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2026 State of Connected Operations Report

Quantifying the hidden cost of asset invisibility

In asset-heavy industries, the loss of a critical asset can have a ripple effect of costly consequences: delays, penalties, emergency rentals, wasted labor, and more.

A 2026 survey of 1,500+ financial executives—majority mid-size operations between \$250M and <\$1B annual revenue—across construction, logistics, field services, utilities, and similar industries reveals the staggering operational cost of asset theft and loss, and the ROI of tracking assets of all sizes.



Table of contents

| Section | Page |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 01: The real financial risk of asset theft and loss | <u>03 – 04</u> |
| 02: The ripple effect of missing assets | <u>05 – 06</u> |
| 03: The top-reported benefits of asset tracking | <u>07</u> |
| 04: Do you know your true cost of asset loss? | <u>08</u> |
| 05: Real asset recovery stories | <u>09</u> |
| Methodology | <u>10</u> |

The real financial risk of asset theft and loss

Theft, loss, and misplacement are recurring risks

Physical operations—across construction, logistics, field services, utilities, and similar industries—face a persistent and underestimated financial drain stemming from asset theft and loss.

Among respondents without an asset tracking solution:

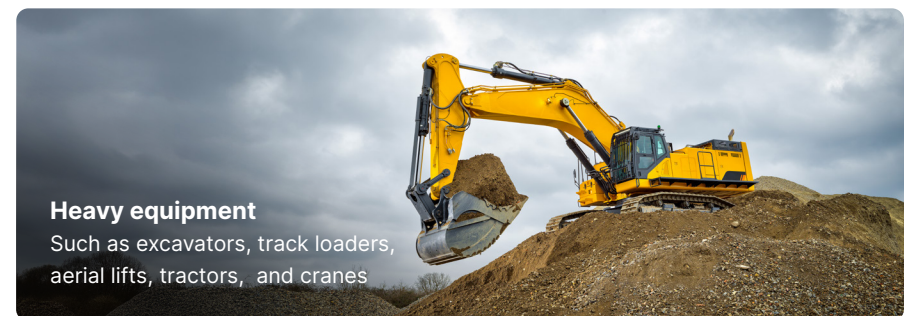
71%

Experience equipment theft every quarter

25%

Of new equipment budget is spent replacing stolen or lost assets

The most commonly lost, misplaced, or stolen equipment



Missing assets have a ripple effect of costly consequences—which are often underestimated

While heavy equipment theft makes headlines, the real financial drain often comes from somewhere less obvious—the “death by a thousand cuts” caused by the disappearance of smaller, critical gear.

Among respondents without an asset tracking solution—the majority mid-size operations between \$250M and <\$1B annual revenue—self-reported losses from missing assets averaged \$13.2M per year, a rough estimate of not just replacement costs but also indirect costs such as project delays, penalties, emergency rentals, and wasted labor. For a \$500M operation, that’s roughly 2.64% of annual revenue. And it’s **likely just the tip of the iceberg**: indirect costs like idle labor and operational downtime are **notoriously hard to quantify and are frequently underreported**.

Most striking: 72% of these direct and indirect costs result from missing assets valued under \$10,000—smaller, critical assets (tools, sensors, specialized parts, the stuff that doesn’t make the news). While these items are relatively inexpensive to replace, the secondary impacts of their absence—such as project delays and labor downtime—can vastly outweigh their market value.

Respondents without asset tracking self-reported losing an average of

\$13.2M

annually as a result of missing assets—a rough estimate of direct and indirect costs, and likely just the tip of the iceberg.

72%

of these costs stem from missing assets valued under \$10K, underscoring that indirect costs can be far more expensive than the assets themselves.



The real impact of a missing asset isn’t limited to the replacement cost—it’s the operational ripple effect that follows: delayed jobs, idle personnel, reactive purchasing decisions. These inefficiencies compound over time and can add up to millions in hidden costs.”



John Chaccour
Director of Technology, Total Safety

The ripple effect of missing assets

Missing assets drain productivity

98%

Say searching for assets is a daily or weekly occurrence

10+ hrs/wk

Spent by employees searching for assets at more than a quarter of mid-size organizations without real-time visibility

This is equivalent to

520+ hrs/yr

Or an employee doing nothing but searching for lost equipment for three months every year

Secondary costs add up

While replacement costs are the visible tip of the iceberg, the “hidden” secondary costs—such as emergency rentals, idle labor, and project penalties—add up quickly.

Respondents without an asset tracking solution (majority mid-size operations between \$250M and <\$1B annual revenue) were **70% more likely to report a seven-figure hit** to their bottom line from these operational inefficiencies, compared to those with an asset tracking solution.

This visibility gap reveals a stark reality: those without an asset tracking solution are hemorrhaging capital—an entirely preventable outcome with the right technology.



Emergency rentals



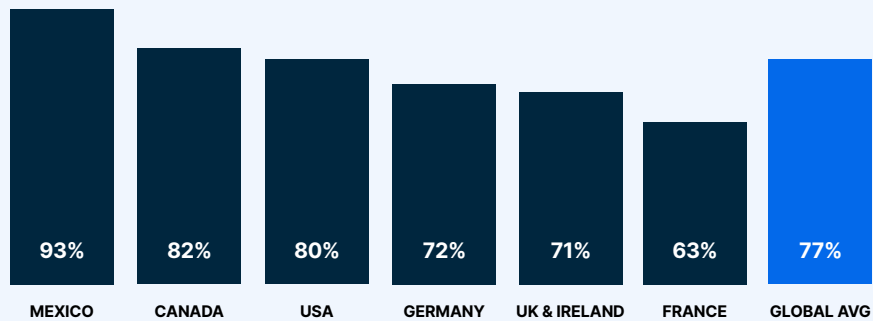
Project penalties



Idle labor

Asset invisibility leads to costly downtime

Percent of executives that say a missing critical asset caused a significant shutdown or delay in the last 12 months, by region



77%

Say a missing critical asset caused a significant shutdown or delay in the past 12 months

Visibility gaps lead to permanent loss

Without a tracking solution, you're stuck in a "visibility lag"—often not realizing an asset is gone until a project grinds to a halt.

This often leads to a frantic, time-consuming search that pulls your team away from their real work. Even if you find the asset, proving it's yours to the police is nearly impossible without a digital trail.

As a result, for those without an asset tracking solution, most lost and stolen equipment is never recovered.

25 days

Average time to locate a missing asset without tracking technology—if it is found at all

54%

Of those without tracking technology are unable to recover even half of stolen high-value equipment

The top-reported benefits of asset tracking



Less time spent searching

Nearly all (99.8%) report that asset tracking has positively impacted their operations, with most seeing a significant drop in time spent manually tracking or searching for missing items.



Quicker asset recovery

Organizations with asset trackers are 2x more likely to recover stolen assets in the first 5 days, and a majority report they can identify and respond to losses almost immediately.



Fewer project shutdowns

Most organizations with asset tracking report fewer project shutdowns and delays—driving a 76% reduction in average annual operational costs due to missing assets compared to those without.



Lower insurance premiums

Nearly a third (31%) have successfully lowered their insurance premiums by implementing asset tracking. It essentially pays for itself twice: first by preventing losses, and second by lowering the cost of insuring the assets you still have.

04

Do you know your true cost of asset loss?

Most operations leaders don't—and that's exactly the problem. Asset theft and loss are chronic, measurable, and largely preventable. But you can't fix what you can't quantify.

Ask yourself:

- ❑ **What is your annual shrinkage budget?** If you can't name a number, you likely don't have full visibility into what you're losing each year.
- ❑ **Are you confident that number captures both direct and indirect costs?** Replacement costs are the easy part. Emergency rentals, idle labor, project penalties, and administrative time are rarely tracked—and often dwarf the sticker price of the asset itself.
- ❑ **How long does it take your team to locate a missing asset?** The average for organizations without tracking technology is 25 days—if the asset is found at all.
- ❑ **What percentage of your stolen high-value equipment do you recover?** For organizations without asset tracking, most are unable to recover even half.
- ❑ **Do you have a digital record of your assets that would hold up with law enforcement?** Without one, proving ownership—and recovering what's yours—is nearly impossible.

Close the visibility gap: Tag it, find it, protect it with Samsara

Protect assets of any size from theft and loss with the Samsara Asset Gateway, Asset Tag, and Asset Tag XS—built for tough conditions and powered by Samsara's industry-leading network of millions of devices.

[Learn more](#)



Real asset recovery stories



\$1.3M

Recovered in single instance of theft

"The location data literally saved our department millions."

Pat Ross
Solid Waste Operations Manager

[Read case study](#)



\$400K

Worth of stolen assets recovered in less than one hour

"The Asset Tags are incredible. They're so small, you'd think they were just part of the motor or the wipers, not a tracking device."

Nitin Vermani
Operations Manager

[Read case study](#)



100%

Recovery rate for stolen equipment

"We had an asset stolen off the back of a pickup truck, and with Asset Tag, we recovered it in less than an hour."

Rich Poppoff
Equipment Superintendent

[Read case study](#)



\$120K

Saved in replacement costs of three forklifts

"Samsara Asset Tags are simple, reliable, and cost-effective. We've tried other solutions, but none have matched the performance or ease of use of Samsara."

Alek Javier
IT Project Manager

[Read case study](#)



\$100K

Saved by recovering a stolen excavator

"Implementing Asset Tags significantly increases the likelihood of recovering equipment in a short period, whereas previously, recovery was unlikely or nearly impossible."

Pat Ross,
Solid Waste Operations Manager

[Read case study](#)

Methodology

This survey was commissioned by Samsara and conducted by an independent research firm, Wakefield Research, between February 5 and February 17, 2026. This was a general market survey of 1,500 executives across seven countries: the United States, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Germany, and Canada. The majority of organizations surveyed are mid-size, reporting annual revenue between \$250 million and less than \$1 billion. Respondents are not necessarily Samsara customers and were surveyed online, in either the English language or translated into a local language across markets. Global results have been aggregated across all responses to provide an average.

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