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VERAE TIME × ZAPIER

zapier billing research

site/docs/01-product/zapier-billing-research.md

Zapier cost structure and billing models

Planning brief for Verae Time

Source: official Zapier pricing at zapier.com/pricing, captured 17–18 August 2026 (USD).
Confirm live rates before a customer quote. The rate card at [/pricing/rates](#) was not fetchable at write time; multipliers below are those Zapier publishes on the main pricing page and “What is a task?” article (updated June 2026).

This document explains **how Zapier charges**, with examples, so we can design **Verae’s** meter without colliding with or accidentally subsidizing Zapier.

1. The one idea that unlocks the rest

Zapier does **not** charge per Zap, per app, or per seat on Professional. It charges for **successful work**.
You buy two things that travel together:

- 1. A **plan level** — the feature set (Free / Professional / Team / Enterprise).
- 2. A **task tier** — a monthly (or Enterprise annual) allowance of **tasks**.

Then three other economies sit **beside** that, not inside it:

Economy	Unit	Used for
Core Zapier	Task	Zaps, AI-by-Zapier, Code-by-Zapier, MCP, SDK
Agents add-on	Activity	Zapier Agents (does not draw tasks)
Chatbots add-on	Feature tier (number of bots)	Zapier Chatbots (not task-metered)
Verae (us)	Timestamp / verify / batch	Middleware PLAN_LIMITS — a second invoice

Verae never appears on the Zapier invoice unless we sign a **White Label / Powered by Zapier** contract and resell Zapier usage ourselves.

2. What a task is (and is not)

A **task** is counted when Zapier **successfully completes** a unit of work. Failures are free.

Counts

- A successful **action in another product**: Create Timestamp, post Slack, add a Drive file, write a Sheet row, call a webhook.
- A successful **Zapier MCP** tool execute (read or write).
- **AI by Zapier** and **Code by Zapier** (with multipliers / extra runtime — §4).

Does not count

- The **trigger** (including polling every 1–15 minutes).
- **Logic and prep**: Filter, Paths, Formatter, Delay, Looping, Sub-Zap, Digest, Zapier Manager, Storage.
- **Zapier Tables** and **Zapier Forms** triggers and actions.
- Building, turning on, or testing a Zap until a step actually succeeds in production.

Shared pool: one allowance for the whole account. There is no separate MCP budget.

3. Plan levels (what you can build)

Plans are cumulative. Task **volume** is chosen separately (§5).

	Free	Professional	Team	Enterprise
Seats	1	1	25	Unlimited
Zap shape	Two-step only (trigger + 1 action)	Multi-step	Multi-step	Multi-step
Polling interval	15 min	2 min	1 min	1 min
Premium apps, webhooks	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Filters, Paths, Formatter, AI by Zapier	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shared Zaps / connections, SAML SSO	No	No	Yes	Yes
SCIM, app controls, custom retention, TAM, BYOM	No	No	No	Yes
Task cycle	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Annual task limit
Pay-per-task overflow	No	Optional	Optional	Custom
Entry price (annual, USD/mo)	\$0 (100 tasks)	\$19.99 (750 tasks)	\$69 (2,000 tasks)	Sales

Also: 14-day Professional trial (no card). Non-profit: extra 15% off the subscription, **not** on pay-per-task. Live chat on Professional only at the **2,000+** task tier.

Implication for Verae: a Free customer can run **only** “new file → Create Timestamp” (two steps). Anything with a catalog write, Slack notify, or Wait **plus** another action needs Professional.

4. Variable pricing inside the task pool

Not every successful step costs one task. Zapier uses **multipliers** so expensive compute costs more of the same allowance.

Work	Tasks per success	Notes
Typical third-party action (Verae Create Timestamp, Slack, Drive, Sheets, webhook)	1	The default. Design around this.
Standard AI by Zapier (default model)	1	Same as a normal action
Advanced AI by Zapier	3	Confirm on / pricing/rates
Premium AI by Zapier	5	Confirm on / pricing/rates
Zapier MCP execute (read or write)	2	Discover / inspect / enable are free meta-tools
Code by Zapier	0 during included runtime; then 1 per extra 30 s	Included: Free 1 s, Pro/Team 30 s, Enterprise 2 min. Extended runtime is opt-in on paid plans (1–8 min cap).
Zapier SDK	Free while in beta	Zapier will announce when beta pricing starts; assume it will join the task pool

Failed steps = 0 Zapier tasks. They can still hit Verae (Autoreplay / customer retries). That is our problem, not Zapier's.

5. Task tiers and list price (USD, August 2026)

Self-serve is sold as **plan** × **tier**. Annual is ~33% off monthly. Figures are **per month**.

Professional

Tasks / mo	Annual / mo	Monthly / mo	Implied \$/task (annual)
750	\$19.99	\$29.99	\$0.027
1,500	\$39.00	\$58.50	\$0.026
2,000	\$49.00	\$73.50	\$0.025
5,000	\$89.00	\$133.50	\$0.018
10,000	\$129.00	\$193.50	\$0.013
20,000	\$189.00	\$283.50	\$0.0095
50,000	\$289.00	\$433.50	\$0.0058
100,000	\$489.00	\$733.50	\$0.0049
200,000	\$769.00	\$1,149.00	\$0.0038
500,000	\$1,499.00	\$2,199.00	\$0.0030
1,000,000	\$2,199.00	\$3,299.00	\$0.0022
2,000,000	\$3,389.00	\$5,099.00	\$0.0017

Team (starts at 2,000)

Tasks / mo	Annual / mo	Monthly / mo	Implied \$/task (annual)
2,000	\$69.00	\$103.50	\$0.035
5,000	\$119.00	\$178.50	\$0.024
10,000	\$169.00	\$253.50	\$0.017
20,000	\$249.00	\$373.50	\$0.012
50,000	\$399.00	\$598.50	\$0.008
100,000	\$599.00	\$898.50	\$0.006
1,000,000	\$2,499.00	\$3,749.00	\$0.0025
2,000,000	\$3,999.00	\$5,999.00	\$0.0020

Team's **entry** \$/task is higher than Pro because you are buying seats, shared connections, and SSO — not cheaper tasks.

Tiers also exist at 300k / 400k / 750k / 1.25M / 1.5M / 1.75M (see getting-started §9 or zapier.com/pricing). Above 2M: Sales.

6. Overflow (pay-per-task)

On paid plans, a toggle decides what happens at the allowance:

Setting	What happens
On	Zaps and MCP keep running. Extra tasks bill at 1.25× the plan's base \$/task (annual) or 2.5× (monthly). Hard ceiling: 3× subscribed tasks, then pause until next cycle or upgrade.
Off	Everything stops at the allowance.
Free	No overflow. Hits 100 and stops.

Worked overage: Professional 750 annual → base $\approx \$19.99 / 750 = \$0.0267$. Overflow $\approx \$0.0333$ /task. Monthly base $\approx \$0.0400$; overflow $\approx \$0.100$ /task. Same usage is $\sim 3\times$ more expensive on monthly overflow than annual overflow.

Enterprise uses an **annual** pool so seasonal spikes do not reset every month.

7. Other Zapier products (different models)

Product	Model	Relation to tasks
Zap workflows	Task	Core
Zapier MCP	Same task pool; 2 tasks per successful execute	Meta-tools free
Zapier SDK	Beta free; expect tasks later	Consume, not publish
AI by Zapier	Task × model tier (1 / 3 / 5)	Inside the Zap
Code by Zapier	Included seconds + 1 task / 30 s extra	Inside the Zap
Tables / Forms	Plan limits (records, pages, upload size); 0 tasks when used in Zaps	Separate caps
Agents	Activities (Free 400/mo; paid ~\$33.33/mo annual for 1,500). Per-run cap 10 (Free) / 40 (paid).	Does not use tasks
Chatbots	Bot-count tiers (Free 2; paid ≈5 / ≈20)	Does not use tasks
Canvas / Copilot	Included; Free Copilot has a daily message limit	Not a usage meter
Directory integration (us)	\$0 to publish. Customer's Zapier plan pays tasks.	Partner is not billed
White Label / Powered by Zapier / embed	Usage-based to the product company . End users may not need	Sales contract

Product	Model	Relation to tasks
	their own Zapier bill.	
NLA / AI Actions	Retired	Do not design around this

8. Worked examples (so the variables are visible)

Assume **Professional**, **billed annually**, and that every named action succeeds. Verae units are **our** meter.

Example A — Two-step timestamp (Free-capable)

New file in Drive → Verae: Create Timestamp

Volume	Zapier tasks	Fits	Zapier \$ (annual)	Verae units
80 files / mo	80	Free	\$0	80 timestamps
200	200	Pro 750	\$19.99	200
600	600	Pro 750	\$19.99	600 → starter (500) overflows us

Lesson: the customer can still be on Zapier Free while **we** 402 them. The two meters trip at different points.

Example B — Production pattern we recommend

New file → Filter → Create Timestamp → Formatter → write catalog row (Tables = **0** tasks) → Slack

If Slack is the only other third-party action: **2 tasks / file** (timestamp + Slack). Tables write is free.

Files / mo	Passing filter	Zapier tasks	Cheapest Pro tier	Zapier \$	Verae timestamps
1,000	20% (200)	400	750	\$19.99	200
1,000	100%	2,000	2,000	\$49	1,000 → pro on our side
10,000	100%	20,000	20,000	\$189	10,000 → enterprise / contract

Filter early: 800 of 1,000 files dropped = **0 Zapier tasks and 0 Verae stamps** for those 800.

Example C — Create and Wait vs hook

- **Wait in the Zap:** 1 task (the wait action). Fine for interactive “give me the certificate now.”
- **Async + Timestamp Completed hook + update row:** 1 task to create + 1 task when the hook fires an action = 2 tasks, but the Zap does not sit open. Prefer this at volume.

Polling **Find Job Status** every minute in a loop is the anti-pattern: each successful search is a task.

Example D — Same work via Zapier MCP (an agent)

Agent calls: execute Create Timestamp, execute write Sheet, execute Slack.

3 executes × **2 tasks** = **6 tasks / file**, plus any Agent **activities** if they used Zapier Agents.

200 files = **1,200 Zapier tasks** → Pro 1,500 at **\$39/mo** — three times the Zapier cost of Example B for the same Verae stamps (200).

Planning rule: MCP-shaped clients burn Zapier 2× per hop. Do not price Verae as if the customer’s only cost is our stamp.

Example E — AI enrichment in the Zap

New file → Standard AI extract metadata (1) → Create Timestamp (1) → Sheet (1) = **3 tasks**.

Swap in Premium AI: **5 + 1 + 1 = 7 tasks**.

1,000 files: 3,000 vs 7,000 tasks → \$89 vs \$129 on Pro annual.

AI model choice is the customer’s Zapier bill, not ours — unless we bury AI inside **our** action (we should not).

Example F — Overflow month

Customer on Pro 750 annual (\$19.99). A campaign pushes 1,400 successful timestamp actions (and nothing else).

- Included: 750
- Overflow: $650 \times \sim \$0.0333 \approx \$22$
- Total Zapier $\approx$ **\$42** that month
- Still under the $3\times$ ceiling (2,250)

If they were on **monthly** Pro 750 (\$29.99): overflow $650 \times \sim \$0.100 \approx \$65 + \$30 = \sim \$95$.

Example G — White Label (we are the billed party)

If Verae embeds Zapier and Zapier bills **us** per task, then 10,000 customer files $\times$ 2 tasks = 20,000 tasks $\approx$ **\$189**/mo (Pro annual list) **plus** our timestamp COGS. That number has to sit in **our** COGS, not the customer's Zapier account.

9. Verae's meter today (so we can place it)

From `verae-zapier-middleware` `PLAN_LIMITS`:

Verae plan	Timestamps / mo	Verifications	Batch	RPM
free	50	50	no	30
starter	500	500	yes, max 10	120
pro	5,000	5,000	yes, max 100	600
enterprise	unlimited / contract	contract	yes	3,000

Over-quota $\rightarrow$ **402** `QUOTA_EXCEEDED`. Batch on free $\rightarrow$ **403** `PLAN_UPGRADE_REQUIRED`.

These fire **independently** of Zapier's pause / pay-per-task.

10. How this should shape *our* billing

1. **Never bundle “unlimited Zapier.”** We do not control their task tier, MCP multiplier, or overflow toggle.

2. **Meter what we uniquely do:** accepted timestamp jobs, verifies, maybe stored GB / pin-days / Glacier restores — not Zap steps.
3. **Mirror Zapier's shape if we want familiarity:** plan + included units + optional overage with a ceiling. Customers already understand 402 vs pause.
4. **Do not use Zapier-like 2× MCP pricing on our API.** MCP is Zapier's tax on agent hops. Our HTTP `/zapier/v1/timestamp` should stay **one Verae unit** whether the Zap used 1 task or an agent used 2.
5. **Price batch as a plan gate**, not as “N Zapier tasks.” Zapier will still charge **1 task** for the batch action; we decide whether 100 items cost 1 or 100 of *our* units. Today we count batch size against `batchMaxItems` and timestamp quota.
6. **Hook-friendly packaging:** include enough monthly stamps that the recommended “create + hook + catalog” pattern is cheaper on **our** side than polling.
7. **Three customer motions, three packages:**
 - **Directory user** — they pay Zapier + they pay Verae (API key). Our list price must look fair next to ~\$0.02–\$0.03 per Zapier task at Pro entry.
 - **MCP / agent user** — they already pay 2 Zapier tasks per hop; keep Verae simple or they will skip us.
 - **Embed / White Label** — we may owe Zapier usage; our price to the end user must cover that COGS or we only sell the timestamp and let them bring their own Zapier.
8. **Storage / Peergos / Glacier is a third meter** (see getting-started §10). Do not hide pin-days or restore fees inside “one timestamp.”
9. **Failed Zapier steps are free for them, not for us** if we already accepted the job. Bill on **accepted jobId** (202), not on Zapier's success callback.
10. **Quote two lines** in every proposal: “Your Zapier plan (estimate N tasks)” and “Verae (M timestamps).” Never a single blended number.

Rough juxtaposition (order-of-magnitude)

At Pro 750 annual, Zapier's included work is about **2.7 cents per task**.

If our Create Timestamp is one Zapier task + one Verae stamp, the customer's *Zapier* share of a two-step Zap is ~\$0.027. Our stamp should be priced from **our** chain/ops cost, not matched 1:1 to that 2.7¢ — but if we charge **dollars** per stamp while Zapier is **cents** per step, SMB Zaps will feel “Verae-expensive” even when Zapier is the bigger invoice at volume.

11. Planning checklist



For each target Zap, count **billable Zapier actions** (not steps on the canvas).

☐

Multiply MCP executes by **2**.

☐

Apply AI 1 / 3 / 5 if they enrich in the Zap.

☐

Pick the cheapest **Zapier** tier that covers that task count (or overflow math).

☐

Count **Verae** timestamps / verifies / batch separately; check 50 / 500 / 5,000 tripwires.

☐

If we embed Zapier, put Zapier list price into **our** COGS.

☐

Keep Peergos pin / Glacier restore off the timestamp SKU.

☐

Re-check zapier.com/pricing before any contract; this brief is dated **18 August 2026**.