By Vignesh S | 2026-10-24

Key findings

- We asked ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Perplexity the identical buyer question, 'what's the best CRM software for a sales team of 20-50 reps in 2026,' on October 24, 2026, and recorded every brand each engine named.
- All four engines agreed on the same 3 CRMs: HubSpot, Salesforce, and Pipedrive. Zoho CRM was named by 3 of 4 (all but Claude), and Close by 2 of 4 (Perplexity and Claude).
- Claude was the outlier: it was the only engine to name Attio, and the only one not to name Zoho CRM, showing real disagreement exists even among engines that mostly agree.
- Every brand any engine named, including Attio and Microsoft Dynamics 365, is already covered in our own best CRM software listicle.
- This is a live, dated, first-party query run across all 4 major assistants, not a synthesis of someone else's data. Screenshots and full transcripts back every brand listed.

"Best CRM software" is one of the highest-intent B2B SaaS searches there is, and it is also one of the first questions buyers now take straight to an AI assistant instead of Google. That first answer matters more than it looks. Before a buyer visits a single vendor site or review page, the AI assistant has already decided which 3 or 4 names make the shortlist, and everything else has to fight its way back in from outside that list.

We wanted to know what those assistants actually say, so we asked four of them the identical question on the same day and wrote down every brand each one named.

Quick answer: what AI recommends for best CRM software We asked ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Perplexity the same buyer question on October 24, 2026. HubSpot, Salesforce, and Pipedrive were named by all four. Every brand named by any engine is already in our best CRM software listicle.

AI engines pull answers like this one straight from pages they already cite. Our listicles and comparisons carry real, tracked citation volume, and a brand mentioned inside an already-cited page picks up mention velocity toward tables like this one. Is your CRM, or any B2B SaaS tool, missing from it? Email hello@topickz.com or see Write for Us.

What we did:

• Asked the exact same question, word for word, to ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Perplexity on October 24, 2026: "What's the best CRM software for a sales team of 20-50 reps in 2026? Give me your top picks."
• Recorded every brand each engine named, with a dated screenshot of the real response.
• ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity were queried logged out, since all three allow an anonymous query. Claude requires sign-in for any chat, so we queried it through a real, already-authenticated Claude.ai session rather than claiming it could not be tested. A signed-in session can reflect account-level context that a logged-out query cannot, noted below as a limit, not hidden.

What each engine actually said

ChatGPT

ChatGPT's shortlist line named 5 brands: Salesforce, HubSpot, Pipedrive, Microsoft Dynamics 365, and Zoho CRM. Its detailed top picks, in order, covered 4 of them: Salesforce Sales Cloud, HubSpot Sales Hub, Pipedrive, and Zoho CRM.

Gemini

Gemini named 4 brands with full writeups: HubSpot Sales Hub, Salesforce Sales Cloud, Pipedrive, and Zoho CRM, in that order, each with a "best for," a "why it fits," and "the catch."

Claude

Claude named 5 brands: HubSpot Sales Hub, Pipedrive, Close, Salesforce, and Attio as a "wildcard" pick for product-led teams. Its final call was Pipedrive for most teams at this size, Close for call-heavy SDR floors, and HubSpot where marketing shares the stack. Claude was the only engine to name Attio, and the only one not to name Zoho CRM.

Perplexity

Perplexity named 5 brands in a comparison table: HubSpot (its default pick), Pipedrive, Zoho CRM, Salesforce, and Close, each with a "best fit" and a specific plan recommendation.

The agreement, brand by brand

• All four engines named the same 3 brands: HubSpot, Salesforce, Pipedrive. That is full agreement on the core shortlist across every engine we tested.
• Zoho CRM was the closest miss: named by 3 of 4, with Claude the only holdout. Close reached 2 of 4 (Perplexity and Claude). Dynamics 365 and Attio were each named by only 1 engine.
• Claude's answer diverged the most from the other three, naming Attio (unique to Claude) and skipping Zoho CRM (named by every other engine). That is a useful reminder that "AI consensus" is not uniform even among engines that broadly agree.
• Every single brand named by any engine, including Attio and Dynamics 365, is already in our own best CRM software listicle. Nothing any AI assistant recommended was a brand we had not already reviewed.

What this means if you are evaluating a CRM

• If four different AI assistants independently agree on the same 3 names, that agreement itself is a signal worth weighing alongside G2 ratings and your own shortlist, not a replacement for either.
• The disagreement is informative too. Attio, Dynamics 365, and Close are all real, credible picks, just more context-dependent: Attio for product-led teams, Dynamics for Microsoft-stack enterprises, Close for outbound-heavy phone sales. An AI engine naming fewer alternatives does not mean fewer good options exist.
• Read the actual reasoning each engine gave, not just the brand name. HubSpot's "catch" was consistently cost escalation into the Professional tier across every engine that detailed it, worth confirming against current pricing before you commit a budget.

What brands should take from this

If an AI engine already treats your brand as part of the default answer set for your category, that is a position worth protecting. If it does not, showing up consistently across ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Perplexity is not accidental, it tracks with how widely and how specifically a brand is covered across the pages these engines actually pull from.

We can show real numbers on this because we track our own citation data. Pages like our best CRM software listicle already carry real AI citation volume (see The State of AI Citations 2026), and a brand placed inside an already-cited page inherits exposure to that same query traffic. We call this brand mention velocity: not a single mention, but a sustained presence across the pages AI engines keep coming back to.

We are not claiming placement guarantees a recommendation from any engine. We are stating plainly that it is the mechanism available to us, and it is the same one this report just demonstrated in action. Our disclosures page covers how sponsored placement works on Topickz: never concealed, never swapped for a ranking position.

What this data does not prove

• This is one query, one day, one category. Agreement rates likely vary significantly by category, and we are not claiming 75% cross-engine agreement is typical.
• AI engine answers change over time and can vary by session, region, and account state even for an identical prompt. This is a snapshot, not a guarantee of what the same question returns tomorrow.
• Claude was queried through a real, signed-in Claude.ai session, while ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity were queried logged out. A signed-in account can reflect prior usage or context the other three could not access, so Claude's answer is not a perfectly matched condition to the other three.
• We cannot rule out that Claude's divergence (Attio, no Zoho) reflects session-specific context rather than a stable model preference. A repeat run, logged out where possible, would help confirm it.

Methodology

• **Query:** "What's the best CRM software for a sales team of 20-50 reps in 2026? Give me your top picks." asked verbatim to each engine.
• **Engines:** ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Gemini (gemini.google.com), and Perplexity (perplexity.ai) accessed logged out. Claude (claude.ai) accessed through a real, authenticated session, since Claude has no anonymous chat mode. All four queried October 24, 2026.
• **Recording:** full response text and a dated screenshot captured for each engine, all four included above.

Cite this report

Free to reference with a link back to this page. Suggested credit: "What ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Perplexity Recommend for Best CRM Software, Topickz 2026 (topickz.com/research/what-ai-recommends-best-crm-software-2026/)."

Topickz may earn affiliate commissions from some tools covered across our listicles. Commissions never influence a ranking or which brand we list as AI-recommended. See our affiliate disclosure for details.

Related reading: the state of AI citations 2026, which content gets AI to send humans, best CRM software, and our review methodology.