Tracking Fleet Total Cost of Ownership

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Executive Summary

Bobit Business Media (BBM) surveyed 190 fleet professionals on behalf of Fleetio and Coast, during February and March of 2026. The results are discussed and insights delivered below.

Fleet operators are under increasing pressure to control costs in a volatile environment—yet most are still managing spend through fragmented systems, partial data visibility, and reactive processes. This research highlights a market in transition: while foundational capabilities are in place, true Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) management remains underdeveloped.

Key Findings

1. **Cost control is focused on the short-term**

   Operational efficiency dominates priorities (56%), signaling a strong focus on immediate, controllable levers to reduce costs, including maintenance scheduling. However, longer-term levers such as data and systems (23%), and commercial optimization (20%) remain underutilized, creating missed opportunities for structural cost reduction.

2. **TCO adoption is growing—but lacks maturity**

   While 63% of fleets report tracking TCO, 37% rely on fragmented tools and manual processes, representing a significant segment still managing costs in functional silos, limiting their ability to optimize total fleet economics. TCO is typically reviewed quarterly or annually, limiting its effectiveness as a real-time decision tool.

3. **Confidence in data exceeds actual accuracy**

   Fleets report high confidence in MPG metrics (over 93% moderate or higher), yet this confidence may be based on incomplete or non-reconciled data, particularly given limited integration and validation processes.

4. **Data fragmentation is the core barrier**

   No single factor prevents TCO visibility—instead, fleets face a combination of challenges, led by data integration (21%) and skills/analytics capabilities (19%), alongside gaps in data quality, processes, and organizational alignment. A common root cause is that the data exists, but is not effectively connected.

5. **Cost volatility is concentrated in maintenance and parts**

   Maintenance and repairs (29%) and parts (22%) are the most unpredictable cost categories, driven by reactive processes, supply chain variability, and limited visibility. Fuel spend can be more manageable with mature tracking tools.

6. **Indirect and soft costs remain largely invisible**

   44% of fleets cite indirect costs—such as downtime and productivity loss—as the hardest to capture, indicating that most TCO models underrepresent true economic impact.

7. **Integration progress is uneven across cost categories**

   Fuel management is relatively mature, with 63% leveraging fuel card data, but maintenance and broader cost tracking remain distributed across Fleet Management Software (FMS), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and manual workflows.

8. **Connectivity is improving—but not complete**

   While 90% report moderate or higher confidence in system connectivity, most environments remain partially integrated, limiting automation and advanced analytics.

Why This Matters Now

Several industry forces are making cost visibility more urgent for fleet organizations. Rising vehicle, fuel, maintenance, and insurance costs are increasing pressure on fleets to better understand and manage operational expenses. At the same time, fleets are adopting a growing number of digital tools—including telematics, fleet management software, modern fuel cards, and connected vehicle technologies—creating more data but not always more clarity.

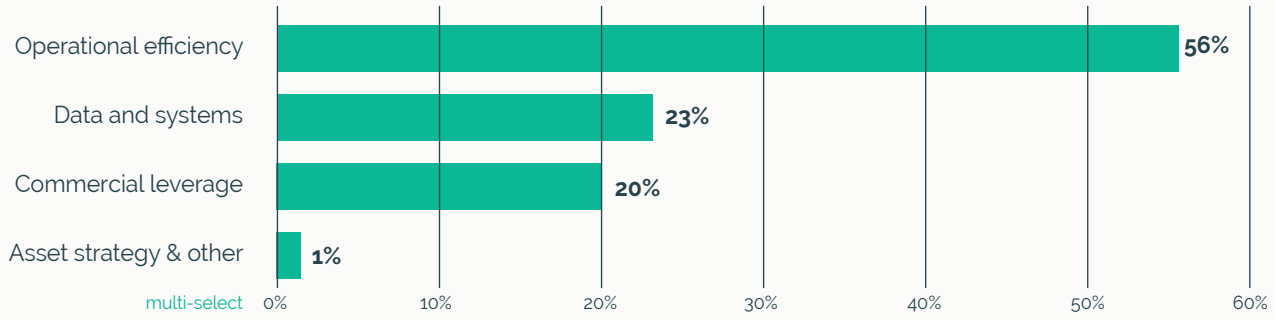
As fleets navigate technology transformation, regulatory pressures, and evolving operational models, the ability to accurately measure and manage TCO is becoming a strategic capability rather than a financial exercise. Organizations that can integrate data, automate expense management, and gain real-time cost insights will be better positioned to optimize operations, improve financial performance, and adapt to future industry shifts.

Addressing the industry's TCO visibility gap—a divide in fleet ops where a small group of fleets is building mature, connected TCO practices, but a lot rely on fragmented or manual approaches. This represents an opportunity to help fleets move from fragmented cost tracking toward more integrated, data-driven fleet management.

To better understand this challenge and inform the development of more effective solutions, this analysis investigates fifteen questions, detailed below. By addressing these questions, the research aimed to identify opportunities to help fleets reduce administrative complexity, improve cost intelligence, and unlock measurable operational savings.

Top Priorities for Fleet Cost Control

What are your top priorities for fleet cost control in the next 12 months?



Operational efficiency capturing 56% of responses signals that fleets are prioritizing near-term, controllable levers to reduce costs, including maintenance scheduling. Fleets are under pressure to deliver fast, measurable savings, likely driven by inflationary cost pressures, labor constraints, and fuel volatility. This also suggests that many fleets feel they still have untapped efficiency gains within existing operations.

Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents highlight data and systems, indicating recognition that cost control is increasingly data-driven, and existing systems are often fragmented or underutilized. While fleets understand the importance of digital transformation, it is still viewed as an enabler rather than the primary outcome. Many organizations may be stuck in disconnected telematics, fuel, and maintenance systems, manual reporting and reconciliation and limited real-time visibility.

Commercial Levers (20%) are an underleveraged opportunity, including procurement, vendor pricing, financing and contracts. This relatively lower prioritization suggests that fleets may perceive commercial terms as fixed or too hard to influence or lack the benchmarking data to renegotiate effectively. However, this is often where significant but hidden savings exist (e.g., fuel contracts, maintenance vendor rates, leasing structures).

Only 1% identified asset strategy (e.g., lifecycle optimization, right-sizing, electrification timing). This is a major strategic gap. Asset decisions typically represent the largest portion and the longest-term cost lever of TCO. The low prioritization suggests fleets are focused on short-term pressures and potentially lacking tools to model lifecycle and TCO scenarios.

Strategic Implications:

1. Lead with immediate value, not long-term vision alone:

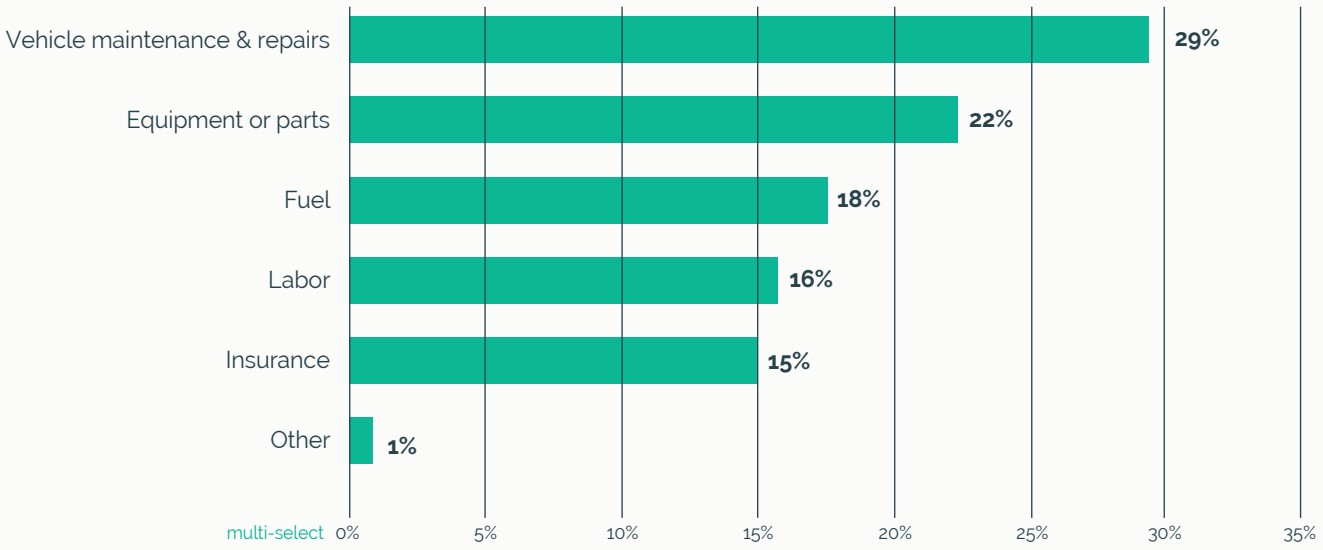
Anchor in near-term, quantifiable savings, particularly in operational efficiency. Quantify ROI (fuel, idle reduction, maintenance avoidance) upfront. Offer rapid deployment / quick-win programs. Package as outcome-driven solutions, not just capabilities.

2. Deliver insights, not just data:

As fleets move beyond basic visibility, providers must close the gap between data and decision-making. Translate data into prescriptive insights (not just dashboards). Integrate across silos: fuel + maintenance + telematics + TMS. Automate cost control actions where possible.

The Most Unpredictable Costs for Fleets

Which of the following costs tend to be the most unpredictable for your business?



Maintenance is both high-frequency and high-variance, making it the single largest driver of cost unpredictability in fleet operations at 29%. This reflects reactive vs. preventive maintenance practices, inconsistent failure patterns across vehicles and usage profiles, as well as limited transparency into vendor pricing and repair timelines.

Parts and equipment costs (22%) are increasingly tied to external market dynamics, reducing fleet control and increasing exposure to delays and price swings. Contributing factors include supply chain disruptions and backorders, as well as price fluctuations across suppliers and limited standardization across fleets.

Fuel ranks third at 18%, but historically is one of the most volatile cost categories. While fuel remains inherently volatile, modern systems are helping operators manage costs.

Labor (16%) and insurance (15%) rank lower in perceived unpredictability. These categories are seen as structural cost drivers, not as day-to-day sources of budget variance.

Strategic Implications:

1. **Shift maintenance from reactive to predictive:**

   Maintenance is the most critical area for intervention. Standardize maintenance workflows and vendor networks. Increase transparency into repair costs, frequency, and root causes.

2. **Continue advancing fuel optimization:**

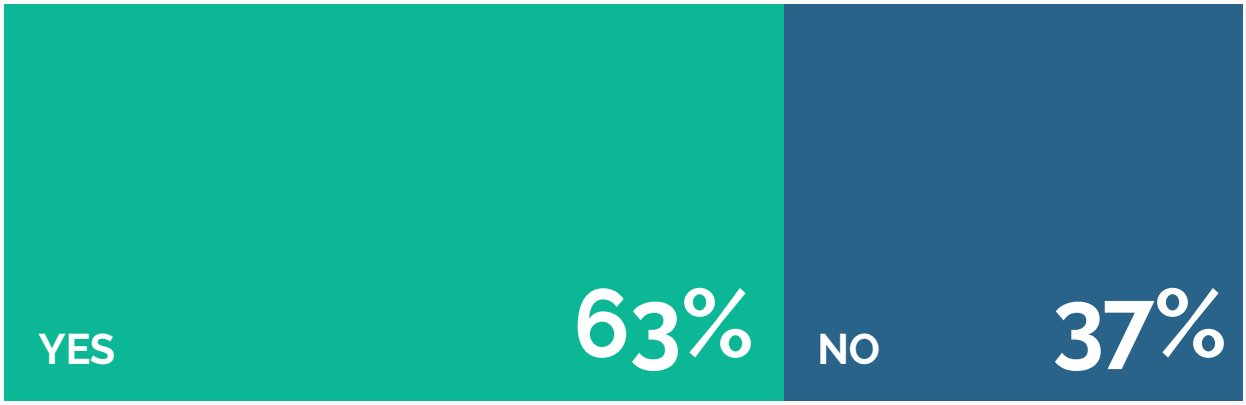
   Integrate fuel data with maintenance and routing insights. Focus on efficiency gains tied to broader operational performance.

3. **Focus on end-to-end cost predictability:**

   The predominant opportunity is to move from cost visibility to cost predictability. Build unified platforms that integrate maintenance, parts, fuel, labor, and insurance data. Apply AI/analytics to forecast cost variability and identify risk drivers.

Tracking TCO

Do you track your TCO today?



While 63% of fleets indicate they track TCO, this does not necessarily indicate full maturity. In practice, TCO tracking often remains: partial rather than comprehensive, periodic rather than continuous, and descriptive rather than predictive.

At the same time, the 37% who do not track TCO represent a significant segment still managing costs in functional silos, limiting their ability to optimize total fleet economics.

Strategic Implications:

1. **For the 37% not yet tracking TCO, start with an entry-level solution:**

   Begin with easy-to-deploy TCO solutions. Use pre-configured models that require minimal data inputs.

2. **Move from tracking to optimization:**

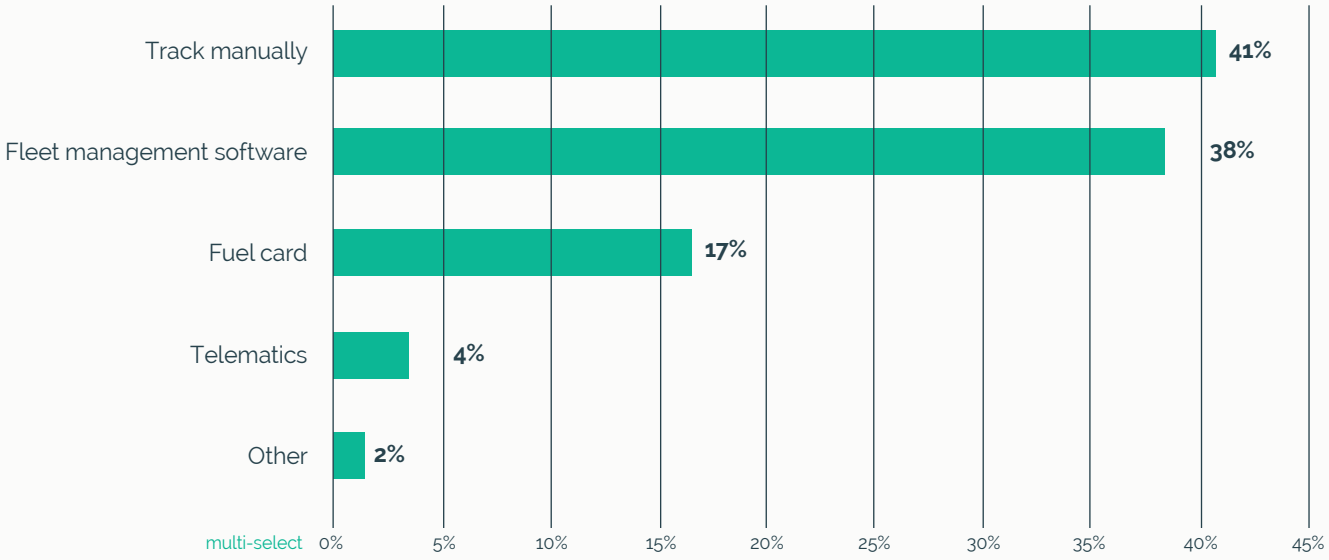
   Increase impact and sophistication. Transition from static reporting to real-time, dynamic TCO. Introduce predictive analytics and scenario modeling.

3. **Use TCO as the unifying layer across solutions:**

   TCO can serve as the central framework that connects all fleet management capabilities. Tie operational efficiency, maintenance, fuel, and asset strategy directly to TCO outcomes. Deliver a "single source of truth" for cost performance.

Systems or Tools Tracking TCO

What system or tools are you currently using to track your TCO today?



41% of fleets rely on manual tracking, typically via spreadsheets. This is a strong indicator of system gaps or lack of trust in existing tools, the need for customized, flexible reporting and limited integration across cost categories.

At 38%, FMS platforms are often used as tools for TCO tracking. However, their position is often overstated. Most FMS platforms capture operational data like maintenance and assets, many lack full integration with fuel, labor, financing and indirect costs, and most require supplemental tools or manual inputs.

At 17%, fuel cards are a key data source, but on their own not a fully comprehensive solution. Although they provide accurate fuel spend tracking and some level of reporting and controls, they are inherently single-category focused and disconnected from broader cost drivers like maintenance and asset performance.

Despite its potential, telematics is cited by only 4% of fleets for TCO tracking. This suggests that telematics is still viewed primarily as an operational tool. There remains limited integration between telematics data and cost systems, and there is an underutilization of predictive insights.

Strategic Implications:

1. **Solve the integration gap—not just add another tool:**

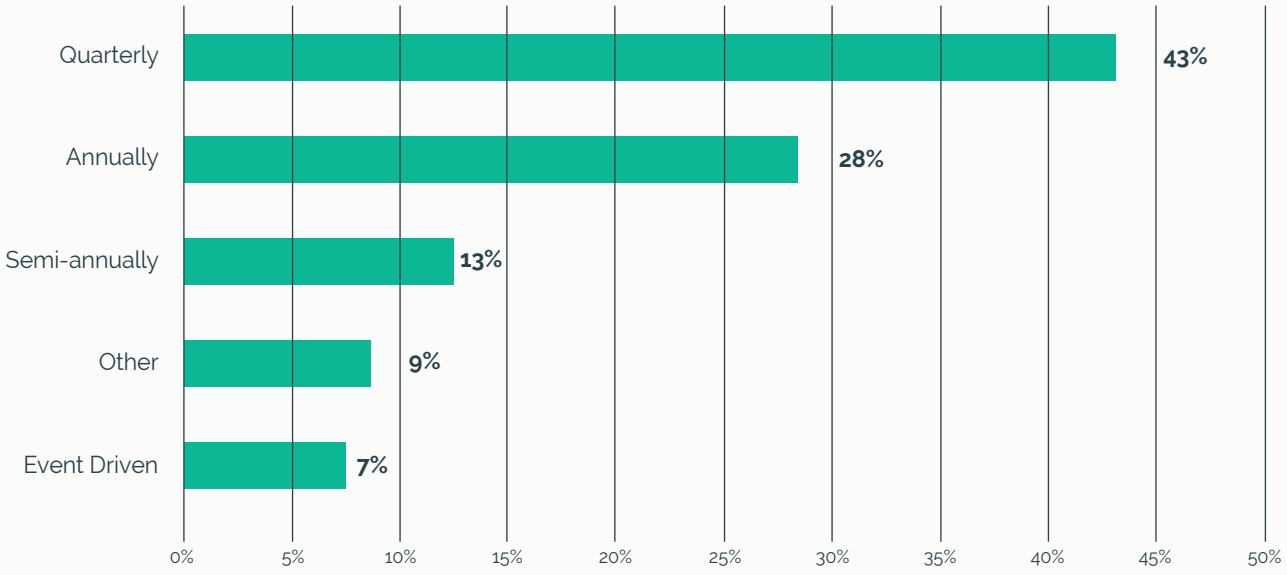
   The primary issue is not a lack of tools, but a lack of connectivity between them. Build or enable integrations across FMS, fuel, telematics, and financial systems. Deliver a unified data layer that consolidates all cost inputs.

2. **Position as a "single source of truth" for fleet costs:**

   Deliver unified, end-to-end cost visibility. Ensure data consistency across all cost categories. Enable real-time updates and cross-functional access.

Frequency of TCO Calculation Reviews

How frequently do you review or update your TCO calculations?



At 43%, quarterly is the most common review cadence. While this reflects a structured approach, it remains retrospective rather than proactive and is misaligned with real-time operational changes. These provide cost visibility, but it is often too late to meaningfully influence outcomes.

38% of fleets update TCO annually, typically aligned with budgeting or planning cycles. This approach supports long-term planning but fails to capture intra-year variability. It risks becoming outdated quickly, particularly in dynamic cost environments.

At 13%, semi-annual reviews suggest some movement toward more frequent analysis—but still limited. These fleets may be in transition, but have not yet achieved operational integration of TCO.

Only 7% of fleets update TCO based on specific triggers (e.g., major repairs, asset replacement, fuel spikes). This group represents a more advanced model, where TCO is linked to real-world events and used dynamically to inform decisions; however, adoption remains very limited.

Strategic Implications:

1. **Move toward continuous, real-time TCO tracking:**

   The gap between cost volatility and review frequency creates a clear opportunity. Use always-on TCO dashboards with real-time data feeds. Automate updates as new cost data is ingested.

2. **Align TCO with operational workflows:**

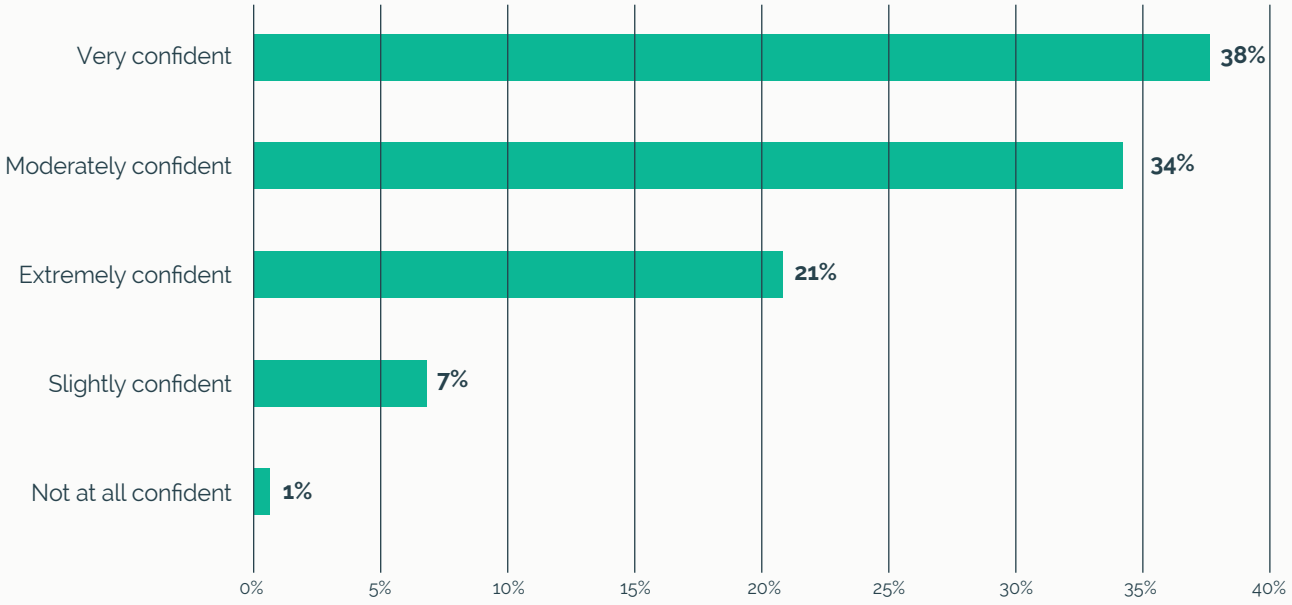
   Embed TCO insights into maintenance, routing, and procurement workflows. Use decision support at the point of action (e.g., create flags in maintenance systems when a repair breaks TCO thresholds, optimize routing engines for fuel+wear, not just time, simulate lifecycle costs before purchase approval…)

3. **Treat TCO as a dynamic control system:**

   Shift perspective. Demonstrate how increased frequency improves financial outcomes. Quantify the cost of delayed insights and missed intervention opportunities.

Confidence in Accuracy of TCO Calculations

How confident are you in the accuracy of your fleet's TCO calculations?



93% of fleets report at least moderate confidence in their TCO calculations, yet this confidence likely exceeds actual accuracy. Given earlier findings—fragmented systems, manual processes, and infrequent updates—there is a clear disconnect between perceived confidence vs. data completeness and integration. This indicates a market characterized by "confidence without full visibility."

With 59% of fleets reporting being very or extremely confident, there is a strong sense of control over cost tracking. Confidence may be rooted in comfort with existing methods, rather than true data accuracy or completeness.

The 34% reporting moderate confidence represents a critical middle group. This segment is highly receptive to solutions that improve accuracy, integration, and automation.

Only 7% report low or no confidence. These fleets represent an entry point for foundational solutions but are not the primary driver of market evolution.

Strategic Implications:

1. **Ensure data transparency:**

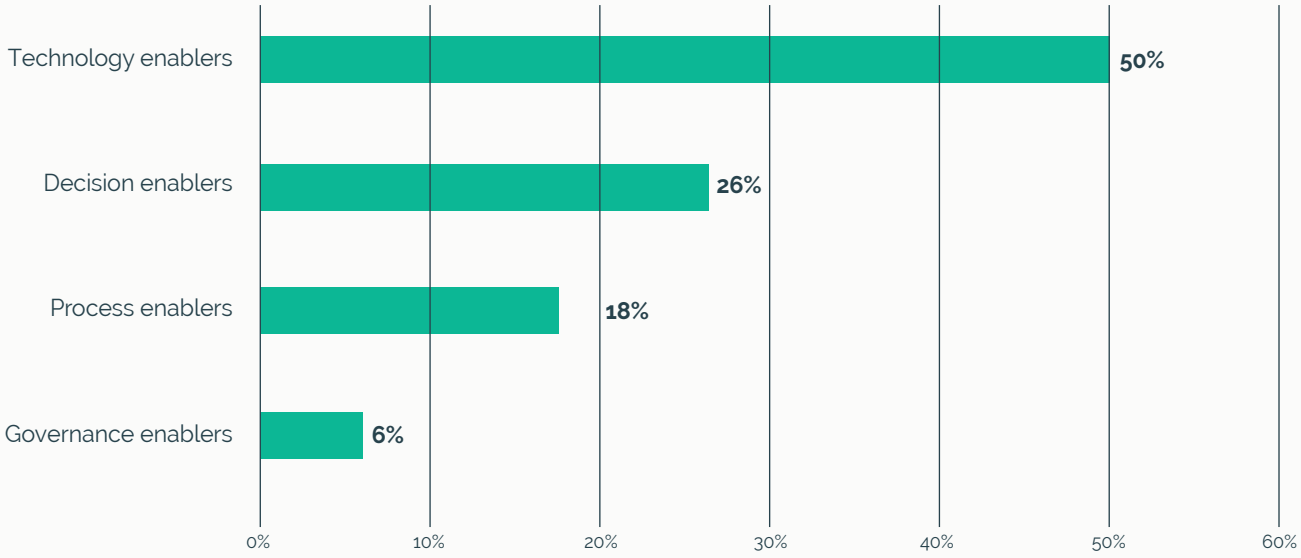
   Offer data validation and reconciliation tools. Identify discrepancies across systems (fuel vs. maintenance vs. financial data).

2. **Move from confidence to verifiable accuracy:**

   Introduce auditability and traceability of cost data. Provide confidence scoring or data completeness indicators. Enable benchmarking against industry standards.

Enabling Improvements to Manage TCO

What would most improve your ability to manage your TCO?



At 50%, technology is the most cited enabler by a wide margin. This reflects demand for integrated platforms across cost categories, real-time visibility into fleet performance, and automated data collection and reporting. Fleets view technology as the fastest path to improvement—but often as a stand-alone solution, rather than part of a broader transformation.

At 26%, decision enablers—including analytics, benchmarking, and scenario modeling—represent a significant secondary priority. This indicates that fleets are not just seeking data but guidance on what actions to take, tools to evaluate trade-offs, and comparative benchmarks to assess performance.

Only 18% of fleets identify process as a key improvement area. This suggests that existing workflows may be inefficient or inconsistent, but are not viewed as the primary constraint.

At just 6%, governance ranks lowest. This includes ownership of TCO metrics and standardization of cost definitions. This creates a risk of misaligned priorities and inconsistent execution.

Strategic Implications:

1. **Prioritize outcomes:**

   Position platforms around business outcomes (cost reduction, predictability). Focus on ease of integration and speed to value.

2. **Embed decision intelligence into the platform:**

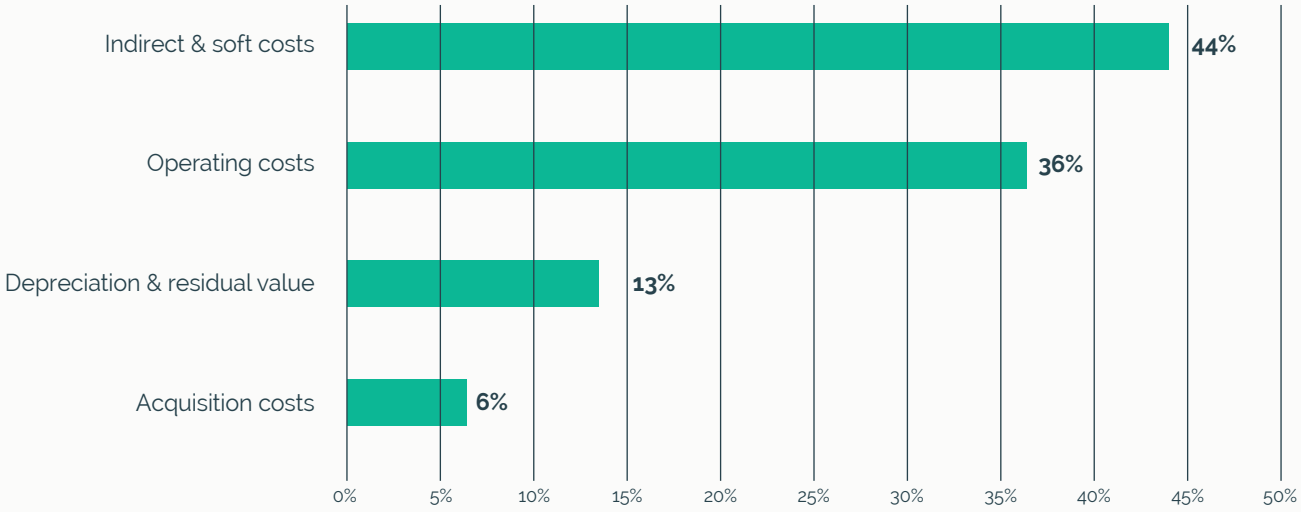
   Adopt prescriptive analytics and recommendations. Enable scenario modeling (e.g., lifecycle, utilization, procurement decisions). Obtain benchmarking against peer fleets.

3. **Obtain an integrated operating model—not just tools:**

   Combine technology, analytics, process, and governance into a unified offering. Position an end-to-end cost transformation.

The Cost Category Most Difficult to Capture Accurately

Which cost category is most difficult to capture accurately?



At 44%, indirect and soft costs stand out as the most difficult to quantify. These costs are distributed across systems (or not captured at all), difficult to standardize and are often estimated rather than measured. Most fleets are likely underestimating their true cost base, limiting the accuracy of TCO and ROI calculations.

At 26%, operating costs remain a challenge, despite being the most visible category. This reflects data fragmentation across fuel, maintenance, and labor systems, inconsistent data quality and reconciliation issues and limited real-time integration. Even well-instrumented cost categories suffer from integration and consistency gaps, impacting overall confidence in TCO.

At 13%, depreciation and residual value are less frequently chosen, but they remain complex. Challenges include variability in resale markets, uncertainty about asset lifespan and utilization, as well as limited access to accurate residual value data. These costs are typically modeled using assumptions, making them sensitive to forecasting errors.

Strategic Implications:

1. **Expand TCO models to include indirect and soft costs:**

   Develop frameworks to quantify downtime, productivity loss, and administrative burden. Provide standardized methodologies for estimating soft costs.

2. **Translate complex costs into actionable insights:**

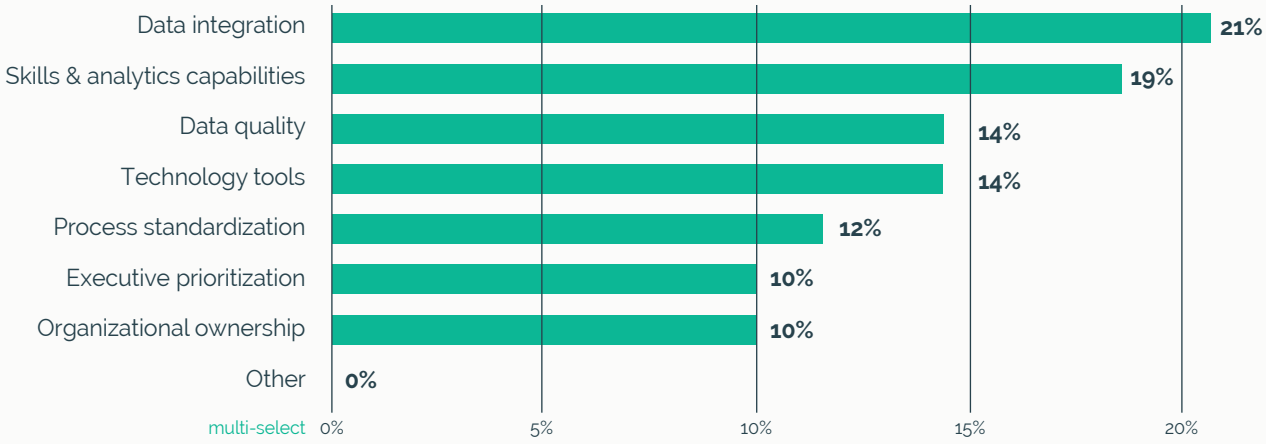
   Link indirect costs to operational levers (e.g., reducing downtime through predictive maintenance). Quantify the financial impact of operational improvements. Prioritize insights based on potential cost savings.

3. **Aim for "true cost visibility":**

   Ensure comprehensive, end-to-end visibility. Identify gaps in traditional TCO approaches. Demonstrate how capturing hidden costs improves financial outcomes.

Factors Preventing Fleets from Complete TCO Visibility

What prevents your organization from having complete visibility into TCO?



At 21%, data integration ranks as the top barrier, reinforcing earlier findings around fragmented systems. Challenges include disconnected platforms (FMS, fuel, maintenance, finance), a lack of standardized data structures and difficulty aggregating data into a unified view. Without utilizing integrations, TCO remains incomplete and delayed, regardless of data availability.

19% of fleets cite a lack of skills and analytics capabilities. This includes limited ability to interpret complex cost data, a lack of advanced modeling or forecasting expertise and resource constraints within fleet or finance teams. Even when data is available, many fleets struggle to translate it into actionable insights.

The 14% citing data quality reflects issues such as inconsistent or missing data inputs, errors from manual entry or reconciliation and lack of validation and governance. Poor data quality erodes confidence, limiting the adoption of TCO insights in decision-making.

Technology gaps, also at 14%, remain a barrier. This suggests that tools exist, but may be underutilized or poorly integrated, and that technology alone does not solve underlying data or process issues. The challenge is less about having tools and more about how they are implemented and connected.

Process standardization (12%), executive priorities (10%), and organizational ownership (10%) collectively account for nearly one-third of the barriers.

These include inconsistent workflows and cost definitions, and a lack of executive alignment on the importance of TCO and on ownership of TCO metrics across teams. TCO visibility is as much an organizational discipline as it is a technical capability.

Strategic Implications:

1. **Take a holistic solution:**

   Build seamless integrations across all major fleet and financial systems. Provide a unified data model for cost aggregation.

2. **Prioritize data quality and governance:**

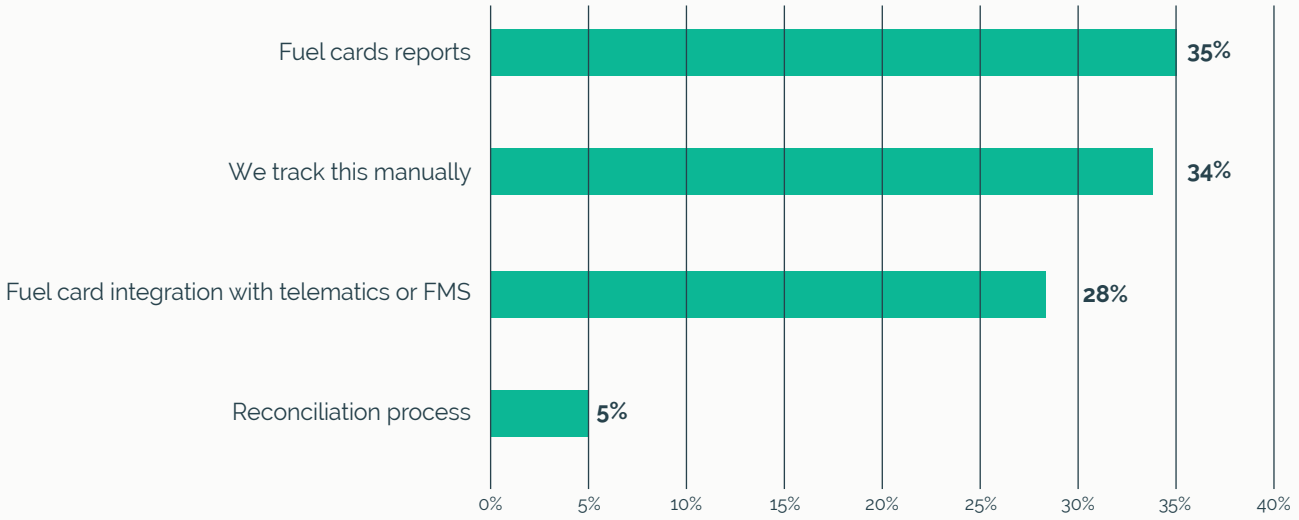
   Accuracy is foundational to trust and adoption. Implement data validation, cleansing, and reconciliation tools. Standardize cost definitions and data structures. Provide audit trails and transparency into data sources.

3. **Go beyond software to enable process standardization:**

   Technology must be paired with operational alignment. Provide best-practice workflows for cost tracking and reporting. Align system outputs with customer processes. Support change management and implementation.

How Do Fleets Currently Track and Reconcile Fuel Spend?

How do you currently track and reconcile fuel spend?



At 35%, fuel card reports are the most frequently cited method of tracking fuel spend. This reflects a reliance on fuel card programs, reliable transaction-level data capture and built-in reporting capabilities. Fuel card data is widely trusted—but often remains isolated from other cost systems, limiting its strategic value.

At 34%, manual tracking was selected more than anticipated, indicating a lack of strong digital adoption in fuel management. Fuel is one of the areas where fleets should move beyond manual processes, creating a benchmark for other cost categories.

28% of fleets integrate fuel data into their FMS. This represents a more advanced approach enabling consolidated cost tracking, alignment with vehicle and operational data and improved visibility into total cost. While progress is being made, the fact that fewer than 30% of fleets integrate fuel data indicates a significant integration gap.

Only 5% of fleets report having a formal reconciliation process. This suggests limited validation of fuel transactions against expected usage, potential exposure to errors, fraud, or misuse and a lack of alignment between fuel spend and operational metrics (e.g., MPG, utilization). Without reconciliation, even high-quality data can lead to inaccurate conclusions and missed cost control opportunities.

Strategic Implications:

1. **Close the gap between data capture and integration:**

   Fuel data is widely available, but not fully connected. Integrate fuel card data directly into TCO platforms and FMS. Link fuel spend to vehicle performance, maintenance, and routing data. Provide a unified view of fuel within total fleet costs.

2. **Use fuel as the entry point for broader TCO integration:**

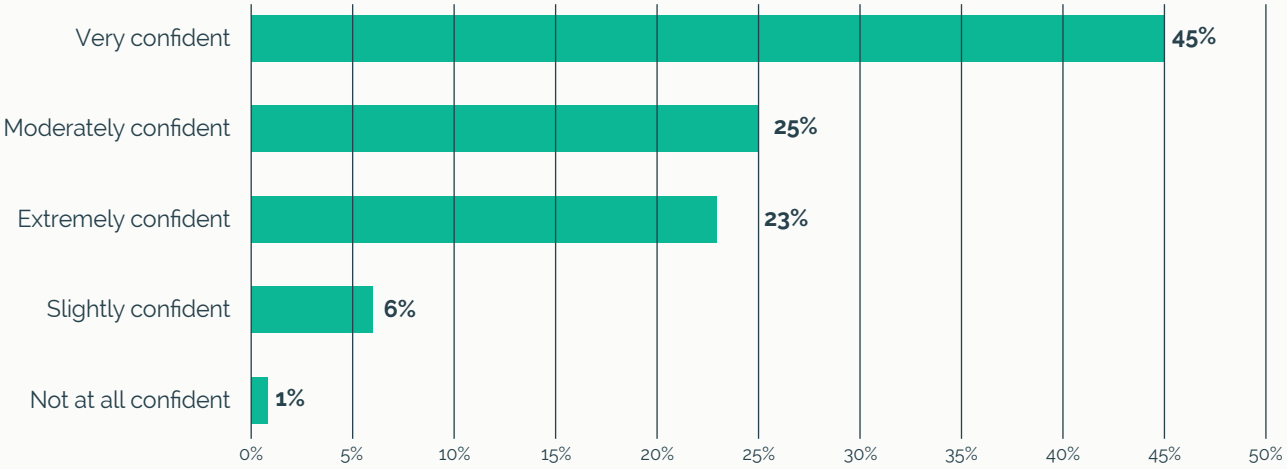
   Fuel is a natural starting point for deeper cost integration. Use fuel integration as the first step toward full TCO visibility. Expand from fuel into maintenance, labor, and asset costs. Understand how integrated fuel data improves overall cost accuracy.

3. **Elevate from tracking to optimization:**

   Use insights on fuel efficiency, driver behavior, and route optimization. Connect fuel data to maintenance (e.g., identifying inefficient or underperforming vehicles). Quantify savings opportunities and track performance over time.

Reported Fuel Miles per Gallon vs. True MPG Consumption

How confident are you that your reported fuel miles per gallon reflects your true miles per gallon consumption?



With 68% of fleets reporting very or extremely high confidence, MPG is perceived as consistent over time, easy to calculate using fuel card and odometer data and a familiar benchmark for performance. MPG has become a default performance metric, benefiting from long-standing use and simplicity.

25% of fleets report moderate confidence, indicating that a meaningful portion recognize that MPG may be directionally correct but not precise. This indicates an awareness of limitations such as: odometer inaccuracies or delays, missing or misallocated fuel transactions, and lack of integration with telematics data.

Only 7% report low or no confidence, suggesting that most fleets have baseline fuel tracking capabilities and that fundamental data capture is not the primary issue. The challenge is not whether MPG can be calculated, but how accurate and actionable it is.

Strategic Implications:

1. **Convert high confidence into verified accuracy:**

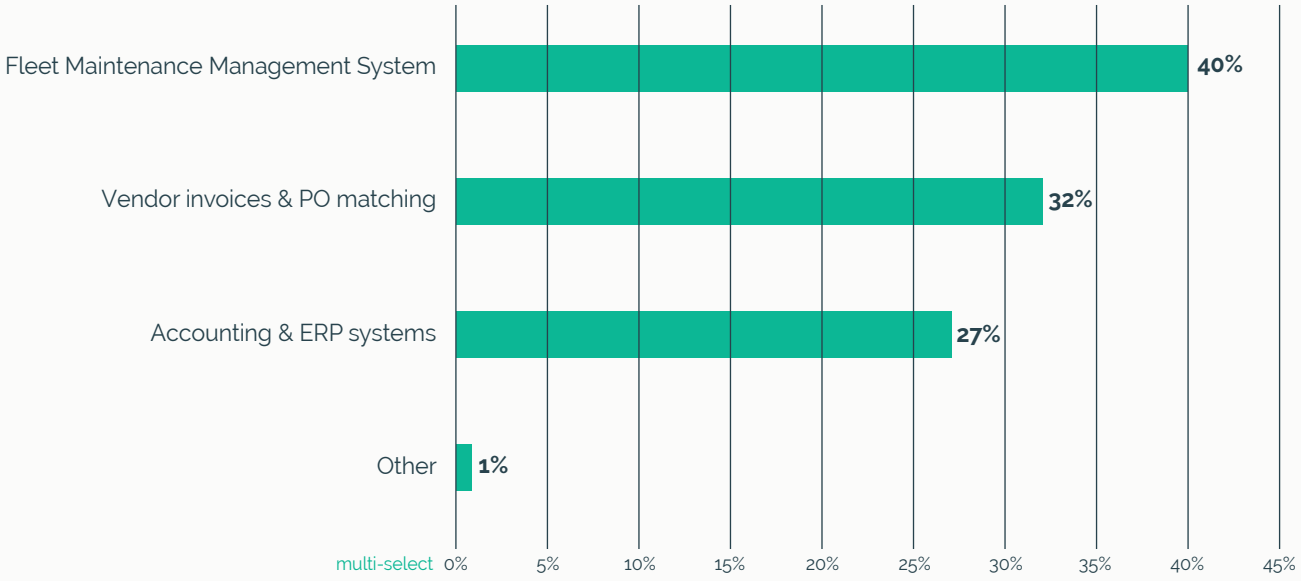
   There is an opportunity to validate where needed, challenge existing assumptions. Introduce automated reconciliation between fuel volume and distance traveled. Flag inconsistencies and data gaps proactively. Provide audit trails and validation metrics.

2. **Elevate MPG from metric to management tool:**

   MPG should drive action—not just reporting. Identify underperforming vehicles and trigger maintenance or replacement decisions. Quantify cost savings tied to MPG improvements.

How Do Fleets Track and Reconcile Maintenance Spend?

How do you currently track and reconcile maintenance spend?



At 40%, Fleet Maintenance Management Systems (FMMS) are the most used tools. However, many legacy FMMS platforms often do not capture full invoice-level detail, lack integration with financial systems and require reconciliation with external vendor data. A modern FMMS would provide a financial system-of-record lens or be interoperable with the organization's incumbent financial system of record.

32% of fleets rely on vendor invoices and purchase order (PO) matching. This approach is often manual and time-intensive, is delayed (post-service reconciliation), and is disconnected from real-time operational data. This method improves accuracy, but sacrifices speed, scalability, and integration.

At 27%, ERP and accounting systems are used to track maintenance spend. They typically lack asset-level granularity, are not necessarily integrated with maintenance workflows, and do not provide insight into why costs occur. ERP systems answer "what was spent," but not "what drove the spend" or "how to reduce it."

Strategic Implications:

1. **Establish a unified maintenance cost framework:**

   The prime opportunity is to connect operational and financial data. Create a single, reconciled view of maintenance spend. Align work orders with actual financial transactions.

2. **Enable real-time visibility into maintenance costs:**

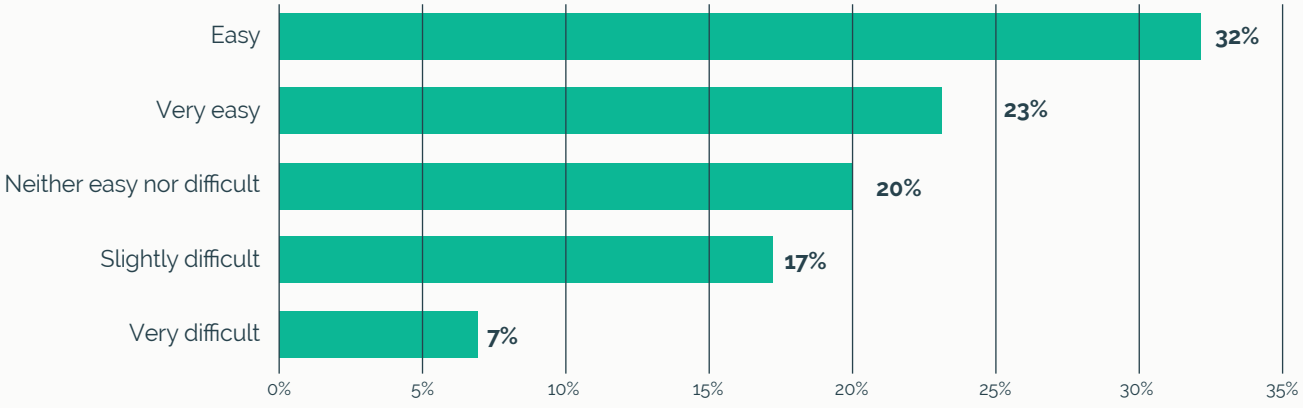
   Provide near real-time updates on maintenance spend. Integrate vendor networks for faster data capture.

3. **Position on "maintenance cost intelligence":**

   Deliver predictive maintenance insights tied to cost outcomes. Benchmark maintenance costs across fleets and asset types. Quantify savings opportunities and performance improvements.

Ease of Viewing Fuel and Maintenance Data Together

How easy is it for you to view fuel and maintenance data together in one report or dashboard?



With 23% reporting finding it very easy, there is clear momentum toward consolidated reporting environments, increased integration among fuel cards, FMMS, and FMS platforms, as well as improved dashboarding and analytics tools. Basic visibility across fuel and maintenance is becoming more common—particularly among more digitally mature fleets.

20% of fleets report that it is neither easy nor difficult. These fleets are in a transitional state, with partial solutions that lack efficiency and scalability. This often indicates: access exists, but requires manual effort or multiple steps; reports are available, but not automated or real-time; and data may be combined, but not deeply integrated.

24% of fleets (slightly or very difficult) still struggle to combine these datasets. This reflects: siloed systems (fuel cards vs. maintenance platforms), lack of integration between operational and financial tools, manual data consolidation and reporting.

For these fleets, the inability to connect core cost drivers limits: TCO accuracy, root cause analysis, and timely decision-making.

Strategic Implications:

1. **Move from basic visibility to seamless integration:**

   Ease and automation are critical. Provide fully integrated dashboards combining fuel and maintenance data. Eliminate manual data stitching and report generation. Ensure real-time or near-real-time updates.

2. **Enable cross-cost analysis and insights:**

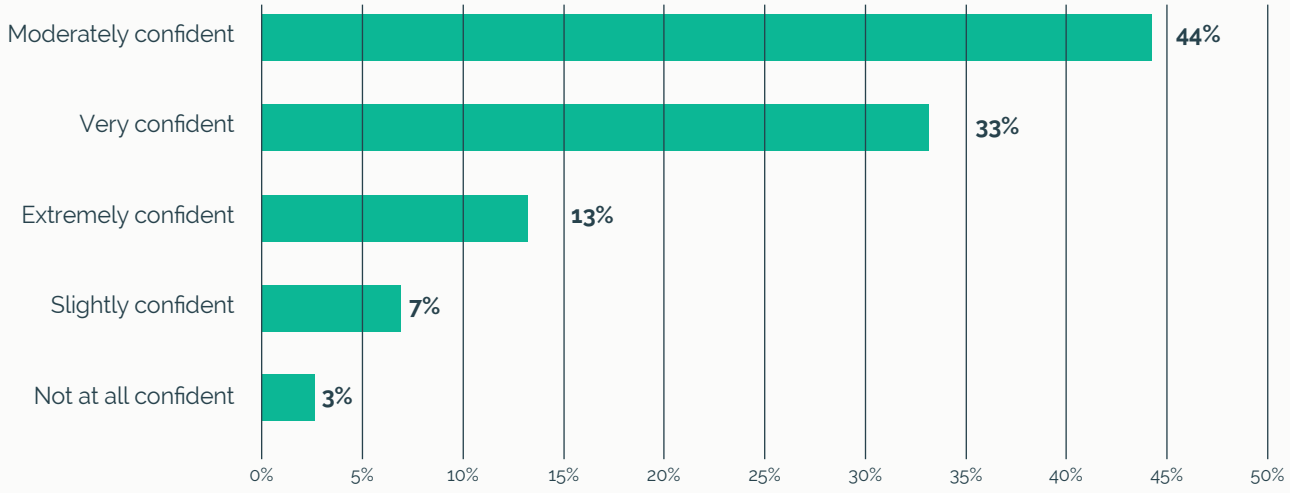
   The true value lies in understanding relationships between cost categories. Identify correlations (e.g., declining MPG linked to rising maintenance costs). Deliver prescriptive insights based on combined data.

3. **Standardize data models across systems:**

   Integration challenges often stem from inconsistent data structures. Normalize data across fuel, maintenance, and asset systems. Align cost categories and definitions. Ensure consistency in reporting across platforms.

Fleet's Level of Systems Connectivity

How would you describe your fleet's current level of systems connectivity?



At 44%, "moderately confident" is the most common response. This suggests fleets typically have some integrations in place (e.g., fuel + FMS/FMMS + telematics + ERP), basic data sharing between systems and limited automation across workflows. Connectivity exists, but is often incomplete, inconsistent, or requires manual intervention.

Still, 46% report being very or extremely confident. These fleets are more likely to have integrated platforms or well-developed data architectures, automated data flows across key systems and more mature reporting and analytics capabilities. True end-to-end connectivity is not yet the norm, even among relatively advanced fleets.

10% of fleets report low or no confidence. This group likely faces siloed systems with little to no integration, a heavy reliance on manual data transfer and limited visibility across cost categories. While smaller in size, this segment reflects foundational connectivity challenges still present in the market.

Strategic Implications:

1. **Treat connectivity as the foundation for TCO visibility:**

   All higher-order capabilities depend on integration. Ensure system connectivity as the enabler of accurate, real-time TCO. Tie integration directly to improved cost control and decision-making.

2. **Eliminate manual workflows between systems:**

   Automate data synchronization and reconciliation. Remove the need for manual exports, uploads, and adjustments. Ensure consistency across all reporting outputs.

3. **Enable real-time, cross-system intelligence:**

   Connectivity should unlock more than data sharing. Deliver real-time insights that span multiple cost categories. Trigger alerts based on combined data signals (e.g., fuel inefficiency + maintenance issues). Support predictive and prescriptive analytics.

Recommendations

To address the gaps identified in fleet cost control and TCO management, fleet managers must adopt integrated solutions. The following recommendations outline where to focus to drive measurable value.

Adopt an end-to-end solution to cost control:

Shift from siloed tools to integrated solutions for stronger differentiation and deeper customer value.

- Adopt tools that connect across all cost categories (i.e. fuel, maintenance, etc.)
- Align efforts around "total cost control" and measurable ROI

Automate data validation and reconciliation:

Confidence in data is high, but often not verified. Results are improved accuracy, reduced risk, and greater trust in decision-making. Use expense management tools that:

- Automate reconciliation of fuel transactions, maintenance invoices, and utilization
- Flag anomalies and inconsistencies in real-time
- Maintain a record of data that can be reviewed and synched to your other systems

Leverage fuel as the entry point for broader integration:

Fuel is the most mature and widely tracked cost category. Choose a fuel card with integrations across FMS, telematics, and ERPs.

- Integrate fuel data with maintenance, telematics, and routing systems
- Use fuel insights to identify inefficiencies across operations
- Expand from fuel tracking to full TCO integration

Maintenance and parts as priority optimization:

These categories represent the highest cost visibility. Adopt an FMS that allows you to:

- Predict maintenance schedules
- Improve parts visibility, sourcing, and pricing transparency
- Identify high-cost assets and recurring failure patterns

Conclusion

Fleet cost management is evolving from fragmented tracking toward integrated, intelligence-driven optimization.

As fleets face growing pressure to control operating costs, improve visibility, and make faster decisions, fleet managers should look for vendor solutions that can:

- Unify data across fuel, maintenance, operations, and financial systems
- Improve the accuracy, consistency, and trustworthiness of cost metrics
- Deliver real-time insights that support faster, more informed decision-making
- Reduce manual reconciliation and administrative complexity
- Provide a clearer view of total cost of ownership across the fleet

Organizations that invest in connected, data-driven fleet management capabilities will be better positioned to move beyond basic cost visibility toward stronger financial control, operational efficiency, and long-term performance.

(!) Reported percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number; as a result, totals may not sum to 100%.