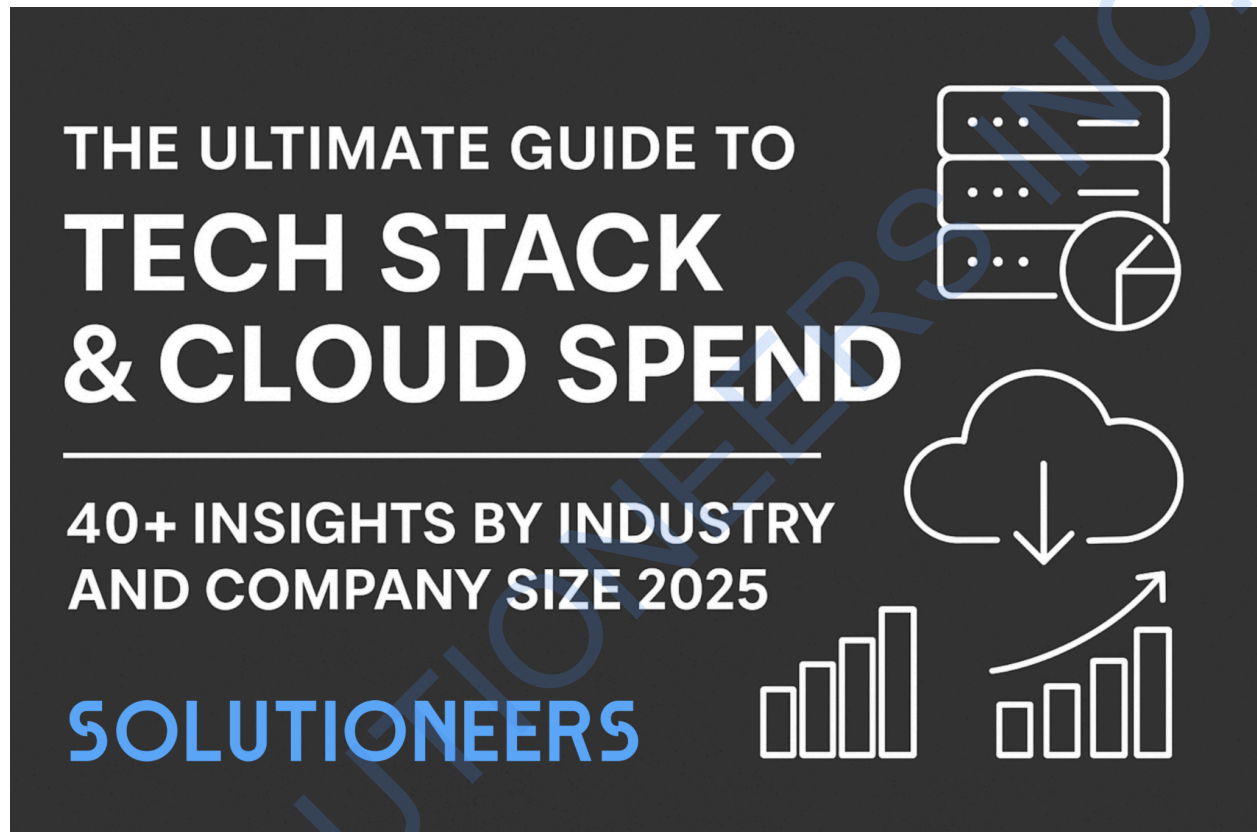


The Ultimate Guide to Tech Stack & Cloud Spend: 40+ Insights by Industry and Company Size [2025]



Every business runs on software—but most have no idea how much it's costing them.

As tools proliferate, teams grow, and cloud infrastructure scales without oversight, the average company finds itself spending millions on underutilized tech. According to recent reports, up to 30% of SaaS licenses go unused, and cloud waste across industries exceeds \$17 billion annually.

What's worse? Leaders don't know where it's happening.

This guide breaks down tech stack and cloud spend benchmarks by industry and company size, helping you identify if your business is operating efficiently—or bleeding budget through the cracks. Whether you're in SaaS, retail, construction, or healthcare, this listicle is your one-stop resource to benchmark your software and cloud costs, uncover savings, and optimize spend.

Section 1: Why Tech & Cloud Spend Is a Hidden Threat

Today's businesses rely more on technology than ever before, but with that reliance comes an often-overlooked cost: waste. Whether it's unused licenses, redundant tools, or underutilized cloud infrastructure, these hidden costs silently erode profitability. Despite increasing pressure to optimize budgets, many companies continue to overspend because they lack the visibility or processes to uncover these inefficiencies.

Here are some eye-opening stats that reveal the scale of the problem:

- Up to 30% of SaaS licenses go unused. These are often the result of overprovisioned accounts, employee turnover, or tools that never gained traction.
- The average company uses 130+ SaaS apps. With so many tools in play, managing them becomes increasingly complex, and duplication is almost guaranteed.
- Cloud waste accounts for more than 20% of cloud bills. This includes idle compute instances, unused storage volumes, and zombie workloads that continue to rack up costs.
- Tech budgets are growing, even in economic downturns. While other departments cut back, IT spend continues to rise as businesses prioritize digital transformation—but not always efficiently.
- Many companies pay for overlapping tools unknowingly. With different departments purchasing software independently, redundancies across teams and regions are common.

Most businesses lack a structured audit process that integrates IT, finance, and procurement perspectives. Finance teams may know the total spend, but they often lack the details on which tools are being used, by whom, and how effectively. Meanwhile, department leads may continue buying new solutions to solve localized problems without understanding the broader tech ecosystem. This misalignment leads to inefficiency, poor ROI, and persistent budget bloat that is difficult to control without intentional oversight.

Section 2: Tech Stack Spend Benchmarks by Industry

Understanding how tech stack spending varies by industry is critical for evaluating your own organization's efficiency. Some industries, like SaaS and healthcare, are more tech-reliant, while others—such as construction or manufacturing—are rapidly increasing their digital spend. In each case, knowing the average spend and common inefficiencies provides a starting point for optimization.

1. SaaS Companies

SaaS businesses are built on software—both as a product and as a means to run internal operations. These companies often invest heavily in best-in-class tools for sales, marketing, development, and analytics. However, due to the fast-moving nature of the industry, tools are often adopted before a clear procurement or usage plan is in place, leading to waste and redundancy.

- Average SaaS spend per employee: \$5,000–\$10,000/year
- Common tools: CRM (Salesforce, HubSpot), Analytics (Mixpanel, Amplitude), DevOps (Jira, GitHub)
- Typical waste: Redundant testing environments, forgotten sandbox tools, overlapping cloud infra

2. Retail Companies

Retailers increasingly rely on digital infrastructure to manage inventory, streamline e-commerce operations, and deliver personalized customer experiences. As retail tech stacks grow more sophisticated, so does the risk of tool duplication and low utilization—particularly during non-peak seasons or across distributed store networks.

- SaaS spend per employee: \$1,500–\$4,000/year
- Key tools: E-commerce platforms, POS, inventory & supply chain management
- Common waste: Legacy platforms still live, duplicate tools across brands, unused seasonal tools

3. Construction Firms

Historically slow to adopt digital tools, the construction industry is now embracing cloud-based platforms to manage everything from on-site coordination to project scheduling. However, many firms struggle with implementation and adoption—particularly among field teams—which results in licenses going unused and investments falling flat.

- Tech spend per employee: \$1,500–\$3,500/year, depending on project size and digital maturity
- Tech spend as % of revenue: 1.5%–3%, rising with digital adoption
- Tools: Procore, Bluebeam, Autodesk, scheduling apps, drone imagery
- Inefficiencies: Licenses not provisioned to field teams, outdated CAD software, rarely used PM apps

4. Manufacturing

Manufacturers are deploying smart factory tools, ERP systems, and IoT platforms at scale. While these technologies can boost efficiency and quality control, the complexity of managing overlapping systems often leads to duplication, unused data platforms, and disconnected workflows that hinder performance.

- SaaS/cloud spend per employee: \$2,000–\$6,000/year
- Common tools: ERP, IoT platforms, supply chain and quality management
- Waste drivers: Redundant tracking systems, unused production data tools, overlapping MES solutions

5. Logistics & Transportation

With a heavy dependency on real-time data, logistics companies invest substantially in route planning, fleet tracking, and warehouse automation. The challenge lies in integrating these systems across regions and business units. Many organizations end up with parallel tools serving the same purpose, racking up unnecessary costs.

- SaaS/cloud spend per employee: \$2,500–\$7,000/year
- Cloud infra share of IT budget: 30–40%
- Key platforms: TMS, fleet tracking, route optimization, warehouse systems
- Overspend: Parallel tracking solutions across geographies, non-integrated systems, custom build cost overruns

6. Healthcare & Life Sciences

In highly regulated environments, healthcare and life sciences organizations prioritize compliance, security, and patient engagement. This leads to a high spend on specialized platforms. However, the complexity of integration, combined with long procurement cycles, often results in shelfware, outdated compliance tools, and security overlaps.

- SaaS spend per employee: \$3,000–\$8,000/year
- Tools: EMR/EHR, compliance software, patient engagement tools
- Inefficiencies: Overlapping security platforms, underused telehealth licenses, legacy compliance software

7. Education

Educational institutions—from K-12 to higher ed—leverage digital platforms to deliver instruction, track student progress, and manage operations. These tools are often funded through grants or subscriptions but rarely undergo regular reviews. Over time, departments accumulate overlapping platforms, driving up costs without improving outcomes.

- Spend per user: \$1,000–\$3,000/year, often grant-funded
- Platforms: LMS, student management, curriculum tools, collaboration platforms
- Common bloat: One-time tools never retired, subscription duplication by department, unmanaged freemium-to-paid upgrades

Section 3: Cloud Spend Benchmarks by Company Size

Company size is one of the biggest factors impacting SaaS and cloud spend. As headcount grows, so do the number of tools, users, and contracts. But larger size doesn't always equal smarter spend. Smaller companies may be agile but lack formal procurement processes, while larger enterprises often wrestle with tool sprawl, decentralized purchasing, and regional duplications.

Understanding how spend scales with company size helps pinpoint where inefficiencies are likely to creep in. From startups to global enterprises, these benchmarks offer a reality check on your technology investments.

1. Companies with <50 Employees

Smaller companies, especially startups, often adopt software quickly to support rapid growth and agility. However, these organizations typically lack formal procurement processes or dedicated IT oversight. This results in inconsistent license management, overlapping tool functions, and underused software as teams focus more on growth than optimization. Despite spending less overall, these companies often experience a higher percentage of waste relative to their budget.

- Average SaaS spend: \$50k–\$250k/year
- Common traits: Highly variable based on funding stage, often low optimization, informal purchasing habits

2. Companies with 50–250 Employees

As companies transition from startup to scale-up, they often expand their toolset to accommodate growing departments and more complex workflows. However, procurement processes may still be maturing, leading to issues like duplicate subscriptions across teams, poor contract negotiation, and missed renewal dates. This group tends to accumulate technology debt as teams adopt tools independently without centralized governance.

- SaaS + Cloud spend: \$250k–\$1M/year
- Risk areas: Rapid app adoption, limited procurement oversight, poor renewal management, inconsistent contract terms

3. Companies with 250–1,000 Employees

At this stage, companies are scaling fast but often outpace their internal processes. IT and procurement teams may not always align on contract terms, renewal schedules, or software selection criteria, leading to inefficiencies. Rapid headcount growth frequently results in overprovisioned licenses or multiple teams independently purchasing similar tools. Without centralized oversight, inconsistent contract terms, duplicated functionality, and scattered tool

adoption become common challenges. These inefficiencies can significantly erode ROI on software and infrastructure investments.

- Annual spend: \$1M–\$3M/year
- Red flags: Multiple instances of the same tool, growing infrastructure without scaling controls

4. Companies with 1,000–5,000 Employees

Organizations of this size face complex technology environments with multiple departments, regions, and sometimes business units procuring software independently. This decentralization often leads to tool fragmentation—where different regions or departments use separate tools for the same functions—and inconsistent license usage tracking. Contract terms and renewal cycles can vary widely, making it difficult to manage and optimize spend effectively.

- SaaS/cloud spend: \$3M–\$10M+/year
- Problem zones: Decentralized purchasing, regional tool fragmentation, inconsistent license usage, varied contract structures

5. Enterprises (5,000+ Employees)

Large enterprises manage some of the most complex and costly technology ecosystems, spanning thousands of tools, integrations, and global teams. These organizations often face challenges related to legacy vendor lock-in, where older systems are too costly or complex to replace, leading to continued spend on outdated tools. Additionally, sprawling internal tooling and overlapping functionality across departments can lead to millions in wasted spend annually.

- Spend: \$10M–\$50M+ depending on sector
- Efficiency challenges: Complex integrations, legacy vendor lock-in, sprawling internal tooling, overlapping functionality across business units

Section 4: Powerful Tips to Cut Tech Stack Waste

Now that you've seen what typical spend looks like by industry and company size, it's time to take action. Managing tech stack and cloud costs isn't just about cutting expenses—it's about optimizing for growth, ensuring every tool serves a purpose, and driving ROI from your technology investments.

The following strategies are designed to help businesses of all sizes and industries streamline their tech environments, improve visibility, and recover wasted spend. Whether you're a startup scaling fast or an enterprise with complex systems, these tips offer practical steps to stay lean and efficient.

1. Conduct a quarterly tech stack audit

Regular audits help maintain visibility into your toolset and ensure you are only paying for what you use. Quarterly reviews allow businesses to identify redundant tools, underutilized licenses, and misaligned subscriptions before renewals lock them into another year of unnecessary spend.

2. Centralize procurement and renewals

By consolidating software purchasing and renewal management under one team, businesses can negotiate better contract terms, avoid duplicate subscriptions, and manage license usage more effectively. Centralized oversight reduces risk and provides a holistic view of technology spend.

3. Use role-based provisioning and license deactivation

Implementing role-based access ensures that only employees who need certain tools have access to them. This minimizes license waste and simplifies deactivation when roles change or employees leave the organization.

4. Eliminate shelfware from implementation backlogs

Shelfware refers to software that has been purchased but never fully implemented or adopted. Regularly reviewing backlogs for these tools and either pushing for adoption or canceling unused licenses can save significant costs.

5. Consolidate duplicate tools across departments

Departments often procure their own tools independently, leading to multiple solutions performing similar functions across an organization. Consolidating these tools into one standard platform reduces costs and improves collaboration and data consistency.

6. Align SaaS contracts with usage-based pricing models

Shift from fixed-license models to usage-based pricing where feasible. This approach ensures that spend correlates with actual consumption, reducing waste from overprovisioned licenses.

7. Monitor logins and active user data monthly

Tracking login activity and usage patterns provides insight into which tools are actively being used and which licenses may be redundant. Monthly reviews help identify opportunities to scale back licenses or reassign them to more active users.

8. Automate license reviews using usage tracking tools

Leverage software asset management (SAM) platforms or built-in usage tracking features to automate the review process. These tools provide real-time insights into utilization rates, helping you make informed decisions without manual effort.

9. Create a “sunset plan” for tools with overlap

Developing a phased plan to retire redundant tools ensures a smooth transition without disrupting workflows. Sunset plans include timelines, data migration strategies, and stakeholder communication, reducing resistance and ensuring alignment.

10. Tie software KPIs to business outcomes

Ensure that every tool in your tech stack is tied to a measurable business objective. Regularly evaluate whether software is contributing to these outcomes—if not, reconsider its place in your stack.

11. Assign tool owners for accountability

Designate a responsible owner for each major tool or platform. This person oversees usage, adoption, license management, and alignment with business goals, ensuring accountability and minimizing waste.

12. Audit cloud environments for idle instances and zombie workloads

Cloud environments often harbor idle virtual machines, storage volumes, and unused compute instances—referred to as zombie workloads. Regularly auditing your cloud setup can uncover these hidden costs and allow you to shut down or right-size these resources.

13. Benchmark spend against industry and size standards (like this guide!)

Regularly compare your tech and cloud spend to industry benchmarks based on your company size and sector. This helps you identify whether you are overspending and provides context for conversations with leadership and vendors.

Final Thoughts: Don't Let Your Tech Stack Drain Your Budget

If Rocket Money can help a household save a few hundred dollars a year on unused subscriptions, imagine the scale of waste in your company's tech stack. Whether you're managing 20 tools or 200, inefficiencies are hiding in plain sight.

StackIQ by Solutioneers was built to solve this problem. We audit, rationalize, and optimize tech stacks with data-driven insights and a performance-based pricing model: if we don't find savings, you don't pay.

Ready to uncover your hidden tech spend? Schedule a demo or try our Savings Calculator today.

Keep this page bookmarked—we'll update it annually with the latest spend data, benchmarks, and tips to help your business stay lean and efficient.

Questions? Email us directly at info@gosolutioneers.com