UNVARNISHED REVIEWS

Zapier vs. Make vs. Workato: The Task-Counting Trap

Market Position: Big Picture

Zapier, Make, and Workato are the three most-compared workflow automation platforms, connecting apps and automating multi-step processes without custom code. They serve distinctly different buyer profiles at distinctly different scales: Zapier and Make both compete for individual, small-team, and mid-market automation budgets, while Workato is a fundamentally different product, an enterprise iPaaS sold exclusively through custom sales contracts, not a bigger version of the other two.

The finding that should change how any team budgets Zapier or Make: The two platforms don't meter usage the same way, and the difference isn't cosmetic. Zapier counts every single action step in a workflow as a billable "task," so a five-step Zap running once consumes five tasks. Make counts "operations," module executions, and specifically does not charge for branches a workflow's logic filters out before they run. For workflows with any real branching or conditional logic, this structural difference compounds into a substantial, well-documented cost gap that has nothing to do with which platform is more efficient at the underlying automation itself.

Platform Ratings at a Glance

Platform	G2 Rating	Reviews (G2)	Note
Workato	4.7 / 5	~751	Eight consecutive years as a Gartner Magic Quadrant Leader
Make	4.6 / 5	~270	Skews small-business (76.2% of reviews)
Zapier	4.5 / 5	~2,000	Largest brand recognition and integration count of the three; Trustpilot rating runs far lower (1.4-1.5/5), dominated by billing and cancellation complaints.

All three rate closely, within 0.2 points of each other, meaning the real differentiator in this comparison is billing structure and market fit, not a satisfaction gap.

The gap between Zapier's 4.5/5 on G2 and 1.4-1.5/5 on Trustpilot is wide enough to warrant an explanation, and it comes down to what each platform's rating actually measures. G2 requires reviewers to sign in with a business email or LinkedIn account, and every review goes through manual moderation before publishing; this creates a real barrier that filters out casual or anonymous complaints, and it means the reviewer pool skews toward identifiable, professionally-engaged users, the kind of user a vendor's customer-success team is also more likely to prompt for a review in the first place. Trustpilot has no equivalent business-identity requirement and is a fully open, public platform, and a well-documented pattern across consumer review sites generally is that frustrated customers are far more likely to leave an unprompted public review than satisfied ones.

Reading the actual content of Zapier's Trustpilot reviews confirms this isn't a population effect alone; the complaints have real, specific, and recurring substance. The dominant pattern is misconfigured or looping Zaps that self-trigger repeatedly and burn through tasks before anyone notices, independently documented as producing surprise invoices in the $400-$1,200 range. Zapier does send usage alerts at 80% and 100% of a plan's task limit, but reviewers report these alerts don't arrive fast enough to stop a rapidly-looping Zap from generating a large bill before it's caught. This is a distinct, more acute failure mode than this report's core finding about per-step task counting on well-behaved workflows, a runaway loop can burn through a month's task allotment in hours, not simply run more expensively than expected over a full billing cycle.

A second, separate driver shows up consistently across reviews and is unrelated to billing mechanics: difficulty navigating Zapier's cancellation flow, with refund requests reported as going unanswered. This is a customer-service and retention-process complaint, not a pricing-model complaint, and it compounds with the billing-surprise pattern rather than explaining it. A third, newer contributor as of 2026: Zapier's AI Copilot, AI Agents, and Chatbot features are priced as separate add-ons stacked on top of the base subscription, independently estimated at $150-$200/month combined, a real, additional cost surprise for teams that assumed AI features were included in their existing plan.

Zapier: The Simplest Interface, Billed Per Action Step

Zapier prices on a free-to-paid ladder: Free includes 100 tasks/month with single-step Zaps only; Professional starts around $19.99/month (annual billing) for 750 tasks with multi-step Zaps unlocked; Team runs around $69/month for 2,000 tasks across up to 25 users; Enterprise is custom-quoted with unlimited users and tasks. Zapier's real strength is breadth, independent sources consistently cite 6,000-8,000+ app integrations, the largest catalog of the three by a wide margin.

The mechanism that drives Zapier's real-world cost: Every action in a multi-step Zap counts as a separate task, every time the Zap runs. A workflow that captures a lead, enriches it, creates a CRM record, posts to Slack, and sends a confirmation email consumes five tasks per single execution, not one. At meaningful volume, this compounds quickly; independently documented cost tables show a workflow consuming 10,000 tasks/month landing around $103.50/month on Zapier.

Make: More Visual Power, Billed Per Executed Module, Not Per Filtered Path

Make (formerly Integromat) prices on a similar free-to-paid structure with a different unit: Free includes 1,000 operations/month across up to 2 scenarios; Core starts around $9-12/month for 10,000 operations; Pro and Teams tiers scale further with additional operations and collaboration features. Make's differentiator is visual workflow power, independent reviews consistently describe its canvas (routers, iterators, aggregators) as meaningfully more capable for complex, branching automation than Zapier's more linear Zap structure, at the real cost of a steeper learning curve reviewers repeatedly flag as the platform's most consistent weakness.

The mechanism that drives Make's real-world cost advantage: Operations are counted per module execution, and modules a workflow's branching logic filters out before they run are not charged. The same 10,000-operation/month workload that costs $103.50/month on Zapier lands around $34.12/month on Make in the same independently documented cost tables, a 67% reduction for comparable work. This gap is not a one-off calculation; multiple independent cost analyses converge on a consistent range, roughly 65%-77% savings with Make over Zapier, and the percentage gap widens, not narrows, as monthly volume increases.

Workato: A Different Market Entirely, Sold Exclusively Through Sales

Workato publishes no pricing anywhere; every deployment requires a sales conversation, and there is no permanent free tier, only a free trial. Verified transaction data from Vendr places real annual contracts between $25,000 and $500,000+, with small-to-mid-market deployments most commonly landing in the $30,000-$80,000 range and enterprise implementations with high-volume workflows and premium connectors reaching $150,000-$400,000 or more annually. Users describe the pricing structure itself, a platform edition fee plus usage fees tracked separately per capability, as "very expensive" with a structure that "lacks transparency," a direct, repeated criticism independent of the absolute price level.

What that price buys is a real, different product tier: 1,200+ deep, vendor-certified connectors (against roughly 1,000-8,000 for the other two, though Workato's are positioned as enterprise-grade integrations for systems like SAP, Oracle, and Workday specifically), built-in API management, enterprise governance and audit capabilities, and dedicated customer success. Workato is not a more expensive Zapier, it's a different category of product built for organizations where governance and premium system connectivity matter more than entry price.

Pricing (July 2026)

Platform	Billing Unit	Entry Tier	Typical Mid-Tier
Zapier	Task (every action step)	Free, 100 tasks/mo	~$103.50/mo at 10,000 tasks/mo
Make	Operation (executed modules only)	Free, 1,000 operations/mo	~$34.12/mo at 10,000 operations/mo
Workato	Custom-quoted (edition + usage)	No free tier; trial only	$30,000-$80,000/year (small-to-mid-market)

TCO Comparison: 5-Step Lead-to-CRM Workflow, 2,000 Runs/Month, 1 Year

This scenario models a common multi-step workflow (capture lead, enrich data, create CRM record, notify team, send confirmation) at 2,000 monthly runs, producing 10,000 billable units/month on either platform's counting method.

Platform	Monthly Cost	Annual Cost
Make	$34.12	$409.44
Zapier	$103.50	$1,242.00
Workato (small-team entry range)	~$2,083-$3,750	$25,000-$45,000

At this scale, Make saves roughly $833/year over Zapier for identical output, a 67% reduction. Workato is not a realistic comparison point at this workflow volume; its entry pricing runs 20x-36x Zapier's annual cost at this scenario, confirming it's the wrong platform for a team automating a handful of workflows, and the right one only once governance, premium connector depth, or enterprise scale require it.

Costs the Pricing Table Misses

- **Failed or errored runs still consume billable units on all three platforms.** A workflow that fails partway through has already spent the tasks or operations for the steps that executed before the failure.
- **Zapier's per-step counting penalizes exactly the workflows most worth automating.** The more steps a workflow has, the more Zapier's task cost compounds relative to Make's operation-based model; complex, high-value automations are where the pricing gap is largest, not smallest.
- **A misconfigured, looping Zap can generate a surprise invoice in hours, not over a full billing cycle.** Independently documented cases show self-triggering loops producing invoices in the $400-$1,200 range before anyone notices; Zapier's usage alerts at 80% and 100% of a plan's limit are not reported as fast enough to catch a rapidly-looping Zap in time. Set hard usage caps or automated kill-switches, not just alert thresholds, if this is a real risk in your workflows.
- **Zapier's cancellation flow is a documented, recurring complaint independent of billing mechanics entirely.** Reviewers report difficulty canceling and unanswered refund requests as a separate, consistent pattern; confirm the cancellation process before committing, not after a billing dispute is already underway.
- **Zapier's AI features are priced as separate add-ons stacked on top of the base subscription.** Copilot, AI Agents, and Chatbot features are independently estimated at $150-$200/month combined on top of whatever tier you're already paying; confirm this before assuming AI capability is included in your existing plan.
- **Make's polling-trigger operations burn budget even when nothing changes.** Scenarios that poll on a schedule rather than trigger on webhook events consume operations on every poll, independent reviewers flag this as a common, avoidable source of unexpected operation consumption.

- **Workato's premium connectors and implementation services are separate, real costs.** Connectors for systems like SAP, Oracle, and Workday commonly carry additional fees beyond the base platform quote, and documented implementation costs for even a small proof-of-concept run $12,000-$25,000.
- **Workato discount range is real and worth using.** Independent negotiation guidance cites 35%-67% achievable discounts off initial quotes; treat any first Workato quote as a starting point, not a final number.

Red Flags

Every finding below is independently documented and recurring, not a one-off complaint or a single bad review.

Zapier Red Flags

- **Trustpilot users rate Zapier 1.4-1.5/5, a full three points below its G2 score, and the complaints are specific.** Billing, subscription, and cancellation problems dominate, not general dissatisfaction with the product's core function.
- **A misconfigured, self-triggering Zap can burn through a month's task allotment in hours, not over a full billing cycle.** Independently documented cases show this producing surprise invoices in the $400-$1,200 range. Zapier's usage alerts at 80% and 100% of a plan's limit are documented as too slow to catch a fast-looping Zap before the damage is done.
- **Cancellation is a documented, recurring point of friction, and refund requests are reported as going unanswered.** This is a customer-service failure independent of any pricing mechanic.
- **AI features are billed as separate add-ons on top of the base subscription.** Copilot, AI Agents, and Chatbot features run an independently estimated $150-$200/month combined, a real surprise for teams that assumed AI capability was already included.

Make Red Flags

- **The learning curve is reviewers' single most consistent complaint about the platform.** Make's visual power comes with real onboarding cost; teams should budget training time, not assume Zapier-level immediacy.
- **Polling-trigger scenarios burn operations on every check, whether or not anything changed.** Reviewers flag this as a common, avoidable source of unexpected operation consumption; webhook-based triggers should be the default wherever the connected app supports them.

Workato Red Flags

- **Workato publishes no pricing anywhere, at any tier.** There is no free tier, only a trial, and every real number in this report comes from independent transaction data, not vendor disclosure. Budget real time for a sales-negotiated quote process.
- **Reviewers describe the pricing structure itself as "very expensive" with a structure that "lacks transparency," independent of the absolute price paid.** This is a direct, repeated criticism of how the platform edition-plus-usage-fee model is communicated, not just its cost.
- **The documented contract range, $25,000 to $500,000+ annually, reflects real negotiation-dependent pricing.** Independent guidance cites 35%-67% achievable discounts off an initial quote; treat any first number from Workato as a starting position, not a real price.

The Decision Framework

Choose Zapier if: Integration breadth and interface simplicity matter more than per-unit cost, your workflows are simple and low-branching, and you want the largest app catalog with the smallest learning curve of the three. Before signing, set hard usage caps or automated kill-switches on any Zap with real complexity, don't rely on Zapier's 80%/100% alerts alone, and read the cancellation process before you need it, not after a billing dispute is already underway.

Choose Make if: Your workflows involve real branching, conditional logic, or complex multi-path automation, and you're willing to invest a real learning curve in exchange for meaningfully lower cost at comparable or greater workflow power.

Choose Workato if: You need enterprise governance, audit trails, or premium certified connectors to systems like SAP, Oracle, or Workday that neither Zapier nor Make meaningfully supports, and your organization's budget and procurement process are built for annual enterprise contracts, not self-serve monthly billing.

Everyone: Model your actual workflow step count and branching complexity against each platform's specific billing unit before comparing headline prices. Zapier's per-step task model and Make's filtered-branch operation model produce different real costs for the same underlying automation, and the gap is largest exactly where automation delivers the most value: complex, multi-step, conditional workflows.

The Bottom Line

Zapier, Make, and Workato are all credible, well-reviewed platforms, but only two of them are competing for the same budget. Zapier and Make solve the same problem with meaningfully different economics, Zapier's per-action-step task counting against Make's filtered-branch operation counting produces a documented 65%-77% cost gap that grows with workflow complexity, not one that favors either platform's raw technical capability. Workato occupies a different market entirely, priced and built for enterprise governance and premium system connectivity that most Zapier or Make evaluations were never trying to solve for in the first place.

Zapier's 4.5/5 G2 rating shouldn't be read as the whole picture. Independently documented Trustpilot complaints, runaway Zaps generating $400-$1,200 surprise invoices, a documented difficult cancellation process, and AI features billed as separate add-ons, are real, recurring, and specific enough to factor into a purchase decision, not background noise from a different population of reviewers. None of these findings changes which platform wins on raw automation capability, but they change what "choosing Zapier" should actually include: real usage caps, not just alert thresholds, and a clear-eyed read of the cancellation terms before the relationship starts.