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# **The Software Asset Manager's guide to building a successful SAM program**



# Why CIOs need SAM programs more than ever

In the past few years, organizations have accelerated their digital transformation efforts. And this growth shows no signs of slowing down.

According to IDC, **global spending on digital transformation will grow 16.3% annually for the next few years** to reach \$3.4 trillion in 2026.<sup>1</sup>

Digital transformation offers many benefits—from more efficient operations to better customer experiences. However, rapid digital growth can also lead to unchecked, unmanageable software environments.

Many IT leaders have a hodgepodge of commercial, open-source, and custom-developed applications spread across legacy and cloud environments. The introduction of AI technologies will make environments even more complex.

Meanwhile, shadow IT is on the rise. **Gartner reported that in 2022, 41% of employees acquired or created technology without notifying IT procurement.** This number is expected to climb to 75% by 2027.<sup>2</sup> While Shadow IT makes life easier for users, it increases risks and unbudgeted costs. Tracking and managing everything is challenging, especially if your IT team is busy keeping the lights on.



<sup>1</sup>IDC: [IDC Spending Guide Sees Worldwide Digital Transformation Investments Reaching \\$3.4 Trillion in 2026](#), 2022

<sup>2</sup>Gartner: [Gartner Unveils Top Eight Cybersecurity Predictions for 2023-2024](#), 2023



34% of CIOs lack visibility into and management of cloud costs.

SoftwareOne<sup>3</sup>



These complex landscapes can consume so many IT resources that they hinder your innovation instead of supporting it.

Software Asset Management (SAM) can help you gain visibility into your entire software environment so you can:

- Optimize your software licenses and costs.
- Minimize the risk of software audits.
- Enhance employee productivity and satisfaction by quickly providing the tools they need to do their jobs.
- Reduce IT management complexity by consolidating applications and eliminating duplicate software.
- Strengthen cybersecurity by addressing unpatched, unmanaged software.

In this playbook, you will discover how to build a SAM program from the ground up. If you already have a SAM program, you will learn strategies that can help you drive more value from it.



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## Challenges

# Why SAM programs fail

Getting a SAM program off the ground can feel overwhelming. It's hard to know where to start if you're faced with a chaotic software environment and lack a dedicated SAM team.

Decentralized teams can further complicate your SAM challenges. When teams work in silos, you'll lack insights into what software people are buying, how much it costs, and its risks. This lack of visibility can cause you to lose control over your assets—leading to inefficiencies, higher costs, audits, and security gaps.

You may also lack the technical infrastructure for an effective SAM program. If you don't have the right tools, it's hard to inventory and manage your assets. You may not know what software is installed, where it lives, and who is using it.

If you don't address your SAM data gaps, you may face the following risks:

- Productivity impacts, especially if it takes months for users to get the applications they need to do their jobs.
- Painful user experiences.
- Higher software licensing and management costs.
- Increased security vulnerabilities from unpatched or unknown software.
- More time and money spent on vendor audits.



1 in 4 organizations paid over \$2 million in software audits in the last 3 years.

Flexera<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup>Flexera: [State of ITAM Report](#), 2023



## How to succeed with SAM

# 7 keys to a successful SAM program



55% of organizations with a SAM program saved more than \$1 million in the past year, while 16% saved more than \$10 million.

Flexera<sup>4</sup>



Building a successful SAM program takes time, effort, and a well-defined strategy. But with the right approach, you can develop a program that meets your organization's needs in as little as 12 months.

**Focusing on these seven areas will help you lay the foundation for an effective SAM program that drives results over the long term:**

<sup>4</sup>Flexera: [State of ITAM Report](#), 2023

## Tip 1: Determine your organization's mission.

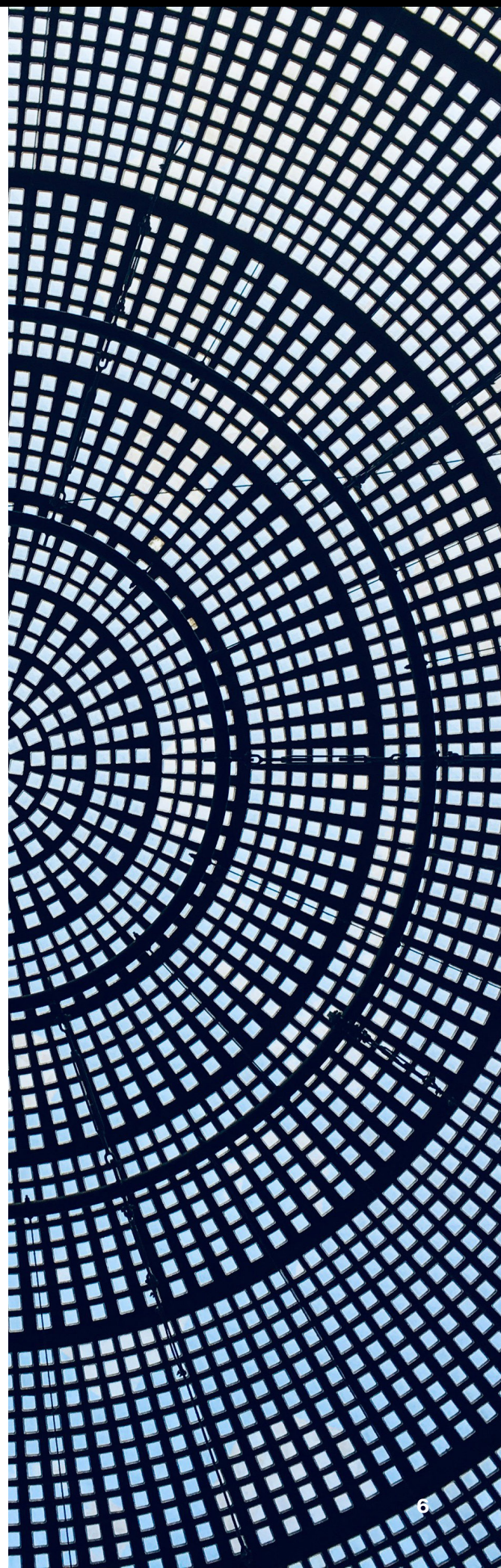
Before you get started, you need to know what your objectives are. These objectives cannot be designed in a silo. They have to be in alignment with what your company's objectives are.

For example, some organizations are high-growth, and they are not focused on cost-cutting. The SAM focus in such an organization would be on enabling and supporting this growth by removing obstacles and simplifying processes to deliver at the speed of growth. These goals require you to hasten new software requests—instead of delaying them to cut costs.

Managing software assets isn't enough. To make your program successful, you also need to understand your organization's mission so you can align your SAM efforts with it. By positioning your SAM program as a strategic enabler, you gain leadership support and buy-in.

Some organizations are under macroeconomic pressure to reduce costs. Effective Software Asset Management is known to drive savings and optimizations in an IT landscape known for ever-increasing costs.

Knowing the strategic objectives of the executive sponsors at the organizational level can help tailor your SAM value plan to meet your organizational needs and objectives.



## Tip 2: Understand how your organization works.

As you build a SAM program, it is essential to understand how your organization works. This knowledge will help you align your program with your organization's needs and goals.

Meet with stakeholders from IT finance, procurement, your service desk, and legal to learn about what they consider when acquiring new software. It would help if you also spoke with business users to discuss what they want from their software acquisition process. This knowledge will help you better serve business users while ensuring that all software purchases comply with your organization's legal and financial requirements.

You want to meet with all stakeholders that participate in acquiring software, know how they purchase software, who buys it, and what the approval process looks like.

You also need to understand:

- How software flows in your organization.
- Your policies around software purchasing and usage.
- The people who influence software purchases.

This information will help you identify gaps in your current procurement process so you can recommend improvements that will benefit everyone.

## Tip 3: Build an inventory of your hardware assets.

An effective SAM program is about more than software. You also need to understand the hardware that your applications run on. This is especially important for platforms such as ServiceNow where the underlying data feeds through the entire lifecycle of the IT asset process.

You cannot create a repository of all your software without a clear understanding of what hardware you have, where it is deployed and what tools are in place today to track hardware assets.

A clear and complete picture of your hardware assets and their configuration can also help you reduce your license costs. Many software licenses tie your costs to the number of cores in a processor or servers with software installed. Tracking your hardware helps you avoid paying for licenses you are not using. It can also minimize your audit risks by showing if you need more licenses.



## Tip 4: Discover your software.



You can't measure what you can't see, and you can't optimize what you can't measure.

SoftwareOne



Conduct a thorough review of your on-premises and cloud environments for software. Once you know where everything lives, you can start to track and manage it. You would quite likely need agents installed on every device to continue to track the status of each device in the environment.

Next, organize your software entitlements. You may find this data in your bookkeeping system or purchase records. If you can't locate this information in-house, you can ask your software vendors for an inventory of your historical purchases.

Software discovery will help you identify licensing issues. For example, you may find licenses assigned to people who are no longer with your organization. Insights like this are low-hanging fruit that can help you see immediate cost savings.

## Tip 5: Get clear on your audit risks.

Software audits are time-consuming and costly. Minimize your risks by determining which vendors are the most likely to audit you and focusing your SAM efforts on their software.

Quantifying the financial risk of a software audit can help you get buy-in for your SAM program. Senior leadership might be more open to SAM if they see a dollar number associated with an audit.

Your software reseller is an excellent resource on the estimated financial burden of a software audit. Since they work with other organizations like yours, they can give you a ballpark estimate of what a Microsoft, Oracle, Quest, IBM, or Adobe audit could cost. Gathering these costs is critical to measuring how much a software audit would impact your organization.



81% of organizations with SAM programs see moderate to significant savings on audit compliance. Meanwhile, 48% save significant time and effort on audit preparation.

Flexera<sup>4</sup>



## **Tip 6: Invest in a SAM tool, but...**

Some asset management teams think a SAM tool will solve all their problems. While tools are helpful, they can't replace a comprehensive SAM program.

You also need skilled personnel, well-defined processes, and a commitment to use your tool's capabilities to their fullest extent. When all these elements are in place, you will realize the full potential of your SAM program.

## **Tip 7: Build a business case for your SAM program.**

You can use the above steps to build a business case for a data-driven SAM program. By demonstrating the benefits of a SAM program and the potential for avoiding the high costs of software audits, you can secure the staff and tools you need to support your efforts.

## Jumpstart your SAM journey

Working with SoftwareOne can help you reduce your SAM costs and compliance risks. Our experts complete over 4,000 SAM projects per year. We can provide all the resources you need to build your SAM business case and achieve your long-term ITAM goals.

**[Book a SAM discovery call now](#) to learn how you can save 30% on your software costs.**

## Learn more

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