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» 2026 STATE OF ITAM REPORT

From visibility to value: How ITAM drives cost optimization

You can’t optimize what you can’t see

As IT environments expand across SaaS, cloud and AI, visibility gaps remain—which limits your ability to control costs and reduce risk.

Complete visibility is still out of reach. Many organizations still lack a full view of their assets. Expanding environments—and the rise of AI—are making it harder to maintain complete visibility across the estate.

36% ↓ 7 points
have complete IT visibility
Down 7 percentage points year over year

Accurate inventory is the starting point

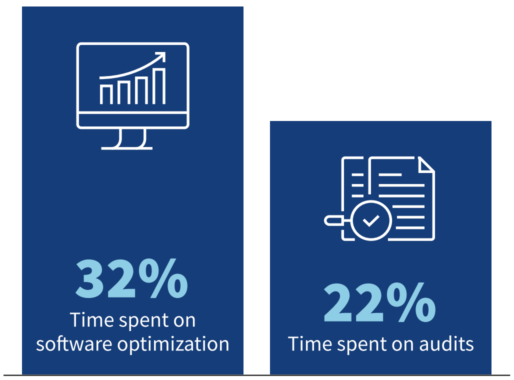
Despite evolving responsibilities, ITAM’s core priority remains the same: maintaining a complete and accurate inventory. Without it, organizations can’t effectively optimize spend, ensure compliance or govern emerging areas like AI.

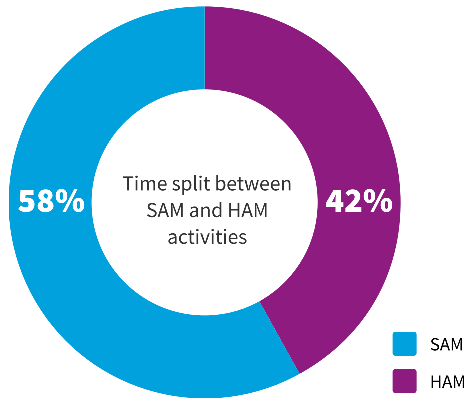
Which SAM-focused responsibilities does your ITAM team have

2026: N=512
Source: Flexera 2026 State of ITAM Report (Figure 10)

Optimization leads—but audits still consume time

ITAM teams are shifting toward optimization, but audit response and operational work continue to take up a meaningful share of effort.

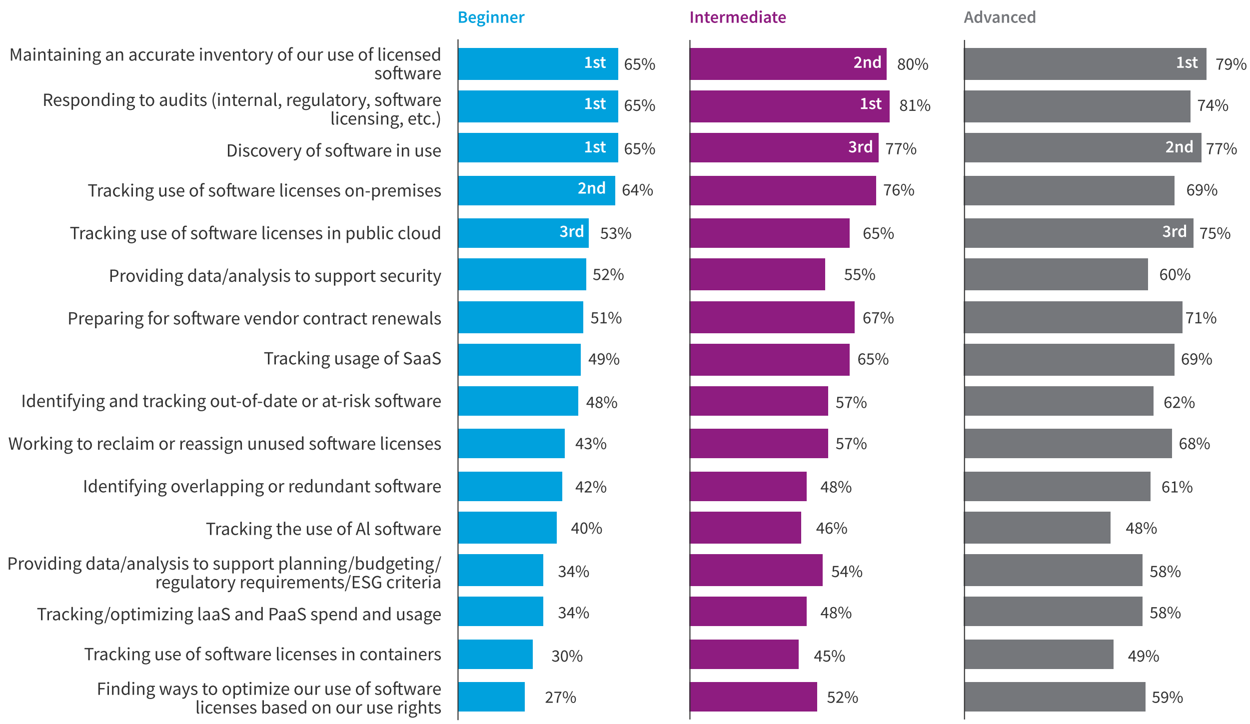




More mature programs deliver greater value

Organizations with mature ITAM practices focus on optimizing software use, managing cloud licenses and driving financial outcomes—while less mature teams are still building foundational capabilities.

SAM responsibilities by maturity



2026: N=512
Source: Flexera 2026 State of ITAM Report (Figure 22)

Visibility and data maturity are the foundation for cost optimization

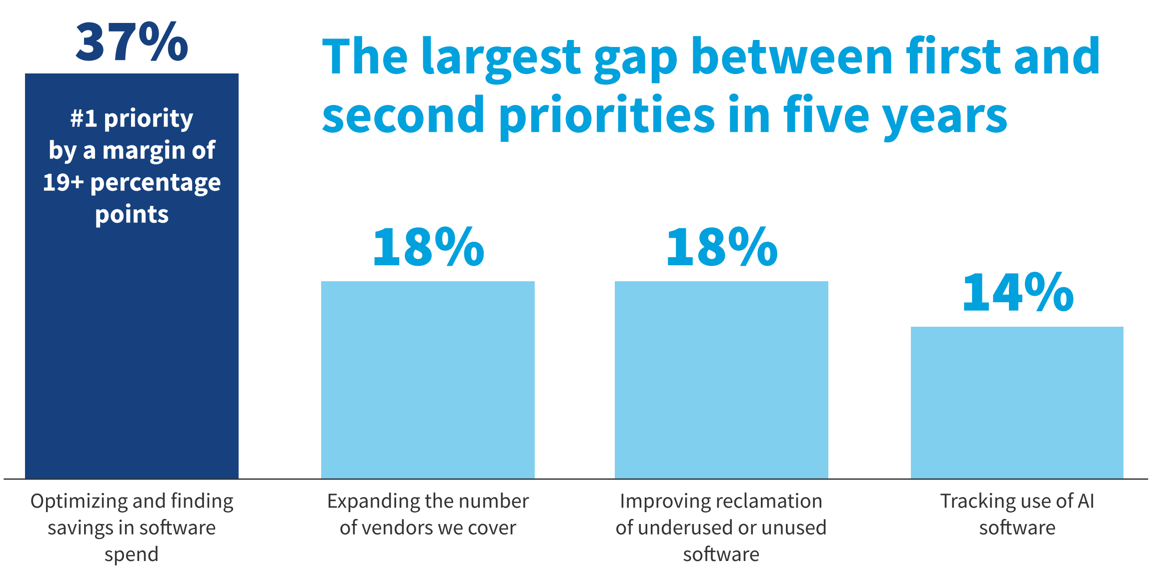
Optimization is ITAM's biggest business impact

With stronger visibility and maturity, ITAM teams are driving measurable savings across software, SaaS and cloud environments.

Saving money is the clear #1 focus

It's no surprise that saving money is top of mind for many organizations. Optimizing software spend remains the leading priority for ITAM and SAM teams—outpacing all other initiatives by a wide margin.

Top-ranked SAM initiative for next year (Rank 1 selections)



How organizations save

Optimization strategies are evolving. Organizations are leaning on proven cost-saving strategies—while also expanding efforts around vendor management and contract negotiation.

License reuse
↓
most consistent savings driver

Contract negotiation
↓
significant year-over-year increase

Rightsizing
↓
key strategy across vendors

Spend is concentrated—and actionable

A few vendors drive a large share of spend. In fact, software spend is heavily concentrated among major vendors, creating outsized opportunities for optimization and cost reduction.

51%
spend more than $5M annually on cloud software

40%
of that spend goes to Microsoft

Success is measured in savings and control

ITAM success continues to be defined by cost savings and audit readiness. At the same time, organizations are beginning to introduce new metrics to measure the value of AI investments.

49%
measure success by cost savings and audit compliance

29%
track AI value as a success metric

Strong ITAM programs turn visibility into measurable financial value

Download the 2026 State of ITAM Report →

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