

Vendor	Monthly	Annual	Annual saving
Toggl Track	$2,880	$1,920	33%
TimeCamp	$1,678.80	$1,198.80	29%
TrackingTime	$1,020	$780	24%
Clockify	$1,198.80	$958.80	20%
Harvest	$2,100	$1,680	20%
Honest Day	$228	$190	17%
Everhour	$1,200	$1,020	15%
actiTIME	$840	$720	14%
My Hours	$1,080	$960	11%

Across the 9 vendors with a complete-bundle plan, paying annually costs 11% to 33% less than paying monthly, with a median of 20%. Honest Day is the lowest-cost option on both billing periods in every scenario for bundles B, C and D.

9 Sensitivity analyses

9.1 Team sizes just above a block boundary

Table 10. Complete bundle (D), annual billing: Honest Day against the cheapest other vendor at sizes just above a block boundary and at 100 users.

Users	Honest Day	Cheapest other vendor	Its cost	Honest Day as a share of it
11	$290	actiTIME	$792	37%
21	$390	actiTIME	$1,512	26%
51	$690	TrackingTime	$3,978	17%
100	$1,090	TrackingTime	$7,800	14%

Honest Day remains the lowest-priced option at each size, at $290, $390, $690, $1,090. Honest Day's published self-serve plan stops at 100 people; larger teams are priced by contact, so there is no list price to compare above that.

9.2 A stricter definition of approvals

Harvest's help page says that submitted timesheets cannot be rejected. The study counts Harvest's submit, approve and lock workflow as native approvals. If a reject step were required, Harvest would be partial for bundles B, C and D. We repeated the analysis on that basis. The number of priced vendors falls by one in each bundle (for B from 12 to 11), the median for B moves from $930 to $900, and the identity of the cheapest plan does not change in any bundle.

9.3 Stress test: every contested call resolved against Honest Day

This is a stress test, not a finding. For every vendor except Honest Day, capabilities recorded as partial or not documented count as native; TimeCamp uses the lower regional price tier that its pricing page returned from a Turkish address (Starter $2.99, Premium $4.49 and Ultimate $5.99 per user per month on annual billing, and $3.99, $5.99 and $7.99 on monthly billing); actiTIME's

band prices apply to every user; Apploye does not bill the account owner's seat; and TMetric gives its published 5 percent discount from 40 users. Honest Day is unchanged. The question is whether Honest Day still ranks first for bundles B to D.

It does in 22 of 24 scenarios. It loses 2, both for 5 users and bundle B (monthly: Desklog $210 against Honest Day $228; annual: Desklog $189 against Honest Day $190). Those two results count Desklog's approvals as native, although its documentation shows only manual time requests and leave approvals.

Table 11. Scenarios in the stress test where Honest Day is not the cheapest.

Bundle	Users	Billing	Honest Day	Rank in stress test	Cheapest	Its cost	Difference
B	5	monthly	$228	2 of 14	Desklog	$210	$18
B	5	annual	$190	2 of 14	Desklog	$189	$1

9.4 The launch price

Honest Day also publishes a launch price of $9 per month or $90 per year for up to 10 people, limited to the first 1000 workspaces. The study never uses it in a headline comparison: the standard price is the conservative choice for the producer. At the launch price the cost for the complete bundle at 10 users is $90 on annual billing and $108 on monthly billing, and Honest Day's ranks do not worsen in any scenario.

10 Limitations

- **Date and currency.** The study covers list prices read on 14 November 2026 in US dollars before tax. Prices change. Other currencies, regional prices, non-profit and volume discounts and negotiated prices are not covered. TimeCamp's price API is geolocated: from a US address (San Jose, California) it returned the prices the study uses, and a read from a Turkish address returned a lower tier. Correction C11 records this.
- **Sample.** The 14 vendors are a rule-based sample, not the market. Products such as QuickBooks Time, Paymo, Timely, Bonsai and Productive were not included.
- **Seat counting.** The study counts every person as a paid seat. Some vendors offer free roles for approvers or viewers, and a team that uses them would pay less than shown.
- **Definitions.** Four capabilities are measured by definitions fixed before collection. Two reasonable readers could classify some vendors differently. Where a vendor's documentation was ambiguous, the study recorded a status other than native rather than assuming.
- **Scope of capability.** Capabilities outside the four bundles are not compared. The study did not score native mobile and desktop apps, activity monitoring, GPS, screenshots, accounting synchronisation, single sign-on, integrations, support or the quality of any feature. Several of the other vendors publish capabilities in those areas that Honest Day does not claim.
- **Price is not value.** The price of a plan is not a measure of product quality, fit, support or total cost of ownership.
- **Source conflicts.** Two vendors have conflicting prices on their own sites: Toggl Premium is $16 per user per month on the pricing page and $18 in a help article, which would make the complete bundle $2,160 a year instead of $1,920 at 10 users; and Apploye Elite is $4.50, or $7 if the struck-through price is the standing one, which would make approvals $840 instead of

$540. The study used the pricing page in each case. Neither change would alter which vendor is cheapest for the complete bundle.

- **Unresolved data.** Each of the following could change a result and is listed in the register: Harvest's usage fees; which TMetric plan carries profitability; how actiTIME's bands apply above 40 users; whether Apploye bills its owner seat; and DeskTime's minimum seat count.
- **No outcome measurement.** Nothing in the study measures whether buyers choose on price, what teams actually pay or whether any plan delivers the described capability in use.

Table 12. Annual-billing scenarios at 10 users with an unresolved plan that could change a result.

Vendor	Bundle	Plan	Status	Why
DeskTime	B	pro	indeterminate	approvals not documented
TMetric	C	business	indeterminate	profitability not documented
TMetric	D	business	indeterminate	profitability not documented

11 Conflict of interest

This research was conducted and funded by Honest Day, which offers one of the software products included in the comparison. All pricing data, methodology and calculations are documented for independent verification. The study received no external funding, and no vendor other than Honest Day was consulted, paid or sent a draft.

12 AI-assisted research disclosure

AI-assisted tools were used for data collection, analysis and manuscript preparation. The author retains responsibility for the research, accuracy and conclusions.

13 Discussion

For a service business, the entry price is a poor guide to the price of the approval workflow. At 8 of 12 vendors with a published approvals plan, approvals sit on a more expensive tier than the cheapest paid plan with time tracking and reporting, and the complete bundle costs up to 2.5 times the entry plan. A buyer who compares entry prices compares a different product from the one the workflow needs.

The producer's low figures follow from its published block pricing, which charges one price for the first 10 people. The study did not test whether other vendors would price differently under a block model, or whether buyers choose on price. The honest reading of the results for bundle A is different: where a team needs only tracking and reporting, free plans from other vendors cost less, and Honest Day is not the cheapest.

Four practical points follow for a team choosing a tool, none of them a recommendation of any product. First, price the plan that has the capabilities the workflow needs, using a count of every person who will take a seat. Second, check whether approvers or viewers can use the product without a paid seat, because the study did not apply that. Third, compare billing periods, because the annual saving ranged from 11 to 33 percent in this sample. Fourth, treat a vendor's partial or undocumented capability as a question to ask, not a verdict: a plan listed as partial may still meet a team's need.

The study invites replication. The calculation is a short script over a public dataset, so a reader can change a definition, such as requiring a reject step in approvals or counting approvers as free, and recompute the result. If a price or a feature in the dataset is wrong, a reader can report it, and the correction will be logged.

14 Conclusion

On 14 November 2026, the cheapest published plan that natively supports submitted and approved timesheets, project profitability reporting and client invoicing from tracked time cost between $190 and $1,920 for 10 users on annual billing across 9 vendors, with a median of $960. Honest Day, the producer, was the lowest-priced option in every scenario that requires approvals, and in 22 of 24 when every contested call was resolved against it. It was not the cheapest option for time tracking and reporting alone. The results describe list prices for four capabilities on one date, for a rule-chosen sample of vendors, produced by a company that sells in the category. They do not rank products.

15 Reproducibility and data availability

The study identifier is **HD-ACTC-2026-11-14**. The dataset is licensed CC BY 4.0 and the calculation scripts are licensed MIT, with Honest Day's operator, KMF Ventures LLC, as the copyright holder. The CSV has one row per vendor, bundle, team size and billing period, with the plan used, the status of the result and the evidence identifiers behind it. It has 448 rows at standard prices (14 vendors, 4 bundles, 4 team sizes and 2 billing periods) and 30 Honest Day rows at the launch price, labelled by price basis.

To reproduce the results, run `node scripts/run.mjs` on the vendor data files, then `node scripts/validate-data.mjs` to check every excerpt against its archived page and `node --test tests/*.test.mjs` for the calculation tests. The scripts need Node 24 or newer and have no dependencies. An independent recomputation, written separately from the main calculation, reproduces every cost in the dataset. Every figure in this manuscript is generated from the dataset by `scripts/build-paper.mjs`, which writes a number ledger giving the dataset source of each figure.

The dataset, the feature eligibility matrix, the source register, the calculation scripts, the methodology and the corrections log are released under CC BY 4.0 (data) and MIT (code). They are deposited on Zenodo as version 1.0 (DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24243331). This paper is licensed CC BY 4.0.

If a reader finds a price or feature that we got wrong, we ask them to report it to hello@honestday.app with the vendor, plan and figure, and we will correct the dataset and record the change.

16 Vendor sources

Primary sources. Official vendor pages, retrieved on 14 November 2026 and archived with a SHA-256 hash, are listed per vendor in the source register of the dataset (372 records for the included vendors and the two excluded candidates). The study's primary sources by vendor are the following pricing pages.

Table 13. Vendor sites and the number of evidence records for each.

Vendor	Official site	Records
actiTIME	https://www.actitime.com/	24
Apploye	https://apploye.com/	25
Clockify	https://clockify.me/	25
Desklog	https://desklog.io/	25
DeskTime	https://desktime.com/	25
Everhour	https://everhour.com/	24
Harvest	https://www.getharvest.com/	25
Honest Day	https://honestday.app/	20
Hubstaff	https://hubstaff.com/	25
My Hours	https://myhours.com/	25
TimeCamp	https://www.timecamp.com/	28
TMetric	https://tmetric.com/	25
Toggl Track	https://toggl.com/track/	25
TrackingTime	https://trackingtime.co/	25
Jibble (excluded)	https://www.jibble.io/	14
TimeTrak (TimeTrakGO) (excluded)	https://timetrak.com/	12

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A Plans and price rules behind the 10-user annual comparison

Table 14. For each vendor, the plan that carries approvals (B) and the plan that carries the complete bundle (D) at 10 users on annual billing, and the annual price rule of the complete plan (or of the approvals plan if there is no complete plan). Annual unit prices are the per-month equivalent when billed annually.

Vendor	Plan for B	Plan for D	Annual price rule
actiTIME	actiTIME Online (cloud, paid)	actiTIME Online (cloud, paid)	\$6 for users 1 to 40; \$5 for users 41 to 200, band mode unclear
Apploye	Elite	none	\$4.50 per user per month
Clockify	Standard	Pro	\$7.99 per user per month
Desklog	none	none	n/a
DeskTime	none	none	n/a

Vendor	Plan for B	Plan for D	Annual price rule
Everhour	Team	Team	$8.50 per user per month
Harvest	Enterprise	Enterprise	$14 per user per month
Honest Day	Premium (standard)	Premium (standard)	$190 per year for the first 10 users, $100 for each further 10, up to 100
Hubstaff	Team	none	$10 per user per month
My Hours	Pro	Pro	$8 per user per month
TimeCamp	Ultimate	Ultimate	$9.99 per user per month
TMetric	Business	none	$7.50 per user per month
Toggl Track	Premium	Premium	$16 per user per month
TrackingTime	Pro	Pro	$6.50 per user per month

B All base scenarios: lowest eligible plan and Honest Day's rank

Table 15. The 32 base scenarios with the lowest eligible plan over all vendors (free plans included), Honest Day's standard-price cost and its rank among vendors with a price (ties share a rank).

Bundle	Users	Billing	Lowest eligible	Its cost	Honest Day	Honest Day rank
A	5	monthly	Apploye	$0	$0	1 of 14
A	10	monthly	Apploye	$0	$228	4 of 14
A	20	monthly	TimeCamp	$0	$348	3 of 14
A	50	monthly	TimeCamp	$0	$708	3 of 13
B	5	monthly	Honest Day	$228	$228	1 of 12
B	10	monthly	Honest Day	$228	$228	1 of 12
B	20	monthly	Honest Day	$348	$348	1 of 12
B	50	monthly	Honest Day	$708	$708	1 of 11
C	5	monthly	Honest Day	$228	$228	1 of 9
C	10	monthly	Honest Day	$228	$228	1 of 9
C	20	monthly	Honest Day	$348	$348	1 of 9
C	50	monthly	Honest Day	$708	$708	1 of 8
D	5	monthly	Honest Day	$228	$228	1 of 9
D	10	monthly	Honest Day	$228	$228	1 of 9
D	20	monthly	Honest Day	$348	$348	1 of 9
D	50	monthly	Honest Day	$708	$708	1 of 8
A	5	annual	Apploye	$0	$0	1 of 14
A	10	annual	Apploye	$0	$190	4 of 14
A	20	annual	TimeCamp	$0	$290	3 of 14
A	50	annual	TimeCamp	$0	$590	3 of 13
B	5	annual	Honest Day	$190	$190	1 of 12
B	10	annual	Honest Day	$190	$190	1 of 12
B	20	annual	Honest Day	$290	$290	1 of 12
B	50	annual	Honest Day	$590	$590	1 of 11
C	5	annual	Honest Day	$190	$190	1 of 9
C	10	annual	Honest Day	$190	$190	1 of 9
C	20	annual	Honest Day	$290	$290	1 of 9
C	50	annual	Honest Day	$590	$590	1 of 8
D	5	annual	Honest Day	$190	$190	1 of 9
D	10	annual	Honest Day	$190	$190	1 of 9
D	20	annual	Honest Day	$290	$290	1 of 9
D	50	annual	Honest Day	$590	$590	1 of 8

C Free plans that cover bundle A

The vendors with a $0 plan that covers bundle A at each size, on annual billing, are listed below. The cap on a free plan is the cap published by the vendor; where none was found it is recorded as not found.

Table 16. Vendors tied at the lowest cost for bundle A, by team size (annual billing). A tie at $0 identifies the vendors with a free plan that covers the team.

Users	Vendors at the lowest cost
5	Apploye, Clockify, Everhour, Honest Day, My Hours, TimeCamp, TrackingTime
10	Apploye, TimeCamp, TrackingTime
20	TimeCamp, TrackingTime
50	TimeCamp, TrackingTime

D Corrections log

These are the corrections made to the dataset after initial collection. Each is also in the dataset (corrections-log.json).

Table 17. Corrections C1 to C11, their stated basis and their effect.

ID	Vendor	Change	Effect
C1	DeskTime	plans.pro.capabilities.approvals: from not_offered to not_documented	DeskTime bundle B result on Pro becomes indeterminate instead of unsupported
C2	TrackingTime	plans.free.capabilities.reporting: from partial to native	TrackingTime Free becomes eligible for bundle A (a $0 plan with no user cap in the data)
C3	actiTIME	plans.online.price.*.rule.tier_mode: from all_units to unclear	actiTIME cost at 50 users is cost_unknown; 5, 10 and 20 users are unaffected (they sit in the first band). Section 8 shows the all_units figure as a sensitivity
C4	actiTIME	plans.free-online.capabilities.invoicing: from native to not_documented	none on any scenario (Free covers 3 users, below the study sizes)
C5	Desklog	plans.free.capabilities.approvals: from not_documented to not_offered	none on prices (Free covers 3 users)
C6	My Hours	confidence: from high to medium	none on prices
C7	TimeCamp	plans.free.usage_fees[0].computable: from false to true	TimeCamp totals are no longer marked as lower bounds
C8	TimeTrak (Time-TrakGO)	inclusion I1/I4: from I1 false, I4 not assessed to I1 true, I4 false	TimeTrak is still excluded; the sample is unchanged
C9	TimeCamp	plans.{starter, premium, ultimate, enterprise}.usage_fees[0].computable: from false to true	TimeCamp totals are no longer marked as lower bounds; no price or rank changes
C10	Honest Day	evidence, free-plan evidence ids, missing_information, billed_users_note: from implicit evidence for Free not_offered; no note on tax or launch counter to evidence records added; notes added	none on any price, status or result

ID	Vendor	Change	Effect
C11	TimeCamp	evidence, plan price evidence ids, missing_information[0]: from tier 1 used as the US list price; a direct US-address read was not made to three evidence records added (price API, pricing page, vantage proof from a US address); the note now states the US read	none on any price, status, rank or result: the US address returned tier 1, which the study already used

E Evidence summary by vendor

Table 18. Evidence records, confidence rating, open missing-information items and the first and last retrieval times (UTC, 14 November 2026) for each vendor.

Vendor	Records	Confidence	Missing items	First (UTC)	Last (UTC)
actiTIME	24	medium	6	08:22	08:45
Apploye	25	medium	7	08:22	08:25
Clockify	25	high	3	08:22	08:22
Desklog	25	medium	7	08:22	08:32
DeskTime	25	medium	9	08:35	08:35
Everhour	24	high	3	08:22	08:32
Harvest	25	medium	9	08:22	08:28
Honest Day	20	medium	5	08:20	11:45
Hubstaff	25	medium	7	08:22	08:28
My Hours	25	medium	6	08:22	08:23
TimeCamp	28	medium	11	08:22	15:45
TMetric	25	medium	5	08:22	08:50
Toggl Track	25	medium	8	08:22	08:24
TrackingTime	25	medium	5	08:32	08:33

Retrieval times for Honest Day's repository files and several manually read pages are nominal, and TimeCamp's last time is the US-address read recorded in correction C11. Methodology frozen at 2026-11-14 08:21:42 UTC.