



Mastering Fleet Finance

The CFO's guide to total cost
of ownership for fleets



samsara



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Fleet essentials for finance leaders

Managing a fleet without complete visibility is like conducting an orchestra without a score. Each instrument plays its part, but without coordinated insight into all the pieces on the stage, missed cues and discord quickly add up leading to a performance that falls flat.

At Element, our years of fleet experience have taught us that cost control begins with complete visibility. From the moment you buy or lease a vehicle to the day you sell it, hidden savings are waiting to be found. Think of your fleet like a balance sheet on wheels as every stage, from purchase to resale, represents potential cost savings opportunities.

Samsara's connected operations platform gives finance teams the kind of data clarity that makes it easy to benchmark performance and quickly spot where savings are hiding.

This guide highlights four critical focal points every CFO should master to maximize these often-missed cost savings:



Understanding the true total cost of ownership (TCO)



Rethinking reimbursement for agility



Turning data into financial advantage



Making strategic fleet finance moves for 2025

Together, **Samsara and Element** bring finance and operations teams a clear, unified picture of their fleet. That means fewer costs, more uptime, and smarter decisions **powered by real data.**

Master the true cost of ownership

Look beyond acquisition

It's easy to zero in on sticker price, but that's only part of the story. Element's Strategic Advisory Services team, alongside our partner Samsara, finds that many fleets overspend by choosing the wrong vehicles for the job. And focusing only on the upfront cost often hides the bigger expenses that come later.

Hidden cost drivers



Maintenance and downtime

As vehicles age, repair frequency and severity rise, driving up maintenance costs while sidelining drivers and disrupting operations.



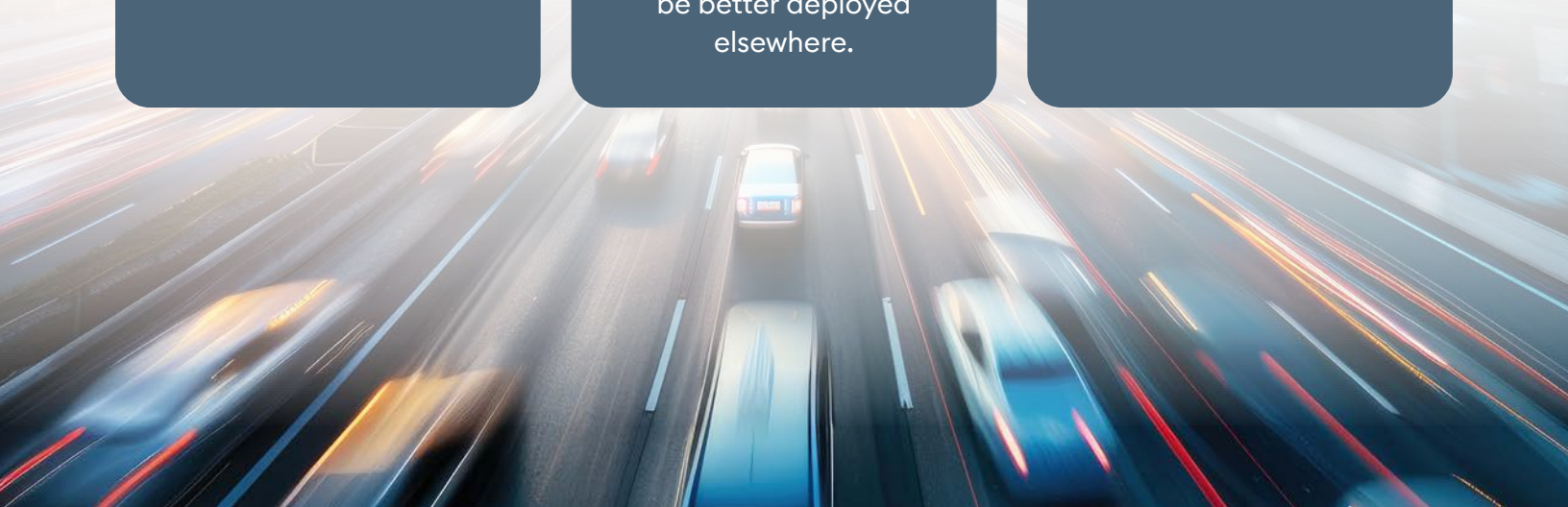
Vehicle mismatch

When vehicles are overbuilt for their actual use, fleets pay more than necessary in fuel, insurance, and depreciation, tying up capital that could be better deployed elsewhere.



Accidents

Injuries and liability can multiply total expenses by 3-5x.



Action for finance teams

Plan vehicle replacements based on total lifecycle cost—including acquisition, maintenance, fuel, and resale value—rather than just age or mileage.

Track how well your team keeps up with preventive maintenance. It’s one of the easiest ways to control costs.

Match each job with the right vehicle. Standardizing your fleet helps cut waste and keep costs predictable.

Hidden costs of accidents

Employer’s average cost per crash

Type of Crash	Cost Per	Frequency	Weighted Cost
Property Damage	\$6,945	71.74%	\$4,980
Injury (per injury)	\$99,295	21.65%	\$39,510
Fatal (per fatality)	\$951,425	0.61%	\$6,340
			\$50,830

Example jury award for fatal injury caused by fleet driver (April 2024)²:

A lineman for a Texas electric company was distracted and did not apply brakes before crashing his Ford F-140 service vehicle into the back of the victim’s disabled vehicle, resulting in the victim being fatally injured.

The jury found in the Plaintiff’s favor and awarded **\$37.5 Million**

¹Based on weighted average for property damage only (PDO) crashes, crashes with injuries, and fatal crashes, with a multiplying factor for number of people injured/killed per injury/fatal crash. Stats from NHTSA & NETS.

²Texas Personal Injury Settlement Amounts and Statistics, Lawsuit Information Center, Jan. 2025.

Use remarketing as a financial lever

A vehicle’s value doesn’t end when it leaves service. How you handle resale can make or break your total cost of ownership. Think of vehicle retirement as the final lap, not the finish line. The way you remarket can dramatically change how much value you get back.

“Remarketing is the fulfillment of your depreciation strategy.”

– Bill Blais, Director, Strategic Advisory, Element

Key recommendations



Compare resale prices to book value to spot which vehicles aren’t holding their value over time.





Time your sales based on mileage, vehicle condition, and what’s happening in the market to get the best return.



Build compliance checks and de-identification into your resale process as it helps protect the vehicle’s value and your brand.

Remarketing: De-identification/Recon

Before		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids reputational risk • Enhances online and in-lane bidding activity 	Initial Bid	\$3,400
	After			Recon Spend
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces sales cycle 	Final Bid
			Net Improvement	\$2,632

Turning data into a financial advantage

Visibility that drives ROI

Telematics and AI are changing how fleet leaders manage money. When your data lives in one place, finance teams can spot trends faster and act before small issues turn into big spending. Think of it as turning on the lights in your fleet’s financial room. Suddenly you can see where costs are adding up, which vehicles are performing best, and what to focus on next to maximize savings.

Common blind spots



Underutilized assets

Vehicles that sit idle still tie up capital, insurance, and depreciation costs, quietly draining budget without delivering value.



Reactive maintenance

Waiting until something breaks drives up costs fast, especially when repairs land at full retail rates or take vehicles off the road unexpectedly.



Fuel waste and theft

Long idling, inefficient routes, or unmonitored fuel cards can leak thousands each month, creating losses that add up quickly across a large fleet.



Safety gaps

Every preventable collision carries hidden costs, from downtime to higher insurance premiums, causing issues that compound when driver behavior isn’t tracked or coached.

Technology ROI in action

Working with an experienced fleet data partner turns raw information into real savings. When analytics and on-the-ground expertise come together, finance teams see measurable returns, from lower operating costs to smarter replacement decisions.

Real world results: Samsara - A Strategic Financial Lever

\$2M+ average annual benefits per organization with an 815% ROI

29% reduction in accident (with video safety)

24% reduction in insurance premiums (new savings against market increases)

20% reduction in idling (with VG functionality)

12% reduction in maintenance costs

10% increase in vehicle lifespan

Source: "The Business Value of Samsara" IDC White Paper (IDC #US52102724, June 2024)

Key takeaway ✨

Invest in systems that create a **single pane of glass** across assets, safety, and cost. Establish unified KPIs (accidents per million miles, cost per operating hour, idle fuel loss) to translate field activity into financial visibility.



Rethink reimbursement for agility

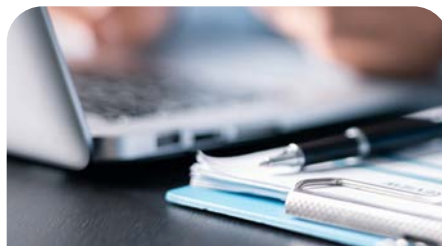
A flexible alternative to company vehicles

Many organizations are finding that not every role needs to sit behind the wheel of a company-owned vehicle. Switching some drivers to a reimbursement model can cut costs, reduce liability, and give finance teams more flexibility to scale up or down.

Why should CFOs consider reimbursement?



Converts fixed asset costs to variable spend.



Reduces corporate liability and insurance exposure.



Scales quickly with headcount or market changes.

A hybrid approach blends owned vehicles for critical roles with reimbursed personal vehicles for passenger-car needs, all managed under one policy.



Real-world reimbursement ROI

A national beverage distributor replaced company vehicles for field staff with a mileage-reimbursement program. As a result, they saw incredible savings through procurement, depreciation, fuel, maintenance, and insurance.

The specific cost benefits are:

ROI in Action: Real World Wins

Motus Vehicle Reimbursement Case Study: Amoskeag Beverages

Reduced costs across procurement, depreciation, fuel, maintenance, and insurance

\$5,000

saved per employee annually

\$215,500

in total annual savings

7.8 workdays

saved each month with GPS automated mileage capture

“The savings were greater than we could have ever envisioned.”

– VP of Operations

Key takeaway ✨

Reimbursement can reduce total cost of ownership, minimize idle capital, and boost employee satisfaction by aligning vehicles to individual needs.



Strategic moves CFOs can't miss

High interest rates and tighter capital budgets are forcing companies to rethink how they fund their fleets. CFOs are reevaluating how to balance capital efficiency with operational needs, finding the mix of leasing, financing, and reimbursement that keeps cash flow healthy and operations moving.

Actions for CFOs



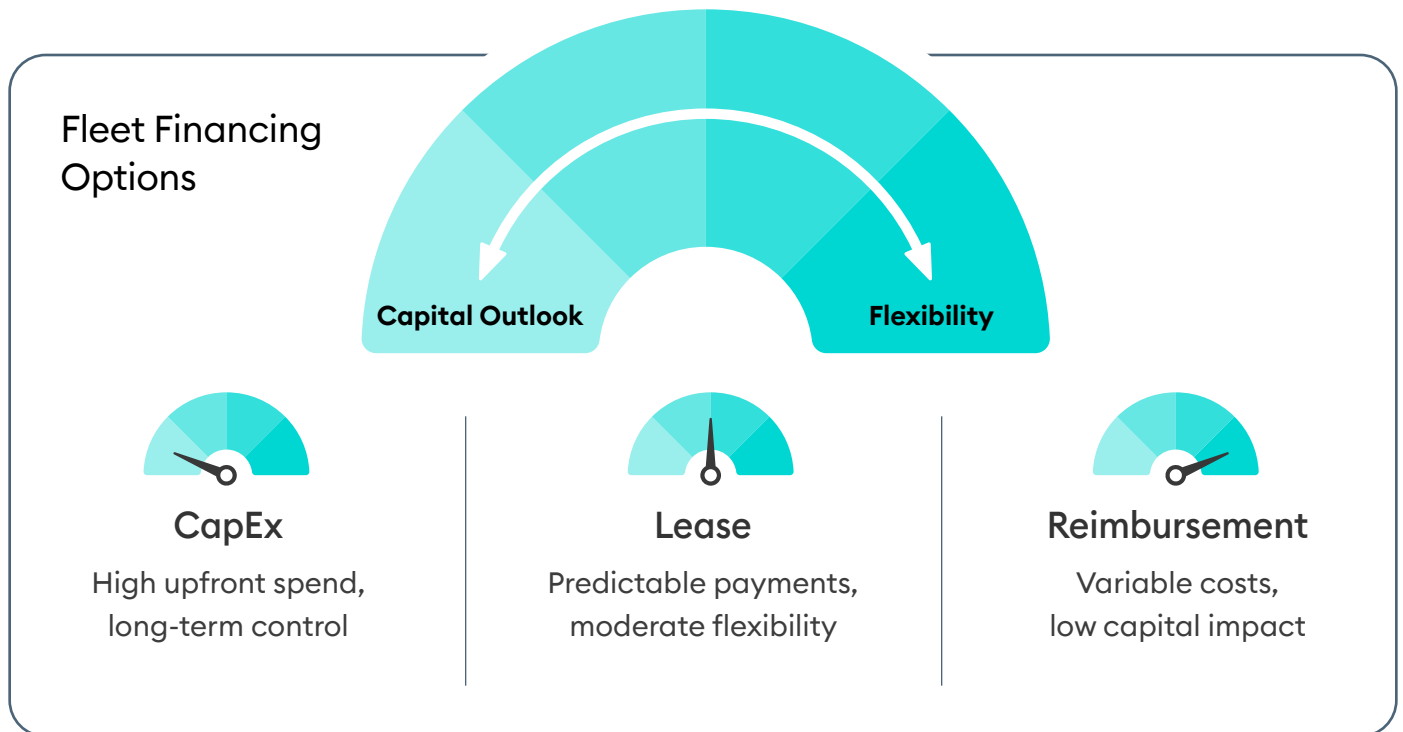
Reassess lease vs. own decisions using total cash-flow impact.



Evaluate exposure to fixed vs. floating interest rates.



Align replacement cycles with financing terms to stabilize budgets.



\$1.4B in identified client savings through Element analytics (2024).

Fast-track proven tech investments

Finance leaders can unlock millions in efficiency gains through technology that’s already proven its value in the field. From predictive maintenance to real-time analytics, these tools are helping organizations reduce downtime, improve asset utilization, and turn fleet data into measurable financial results.

Key enablers



Connected telematics for predictive maintenance



AI-driven safety coaching



Integrated analytics for cost forecasting



Powered by Samsara’s Connected Operations Platform™

This approach requires a bit of a mindset shift where you treat vehicles as revenue-enabling assets, not fixed costs. Measure total cost to serve which includes vehicle expense + driver productivity + customer value to understand ROI more holistically.

From insights to action

Fleet finance is evolving into a key driver of business strategy. By mastering total cost of ownership, using data to guide decisions, and building flexibility into fleet models, CFOs can strengthen financial resilience and position their organizations for long-term success. That’s why the smartest finance teams see fleet management as an investment opportunity. With the right mix of data insight and flexibility, they’re turning vehicles into assets that drive efficiency and growth.

Key takeaways



Visibility = Control

Unify your data across lifecycle stages.



Agility = Resilience

Use flexible fleet and reimbursement models.



Timing = Value

Replace and remarket proactively.



Element’s Strategic Advisory Services team partners with finance and operations leaders to help stabilize costs, reduce risk, and unlock working-capital potential.

From cost to advantage



Acquisition



Utilization



Replacement



Reinvestment

Contact us to explore a smarter, data-driven fleet lifecycle with **Samara and Element.**



About Element Fleet Management

Element Fleet Management (TSX: EFN) is the largest publicly traded pure-play automotive fleet manager in the world. As a Purpose-driven company, we provide a full range of sustainable and intelligent mobility solutions to optimize and enhance fleet performance for our clients across North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

Our services address every aspect of our clients' fleet requirements, from vehicle acquisition, maintenance, route optimization, risk management, and remarketing, to advising on decarbonization efforts, integration of electric vehicles and managing the complexity of gradual fleet electrification. Clients benefit from Element's expertise as one of the largest fleet solutions providers in its markets, offering economies of scale and insight used to reduce operating costs and enhance efficiency and performance. At Element, we maximize our clients' fleet so they can focus on growing their business.

To learn more, visit elementfleet.com

About Samsara

Samsara is the pioneer of the Connected Operations Platform™, helping organizations that depend on physical operations run smarter, safer, and more efficiently. Our platform delivers real-time visibility across vehicles, equipment, and sites to reduce costs, improve safety, and unlock operational insights. We support fleets across industries with scalable technology that integrates seamlessly with partners like Element to drive measurable financial outcomes.

To learn more, visit samsara.com