



SVZ × Utz

2026 CMS, Custom-Variety Experience & AI Search Foundations

Statement of Work: V1.4 review draft, not an executed agreement

Revision date: October 7, 2026

Prepared for: Utz Quality Foods, LLC

Prepared by: SVZ Design LLC

Supersedes: V1.3 (September 17, 2026) for review

Commercial structure: \$49,500 fixed fee; 50% at activation and 50% at the approved Day 8 architecture decision gate. Additional work only with prior written approval at \$350/hour.

Governing agreement: The framework Master Services Agreement between Utz Quality Foods, LLC and SVZ Design LLC

Signing-to-activation dependency. Day 1 is the first business day after this SOW and the governing MSA are countersigned and the access listed in Section 6 is granted. Every “Day N” means N calendar days inclusive of Day 1. **The CMS launch targets December 11, 2026, which holds at Day-45 pacing for a Day 1 on or before October 28, 2026** (countersignature and access by Tuesday, October 27). If activation lands later, SVZ issues a written reforecast within two business days, and Utz and SVZ agree in writing whether the launch date moves or a narrower launch scope ships on December 11. Testing is not compressed to hold a date.

1. Executive summary

On September 21, 2026, Utz asked SVZ to separate the third-party-logistics (3PL) work, now delayed into 2027, and deliver a smaller, standalone 2026 engagement. V1.4 does that by removing deliverables, not by discounting the V1.3 package.

This SOW covers three workstreams on the utzsnacks.com Shopify storefront:

1. **CMS architecture, Salsify alignment and the custom-variety experience**, launched as one production release targeting December 11, 2026, the priority Utz set on September 17.
2. **Release QA, launch and bounded stabilization** for that release.
3. **A defined technical AEO/GEO foundation**: metadata safeguards, a connected brand entity graph, FAQPage and Recipe structured data on agreed templates, a brand-oriented lms.txt resource, and before-and-after measurement.

The 3PL storefront enablement (FBS/Rithum, hybrid Hanover routing, the fulfillment cutover and its support) moves to a separately scoped 2027 SOW, together with the broader optimization items listed in Section 4.

This SOW stands alone. It delivers a complete outcome without any change order, 2027 SOW or other purchase. Everything included here remains SVZ's delivery obligation unless both parties change it in writing; included work does not roll into a later purchase.

2. Engagement outcomes

- A governed Shopify content and product model aligned with the agreed Salsify taxonomy, with documented source-of-truth ownership and publishing workflow.
- An improved custom-variety and bundle experience, designed responsively and implemented in the existing theme, preserving the existing Hanover fulfillment behavior.
- A tested, Utz-authorized CMS release targeting December 11, 2026, with handover and stabilization.
- A technical foundation that helps search and answer engines connect the Utz brand, products, FAQs and recipes.
- Baseline and closeout measurement, plus a remaining-gap register that can inform the 2027 scope.

Scope is limited to the agreed utzsnacks.com Shopify environment. Other brands may appear as entities in structured data, but no implementation on Zapp's, Boulder Canyon or other UBI-owned sites is included.

3. Scope of work

Phase 1: CMS architecture, Salsify alignment & custom-variety UX

Window: Day 1 through the Day 45 launch, with stabilization through Day 61. Phase 1 has first call on SVZ capacity through launch.

Activities and deliverables

- Current-state review of Shopify templates, collections, product types, metafields, tags, variants, bundles and relevant apps.
- Agreement with Ren Lovejoy on the working baseline, preview/testing approach and merge/publish path for the active-development repository and the held live theme.
- Salsify-to-Shopify taxonomy and field-mapping specification for the agreed priority product types, validated against representative records supplied by Utz.
- Recommended content model and governance rules, including source-of-truth ownership and publishing workflow.
- Journey mapping of the agreed priority custom-variety/bundle flow across discovery, configuration, cart, checkout and the existing fulfillment handoff.
- Responsive UX/UI design for that flow, including empty, validation, unavailable and error states.
- Shopify theme implementation of the approved flow and content-model changes.
- Architecture record, implementation handover and rollback instructions.

The Day 8 architecture gate records the exact product types, flow, sample records and acceptance tests.

Milestones

- Day 8: architecture/taxonomy decision gate (also the Invoice 2 trigger).
- Day 18: architecture record, mapping specification and custom-variety design approval.
- Day 28 to Day 39: release test window.
- Day 42: launch-readiness review.
- Day 45: CMS production launch, targeting December 11, 2026.

Acceptance

- Utz approves the taxonomy/field-mapping specification and ownership model.
- The agreed custom-variety flow passes the agreed tests in staging across target breakpoints, including unavailable/error cases and the existing fulfillment handoff.
- Touched interactive components pass keyboard/accessibility and regression checks. This is not a whole-site compliance certification.
- No unresolved Severity 1 defect attributable to SVZ's work remains at the launch-readiness review. Utz owns the launch decision.

Phase 2: Release QA, launch & stabilization

- Release test matrix, defect log, launch-readiness review and go/no-go recommendation, with agreed approvers and rollback path.
- Production release of the approved CMS and custom-variety changes, with handover documentation.
- **Stabilization allowance of 16 hours** from launch (Day 45) through Day 61 for Severity 1 and Severity 2 defects directly attributable to SVZ's changes. Severity 1 means a checkout or storefront failure that prevents the released flow; Severity 2 means a material customer-experience defect without a complete transaction outage.

- SVZ notifies Utz in writing at 75% use (12 hours). Support beyond the allowance is available through Day 75 at \$350/hour with prior written approval; Utz names an approver who can authorize it by email so a live issue is never held up. No overage is pre-authorized.
- Response commitment: SVZ acknowledges a Severity 1 issue within 4 business hours and begins remediation within 4 business hours of acknowledgment, and acknowledges Severity 2 issues within one business day. Business hours are 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pacific, Monday through Friday. SVZ also monitors and responds to Severity 1 reports on weekends from Day 45 through Day 52.
- Vendor-side and Utz-side issues are escalated to their owners. New features and enhancements are not stabilization.

Phase 3: Technical AEO/GEO foundation

AEO/GEO here means making the included site surfaces clearer to search engines and AI answer systems. It does not guarantee rankings, citations or answer-engine inclusion.

Window: baseline measurement by Day 28, before launch, so Utz has a true before-and-after view; implementation in a follow-on release after the CMS launch, targeted by Day 75 and timed around any Utz holiday change freeze; closeout measurement by Day 90.

- Revalidation of the August 27, 2026 technical findings (Section 10) at activation.
- Metadata safeguards so access-control or personalization logic cannot suppress meta description and Open Graph tags for crawlers and answer engines, with regression checks.
- A connected organization, brand and product entity graph using stable identifiers, extending valid existing structured data rather than rebuilding it.
- FAQPage and Recipe structured data on the agreed product, FAQ and recipe templates where the visible content supports it, plus validation of the existing Product, BreadcrumbList and WebSite schema on those templates. No invented content or claims.
- A brand-oriented llms.txt addition or companion resource using a supported serving path, preserving Shopify's commerce-agent information.
- Baseline and closeout measurement over an agreed query set of up to 25 queries, with a findings and remaining-gap register.

Acceptance

- Implemented structured data validates in the agreed tooling without conflicting output.
- The agreed templates expose the agreed metadata and entity signals.
- The llms.txt resource and the closeout record are delivered.

Utz supplies and approves the underlying brand, product, FAQ and recipe content. Content production is not included.

4. Moved out of this SOW

4.1 3PL storefront enablement: separately scoped 2027 SOW

- FBS/Rithum discovery, vendor workshops, data contracts and the integration-responsibility matrix.
- Hybrid FBS/Hanover routing rules and mixed-cart behavior.
- Fulfillment-path, availability, shipping and delivery messaging; free-shipping policy implementation; fulfillment funnel analytics.
- Sandbox and test-order coordination, end-to-end vendor testing, 3PL launch readiness, the cutover and its stabilization.
- Participation in Profitero's bi-weekly program sessions and fulfillment action tracking.

- The Emplifi compatibility review tied to that program. Ren continues to own the Emplifi application; regression checks for SVZ's own theme changes remain included.
- The post-launch sales-acceleration opportunity register.

4.2 Broader optimization: future scope

- A broad AI-readable content layer and reusable answer-first content modules.
- Omnichannel pathway review, labels and measurement across direct, retailer and in-store purchase.
- Where-to-buy, FAQ and recipe discovery-path remediation beyond the agreed templates.
- The three-brand 2027 roadmap for Utz, Zapp's and Boulder Canyon.

These are removed deliverables, not work folded into a lower fee. Any later work needs its own written scope and whatever Utz approvals apply at that time.

5. Timeline

The reference calendar shows October 28, 2026 as Day 1, the latest Day 1 that holds December 11 at Day-45 pacing. The Day column is the commitment; dates move day for day with actual activation, subject to the signing-to-activation clause above. A milestone that falls on a weekend or US federal holiday is held on the next business day.

Milestone	Day	Reference date
SOW and governing MSA countersigned; access granted	Day 0	Tue Oct 27, 2026
Kickoff	Day 1	Wed Oct 28
Architecture/taxonomy decision gate; Invoice 2	Day 8	Wed Nov 4
Architecture record, mapping specification and design approval	Day 18	Mon Nov 16 (Day 18 is Sat Nov 14)
AEO/GEO baseline measurement	By Day 28	Tue Nov 24
Release test window, including Thanksgiving week	Day 28 to Day 39	Nov 24 to Dec 5
Launch-readiness review	Day 42	Tue Dec 8
CMS production launch	Day 45	Fri Dec 11, 2026
Weekend Severity 1 monitoring	Day 45 to Day 52	Dec 11 to Dec 18
Included stabilization window closes	Day 61	Mon Dec 28 (Day 61 is Sun Dec 27)
Approved extra support ends; AEO/GEO release target	Day 75	Mon Jan 11, 2027 (Day 75 is Sun Jan 10)
AEO/GEO closeout measurement; engagement close	Day 90	Mon Jan 25, 2027

6. Roles and dependencies

SVZ provides architecture, UX/UI design, theme implementation, release QA, the technical AEO/GEO work, a decision and risk log, and weekly status. Scott Van Zandt is Founder and Executive Sponsor and the escalation point; Keyvon Nariman is the senior client-success lead; Lauren McLaughlin leads operations, scheduling and approvals. SVZ confirms the named delivery owner, Shopify engineering lead, design lead and QA/launch owner in writing at kickoff. Substituting a named lead requires advance notice and equivalent seniority.

Utz provides:

- Ren Lovejoy as point person for technical dependencies and consolidated approvals.

- Business-policy decisions, the existing bundle and fulfillment rules, representative Salsify records and approved content.
- Access to the Shopify admin, theme repository and preview environment, Salsify data or an agreed export, analytics and technical contacts, within two business days of request.
- Test products, specialist approvers available for the Day 28 to Day 39 test window (which includes Thanksgiving week), consolidated feedback within two business days at launch-critical gates, and final launch authorization.

FBS/Rithum readiness does not gate this SOW. Profitero and other vendors keep their own responsibilities and service commitments.

7. Assumptions and exclusions

- No full redesign, replatforming, brand identity, broad data migration or catalog cleansing.
- No Salsify publishing-channel build, ERP/PIM replacement, custom middleware, warehouse or inventory operations, vendor-side configuration, carrier selection, tax-engine or customer-care platform work.
- No paid media, digital PR, content production, ongoing managed SEO/AEO or monthly retainer.
- SVZ does not warrant Shopify, Salsify or other third-party services, or the behavior of search and answer engines.
- A newly discovered need for a paid app, service or custom integration is assessed and approved before any commitment or expense.
- Material changes to product types, flows, templates, integrations or the number of releases go through change control.
- Travel only with advance written approval, billed at cost under the governing MSA.
- December 11, 2026 is a shared target, not an unconditional guarantee. It depends on activation by October 27, Utz approvals at Day 8 and Day 18, and the Section 6 dependencies.

8. Commercial structure

Fixed fee for the complete scope: \$49,500.

Invoice	Amount	Trigger
1. Engagement activation	\$24,750	On countersignature of this SOW and the governing MSA
2. Architecture decision gate	\$24,750	On Utz approval of the Day 8 architecture/taxonomy decision gate
Total	\$49,500	50% / 50%

What the fee includes. All deliverables in Section 3, governance, release QA and the 16-hour stabilization allowance.

Additional work. Only with prior written approval (email is sufficient) at \$350/hour, with the scope, estimated hours and a spending cap agreed before work starts, invoiced monthly in arrears. Nothing is pre-authorized.

Schedule terms. A delay at the Day 8 gate moves dependent milestones day for day; SVZ issues a written reforecast within two business days, and a reforecast is not a change order. A client- or vendor-caused schedule shift does not reduce the fee or require SVZ to compress testing. Invoice due dates and legal terms follow the governing MSA.

9. Change control

A change request is required when new work materially changes the approved deliverables, product types, flows, templates, integration complexity, data volume, number of releases or schedule. SVZ documents the impact on fee, timing and dependencies, and both parties agree it in writing before the additional work begins.

10. Structured data findings (August 27, 2026 review)

These findings come from SVZ's August 27, 2026 review of the utz-hyper repository and live storefront. They inform Phase 3 and will be revalidated at activation. The review was non-billable, and SVZ has not changed the storefront.

- **The brand entity graph is not connected.** The Corporation schema enumerates fifteen brands, but Product.brand is a plain {"@type":"Brand","name":"Utz"} value with no @id reference back to those entities, so search and answer engines see the catalog and the brand portfolio as two unrelated graphs.
- **No FAQPage structured data** is present on the site's question-and-answer surfaces.
- **llms.txt is Shopify's platform-generated default.** It explains how an agent can transact with the store but contains no Utz brand content: it teaches an AI assistant how to check out, not why Utz should be recommended.

11. Immediate next steps

1. Ren reviews V1.4 and returns redlines in Word or in the Slack thread.
2. Confirm the contracting path: whether this SOW is countersigned together with the framework MSA, or proceeds by another route Utz approves in writing.
3. Target countersignature and access by Tuesday, October 27, 2026 to hold December 11.

4. Confirm the specialist approver roster and test-window coverage over Thanksgiving week.
5. At kickoff, agree the repository baseline and publish path; SVZ confirms the named delivery leads.

Governing agreement

This Statement of Work attaches to and is governed by the framework Master Services Agreement between Utz Quality Foods, LLC and SVZ Design LLC. In the event of a conflict, the MSA controls except as to scope, deliverables, schedule and fees, which are governed by this document.