



# THE TOP 5 CHALLENGES FACING FLEET OPERATORS AND HOW TO NAVIGATE THEM



Discover the five challenges putting pressure on today's fleets and the practical strategies you can use to simplify operations, strengthen performance, and protect your bottom line.



Fleet management has become more complex in recent years. It now touches virtually all aspects of business operations and current trends including inflation, supply chain challenges, regulatory pressures, and workforce shifts continue to reshape how fleets operate. The good news? Most issues trace back to common challenges that can be managed with the right strategy. When you address the root cause proactively, you can reduce complexity, control costs, and improve business performance.

Here are five of the most common challenges fleets face today, and practical ways to navigate them.

## Challenge 1: Rising Maintenance Costs & Aging Assets

Inflation has driven up the price of parts and labor, supply chain disruptions have made key components harder to source, and staffing shortages mean fewer technicians are available to complete repairs — all of which push maintenance costs higher than ever. Meanwhile, delayed replacements mean vehicles are staying in service far longer than intended. The result is a compounding cycle: more component failures, more shop visits, more downtime.

Older vehicles quietly absorb time, money, and operational attention. Left unchecked, they weigh down overall fleet performance.

### Ways to Navigate this Challenge:

- **Lifecycle Planning:** Implement proactive replacement strategies based on asset age and utilization rather than reactive breakdowns.
- **Leverage Analytics:** Rank vehicles by cost-to-value ratio to guide smarter replace-or-repair decisions.
- **Preventive Maintenance Compliance:** Align preventive maintenance schedules with OEM guidelines and work closely with fleet personnel to adhere to these parameters.
- **Rightsizing & Utilization Studies:** Reassess fleet mix and usage to eliminate underutilized vehicles without compromising operations.
- **Optimize Resale Timing:** Adjust vehicle cycling to align disposal to ideal market conditions to maximize resale value and lower total cost of ownership.

When lifecycle planning is rooted in data, you stop aging assets from becoming silent budget drains and elevate maintenance into a strategic advantage rather than a chore.

## Challenge 2:

### Constrained Capital & Tough Budget Decisions

When budgets are limited, replacement decisions get pushed into the future, but the costs don't wait. Every postponed replacement compounds wear-and-tear, raises maintenance spend, and increases the operational risk your fleet carries day to day.

#### Ways to Navigate this Challenge:

- **Depreciation Schedules:** Reevaluate depreciation schedules and potential equity positions to understand where reinvestment flexibility exists.
- **Replacement Prioritization:** Prioritize vehicle replacements using age, mileage, downtime, and maintenance spend data to guide your decisions.
- **Fleet Equity:** Identify equity in leased or owned assets, including non-traditional assets, such as forklifts or heavy-duty equipment, to unlock cash for reinvestment.

By prioritizing capital planning, you optimize your replacement cycle, ensuring your most critical and cost-intensive units are addressed first while staying within budget.

## Challenge 3:

### Fleet Strategy That Isn't Aligned With Business Goals

Your fleet becomes a true business asset when your fleet strategy moves in sync with operations. Without strategic alignment, operators struggle to control costs, maintain customer expectations, and support long-term business goals.

#### Ways to Navigate this Challenge:

- **Fleet Road-Mapping:** Develop multi-year plans that tie fleet actions directly to business KPIs such as cost reduction, new business development, service delivery, sustainability, or employee safety.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Involve finance, procurement, operations, human resources and other fleet stakeholders in key decisions.
- **Narrative Building:** Clearly articulate how fleet investments support broader organizational goals.

With strategy and operations in sync, your fleet is positioned to make a meaningful impact on business success.

## Challenge 4: Disconnect Between Fleet Performance & Employee Experience

Your vehicles shape the daily experience of the people who rely on them. When assets are unreliable, outdated, or poorly equipped, morale and productivity drop, especially for frontline teams.

### Ways to Navigate this Challenge:

- **Fleet Experience Audits:** Evaluate how vehicle availability, reliability, and comfort affect employee morale and productivity.
- **Fleet-Brand Alignment:** Ensure vehicle quality reflects brand standards and customer expectations.
- **Executive Engagement:** Frame fleet investments as enablers of industry leadership, competitive advantage, efficiency, and innovation.

When employees are supported by reliable equipment that delivers a pleasant experience, performance rises across the board.

## Challenge 5: Inconsistent Program Utilization & Data Gaps

Fuel, maintenance, and safety programs deliver the most value when used consistently. Many fleets still have spend or activity occurring outside the parameters of these programs, creating blind spots, compliance gaps, and missed savings opportunities.

If you can't monitor and measure the data, you can't manage fleet performance.

### Ways to Navigate this Challenge:

- **Identify Gaps:** Use utilization metrics to understand where programs are being bypassed, such as unauthorized fuel or maintenance purchases.
- **Educate:** Address communication gaps and reinforce expectations through policy, field communication, and mobile tools.
- **Track:** Partner with a fleet management company to build tracking methods that quantify the cost of non-compliance and highlight areas for immediate savings.

With better visibility, you can drive better decisions and results.

## Where to Go From Here

Improving fleet performance doesn't always require dramatic change. Often, it begins with understanding your biggest pain points and tackling them systematically.

If you're unsure where to begin or feel overwhelmed, partnering with a fleet management provider such as Holman that leverages data, technology, and its industry expertise to support your fleet operations can be a game changer. The right partner will understand your objectives and build a strategy that boosts performance and supports long-term growth.

