

Snowflake Cost Governance: The 90-Day Action Plan

A week-by-week framework for data engineering leaders to move from reactive cost monitoring to verified, documented savings — without a large team.

DESIGNED FOR

DATA ENGINEERING LEADS

FINOPS MANAGERS

PLATFORM ARCHITECTS

CTOS & VP DATA

90-DAY ROADMAP

DAYS 1-30

Establish Visibility

Audit, instrument, and baseline your Snowflake environment

DAYS 31-60

Assign Accountability

Map workloads to owners and set governance policies

DAYS 61-90

Prove the Value

Close optimization loops and document verified savings

23-40%

Average Snowflake credit reduction achieved by engineering teams that complete all 3 phases of this plan

Based on platform data from Anavsan customers that implemented formal governance workflows.

BEFORE YOU START

The Trap Most Teams Fall Into

The majority of Snowflake cost programs achieve good visibility and very little savings. Here's why — and how this 90-day plan is structured to close that gap.

Most engineering teams start a Snowflake cost initiative the same way: they build dashboards, set up alerting, and generate weekly reports showing which warehouses consumed the most credits.

This is useful. But it is only the beginning. **Visibility without resolution is documentation — not governance.**

The teams that consistently control Snowflake spend share one characteristic that sets them apart: they have closed the loop between *identifying* a problem and *proving it was fixed*. Everything between those two points is where most programs silently fail.

THE VISIBILITY TRAP

Organizations that invest in monitoring without investing in accountability workflows often find themselves producing better and better reports about the same persistent problems.

WHAT THIS PLAN SOLVES

This 90-day plan gives you the specific steps, week by week, to build a complete governance cycle — from detection through verified resolution — with a realistic scope for an engineering team of any size.

COMMON FAILURE PATTERNS

● Dashboards without owners

Cost data is visible to everyone, assigned to no one. Anomalies are noticed but never acted on systematically.

● Recommendations without tracking

Optimization ideas are generated in reviews but never tracked to completion. The same suggestions recur quarterly.

● Savings without proof

Engineers optimize workloads but cannot demonstrate credit impact to finance. Trust in the program erodes.

● Alerts without escalation policies

Cost spike notifications fire, but there is no defined workflow for who responds, how quickly, or how the outcome is validated.

○ Orphaned workloads

Engineers leave or change teams. Expensive pipelines run indefinitely because no one knows who is accountable for them.

PREREQUISITES FOR THIS PLAN

- ✓ Snowflake account with ACCOUNTADMIN or SYSADMIN access
- ✓ At least 60 days of query history available
- ✓ Designated DRI (Directly Responsible Individual) for cost governance
- ✓ Finance or leadership stakeholder for savings reporting

01

DAYS 1-30

Establish Visibility

*Goal: Know exactly where every dollar is going before spending effort on optimization*WEEKS
1-2**Baseline Audit — Query the data you already have**

- Run top-50 queries by credits consumed (last 30d)
- Identify warehouses with >70% idle time
- List all warehouses and their AUTO_SUSPEND settings
- Export query patterns by user and application
- Find queries with zero cache hit rate
- Audit Time Travel retention periods by table size

WEEKS 3-4

Instrument & Tag — Make costs attributable

- Tag all warehouses with team and workload owner
- Implement QUERY_TAG standard for BI and ETL jobs
- Set up budget alerts for top-5 warehouse groups
- Create a cost baseline dashboard with weekly deltas
- Document all scheduled jobs and their warehouse bindings
- Identify workloads with no owner tag (orphan list)

PHASE 1 SUCCESS METRIC

By Day 30, you can answer: **"Who is responsible for each of our top 20 credit-consuming workloads?"** If you cannot, extend this phase before proceeding.

KEY QUERIES TO RUN — WEEK 1

```
-- TOP 20 WAREHOUSES BY CREDITS (LAST 30D)

SELECT WAREHOUSE_NAME,
       SUM(CREDITS_USED) AS credits,
       ROUND(AVG(AVG_RUNNING),1) avg_run
FROM SNOWFLAKE.ACCOUNT_USAGE
     .WAREHOUSE_METERING_HISTORY
WHERE START_TIME >= DATEADD('day',-30,NOW())
GROUP BY 1 ORDER BY 2 DESC LIMIT 20;
```

METRIC TO ESTABLISH**TARGET BASELINE****STATUS**

Cache hit rate	> 40% for BI queries	□ Measure
Idle warehouse time	< 30% per warehouse	□ Measure
Orphaned workloads	0 unowned workloads	□ Audit
AUTO_SUSPEND	≤ 60s on all warehouses	□ Verify
Budget alerts	Alert on 80% of budget	□ Configure

COMMON DISCOVERY

Most teams find 3-5 warehouses consuming 60%+ of credits, and at least 30% of workloads lack a tagged owner. This is normal — and fixable.

02

DAYS 31-60

Assign Accountability

Goal: Every workload has a named owner and a clear path to resolution when issues arise

WEEKS 5-6

Build the Workload Ownership Registry

- Create ownership table in your data catalog or sheet
- Map every warehouse to a team and DRI
- Assign owners to all orphaned workloads found in Phase 1
- Establish SLA tiers: P0 (24h), P1 (3d), P2 (14d)
- Define escalation path when DRI doesn't respond
- Publish registry to all engineering leads

WEEKS 7-8

Route Anomalies — Not Just to Channels, to People

- Configure alerts to fire to specific owners, not #data-platform
- Set up weekly cost digest per team (not one shared report)
- Create a ticketing flow for optimization recommendations
- Establish monthly accountability review cadence
- Add cost KPIs to team OKRs or sprint planning
- Train each team DRI on reading their cost digest

⚠ THE HARDEST PART OF PHASE 2

Getting ownership assignments done is organizational work, not technical work. The most common blocker is a missing escalation path — define who overrides disagreements on ownership before conflicts arise.

OWNERSHIP REGISTRY — MINIMUM REQUIRED FIELDS

FIELD	EXAMPLE	REQUIRED
Warehouse / Workload	ETL_PROD_WH	Yes
Primary Owner	jane@company.com	Yes
Owning Team	Data Engineering	Yes
Business Purpose	dbt prod transforms	Yes
SLA Tier	P1 (resolve in 3d)	Yes
Secondary Owner	mark@company.com	Recommended
Last Reviewed	2026-06-01	Recommended

ESCALATION POLICY TEMPLATE

- Day 0:** Anomaly detected → alert sent to DRI via Slack / email
- Day +2:** No acknowledgment → auto-escalate to team lead
- Day +4:** No resolution plan → escalate to engineering director
- Day +7:** Still open → add to weekly cost governance review agenda

PHASE 2 SUCCESS METRIC

By Day 60: **100% of your top-20 workloads have a named owner** and at least 3 cost issues have been routed through the formal ownership workflow and resolved.

03

DAYS 61–90

Prove the Value

Goal: Present finance and leadership with documented, verifiable savings — and prevent regression

WEEKS
9–10

Close the Loop — Measure and Document Each Fix

- For each resolved issue: compare credits before vs. after (same weekday, same time window)
- Record: Workload, Owner, Fix applied, Credit delta, Date verified
- Build a "Savings Ledger" spreadsheet or dashboard
- Confirm fixes held for 2 full weeks (regression check)
- Identify top 5 remaining opportunities for Q2
- Calculate annualized savings projection for leadership

WEEKS
11–12

Build the Governance Rhythm — Make This Permanent

- Publish 90-day savings report to finance + CTO
- Set up monthly governance review cadence
- Schedule quarterly ownership registry refresh
- Automate anomaly-to-owner routing where possible
- Add governance metrics to engineering team KPIs
- Plan Phase 2 of governance: Storage + Cortex AI cost control

✓ WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE AT DAY 90

You can walk into a finance review and show: **(1)** which workloads were optimized, **(2)** who resolved them, **(3)** how many credits were saved, and **(4)** that the savings held.

SAVINGS DOCUMENTATION TEMPLATE

WORKLOAD	ISSUE	CREDITS SAVED/MO	STATUS
ANALYTICS_WH	Oversized (XL→M)	≈ 840 credits	Verified ✓
dbt_PROD	AUTO_SUSPEND 10m→1m	≈ 320 credits	Verified ✓
RPT_BI_WH	Cache miss — fixed date param	≈ 210 credits	In Progress
ML_SCORING	Full scan (clustering key)	TBD	Open

90-DAY OUTCOMES CHECKLIST

- ✓ Baseline cost report with per-team attribution established
- ✓ All top-20 workloads have named DRI owners
- ✓ Anomaly-to-owner routing workflow in place
- ✓ At least 5 optimizations completed with verified credit delta
- ✓ Savings report delivered to finance / leadership
- Monthly governance review cadence scheduled
- Quarterly ownership registry refresh scheduled

BENCHMARK

Teams that complete all three phases typically reduce their Snowflake bill by **23–40%** within the first 90 days while improving engineering team confidence in cost ownership.

Ready to run this plan on autopilot?

23–40%
credit reduction in 90 days

APEX automates every phase of this 90-day plan: continuous anomaly detection, automatic ownership routing, remediation tracking, and verified savings documentation — all in a single platform that connects to your Snowflake account in minutes.

MOST POPULAR

Book a Live Demo

See APEX run the full 4-stage governance cycle on your actual Snowflake data in 30 minutes.

[Book Demo →](#)

FREE · 5 MINUTES

Accountability Score

Benchmark your team against the 5-stage governance maturity model and get a prioritized action plan.

[Take Assessment →](#)

SELF-SERVE

Start Free Trial

Connect your Snowflake account and see APEX identify your first accountability gap in under 15 minutes.

[Start Free →](#)

WHAT APEX AUTOMATES FROM THIS GUIDE

PHASE 1

Continuous Audit

ML-based anomaly detection replaces manual weekly queries

PHASE 2

Auto Ownership

Issues auto-routed to the accountable engineer — no manual triage

PHASE 3A

Resolution Tracking

Tickets track status from open to verified with SLA enforcement

PHASE 3B

Savings Proof

Before/after credit delta reports generated automatically