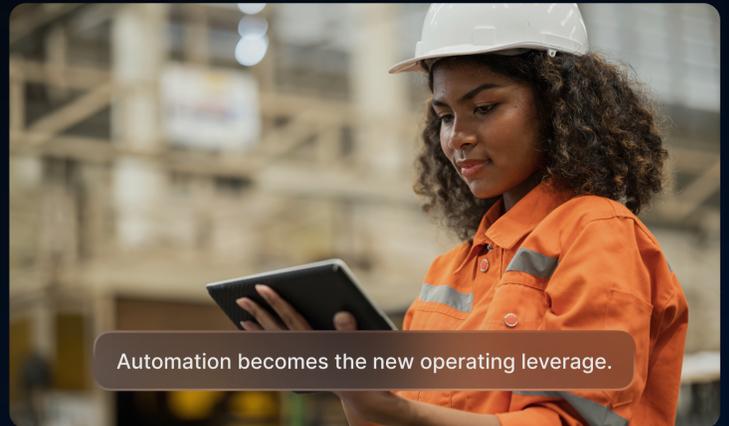
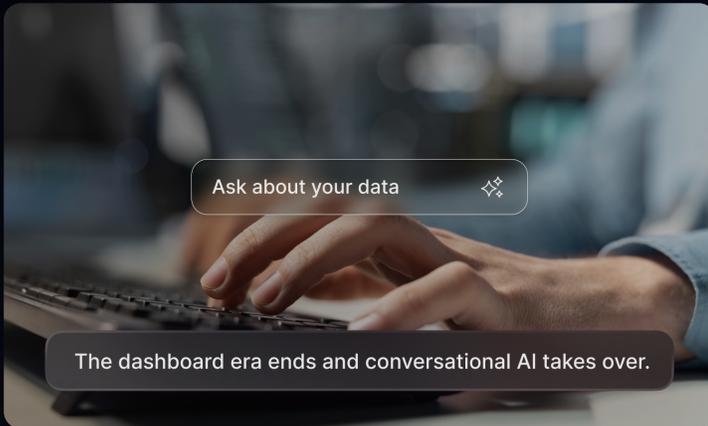
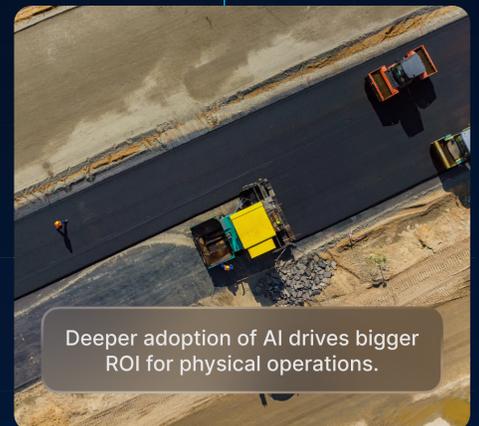
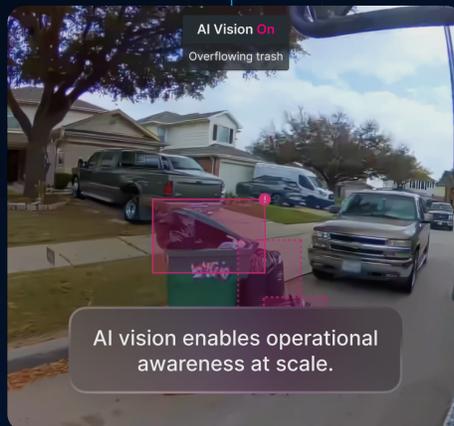


2026

Guide to AI in Fleet Management.



AI Guide



Introduction



Where the last couple of years [exploded with rapid AI development](#), in 2026, the rubber meets the road. Technological developments must evolve into products that hold up in real operations. Leaders aren't chasing the next breakthrough. They're demanding AI that performs consistently in the field, at scale, and under pressure.

The next wave of AI innovation is being shaped by automation, AI agents, and copilots that help organizations achieve more accurate outcomes, faster. AI isn't just surfacing data or generating alerts. It's prioritizing what matters, guiding the next best decision, and continuously learning so every operation gets sharper over time.

AI is moving beyond insight to action, enabling leaders to stop reacting to yesterday's problems, start operating with better visibility, and adopt a more proactive mindset. In this guide, we'll break down what that shift looks like across safety, operations, and finance — and what it signals for the year in physical operations as organizations strive to become safer, more productive, and more profitable.

When AI is applied in the moments that carry the most risk and cost — [preventing accidents](#), [reducing litigation](#), and turning efficiency gains into [tangible financial results](#) — the impact shows up quickly and clearly.

AI becomes foundational to executive-level leadership

A year ago, AI in fleet management and job site operations was funded by COOs and CFOs from their core operations budgets, and [that's still true](#). The difference now is that organizations are [hiring senior leaders specifically to manage data and AI](#).



AI is on every leader's mind. For every initiative we talk about, we inevitably ask, 'Can AI help with that?' Across the world right now, everybody is saying, 'We have this problem. How can we solve it with AI?'"

Praveen Boppana

Chief Information Officer at Bennett Family of Companies

That mindset is driving real excitement and investment. Ideas tied to AI are more likely to gain momentum internally — but only if they move the needle. And as AI becomes more deeply embedded in core operations, companies are realizing that strong governance and clear guidelines are just as critical as the technology itself, especially when it comes to protecting sensitive business data.

"AI can't be used just for the sake of using it," cautioned Praveen Boppana, Chief Information Officer for logistics and transportation provider the Bennett Family of Companies. "It has to translate into outcomes, whether that's productivity, business growth, bottom-line impact, or other measurable value. The real work is evaluating where AI fits, then turning it into something that can be implemented."

With so much demand, AI could contribute up to [\\$15.7 trillion](#) to the global economy by 2030, nearly equal to China's [current output](#) alone. And the biggest gains will go to organizations that apply AI to high-cost, high-consequence operations — not just knowledge work.

[Motive's Physical Economy Outlook](#) shows a growing consensus across physical operations.

76%

of physical operations leaders want AI-powered visibility across their businesses.

74%

say AI is critical to cutting costs and increasing efficiency.

73%

agree that AI-powered dash cams make roads safer.

71%

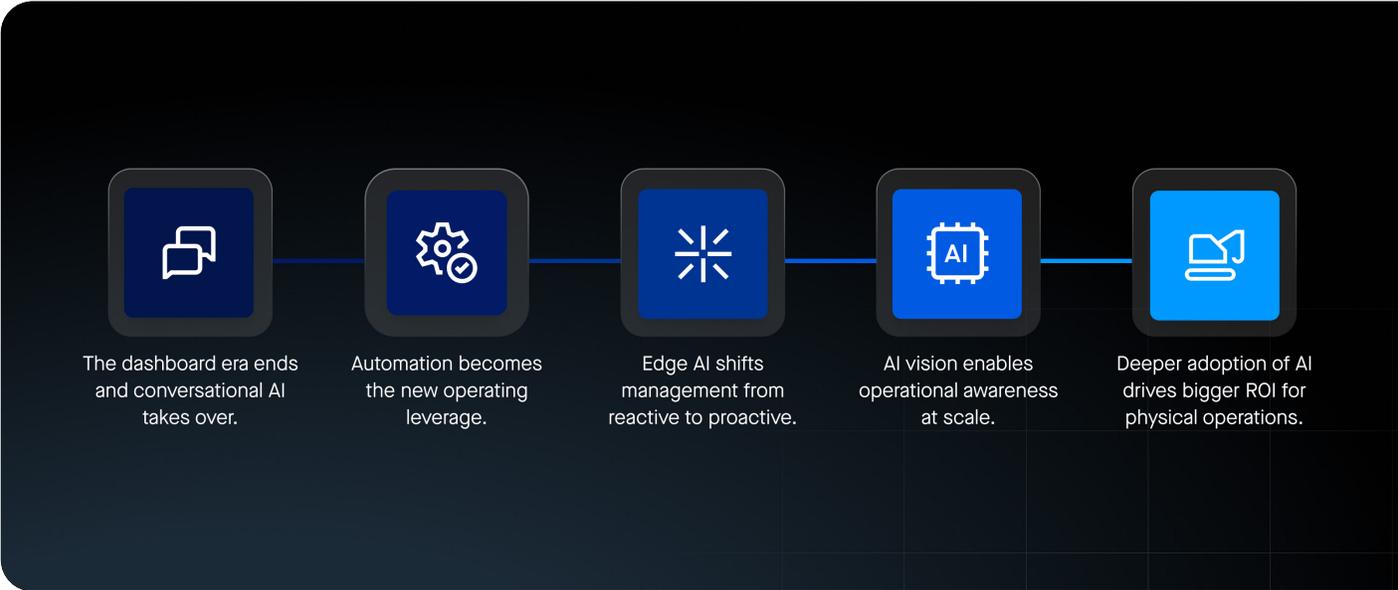
are integrating generative AI into daily operations.



Through automation and AI, 2026 will bring more of what fleets need most — less manual work, more proactive intervention, and capabilities that give leaders complete control where it counts.”

Michael Benisch
Vice President, Artificial Intelligence at Motive

The 5 AI trends shaping fleet management in 2026



TREND 1

The dashboard era ends and conversational AI takes over.
Conversational AI is turning fleet data into instant, plain-language answers — so leaders can move faster without living in dashboards and relying on data analysts.

TREND 2

Automation becomes the new operating leverage.
AI shifts physical operations beyond insights into automation that reduces manual work, saves valuable time, and drives faster, more consistent execution at scale.

TREND 3

Edge AI shifts management from reactive to proactive.
Edge AI will make prevention the baseline — shifting operations from after-the-fact review to real-time intervention in the cab, so teams can catch risk earlier, cut waste faster, and operate with more control.

TREND 4

AI vision enables operational awareness at scale.
As it expands into day-to-day use cases, the greatest gains will be in waste management and construction — surfacing what’s happening in the field in real time so teams can respond faster, run safer operations, and improve customer service and compliance.

TREND 5

Deeper adoption of AI drives bigger ROI for physical operations.
As AI adoption scales across more drivers, vehicles, assets, and spend, the benefits will compound in physical operations.

The basics: The different types of AI

AI is an umbrella term encompassing multiple technology categories, each with distinct capabilities and applications across workflows, decision-making, and automation. With the proliferation of AI in every product, it's important to understand key AI terms and types, and how to read beyond the hype to recognize AI that's truly integrated and designed to improve physical operations.

Type of AI	What it does	Why it matters for physical operations
AI (artificial intelligence)	Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to systems that perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence, such as perception, decision-making, and pattern recognition.	New “thinking” models are designed to work through problems in steps and handle more complex work with fewer gaps. Now, AI is becoming more agentic, taking action across workflows rather than just answering questions.
AI agents (agentic AI)	AI systems that can plan and carry out multi-step tasks, use tools and data to take action, and adjust their approach based on results and feedback in real time.	AI agents help automate fleet processes, such as analyzing data, generating reports, detecting fraud, and coaching drivers.
Edge AI	AI deployed directly on local devices (“the edge”), such as smartphones, cameras, and sensors.	Edge AI runs on the vehicle or device, detecting safety issues in real time even when connectivity is limited.
Computer vision	AI that interprets visual information, such as objects, motion, and behavior, in video.	Computer vision detects unsafe driving behaviors, identifies job site hazards, and tracks assets, helping reduce risk and improve efficiency.
Generative AI	Generative AI (Gen AI) creates new content (text, images, videos) based on patterns learned from existing content and training data.	Gen AI is now built into fleet platforms as embedded AI copilots. They pull context from safety and maintenance activity to generate incident summaries and coaching notes, then surface the next best action so teams can resolve issues faster.
Large Language Models (LLMs)	AI models trained to understand and generate human-like text, powering tools like ChatGPT and newer “thinking” models built for more multi-step reasoning.	LLMs are moving past “chat” and into execution. Multi-task models like these can use the right context, draft the appropriate output, route it to the right person, and keep the workflow moving without constant human prompting.

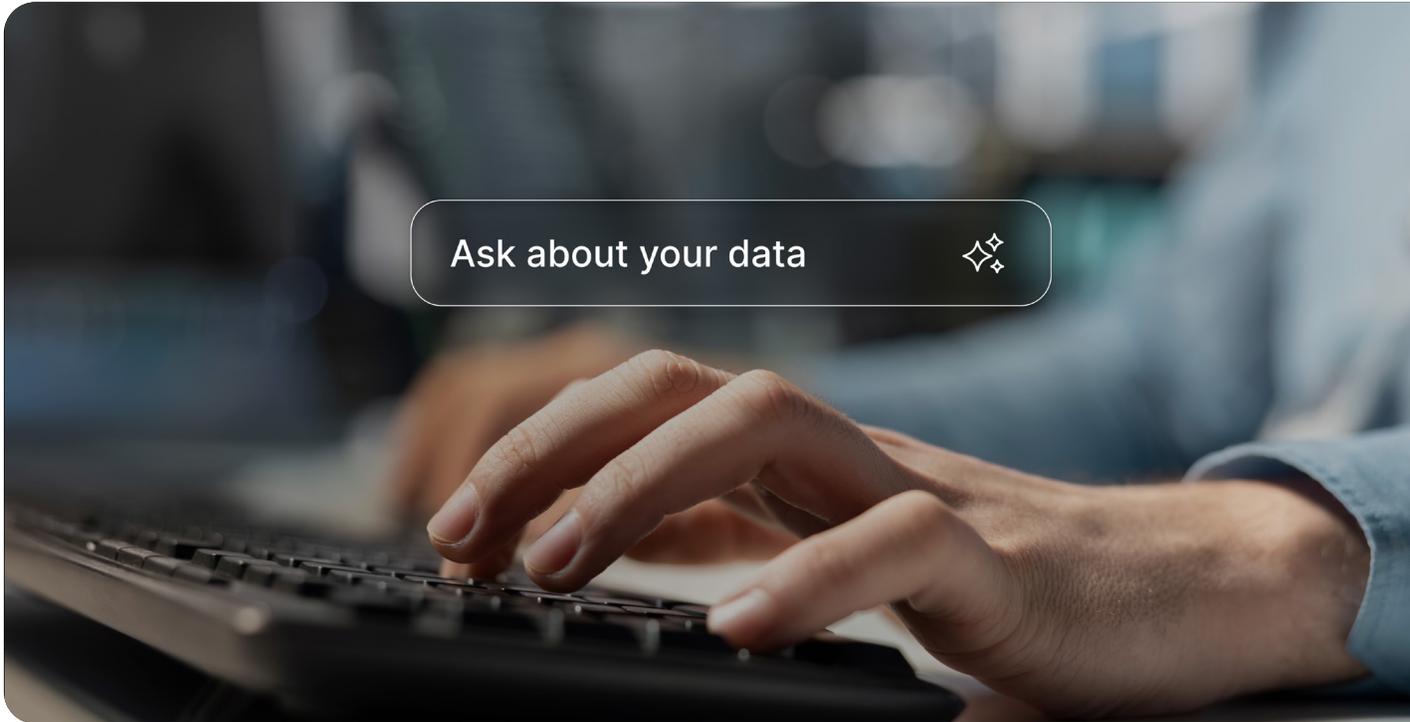
Type of AI	What it does	Why it matters for physical operations
Physical AI	AI integrated with sensors and cameras to interact with and understand real-world environments.	Physical AI powers systems that can perceive, reason, and act in real-world environments, including autonomous vehicles, robotics, and industrial automation.
Multimodal foundation models	AI systems that use multiple types of data to plan and carry out multi-step tasks, use tools to take action, and adjust their approach based on results and feedback in real time.	Multimodal foundation models help fleet-based organizations make faster, more confident decisions by combining video and vehicle data to understand what's happening in real time.
Multitask models	A single AI system trained to detect multiple signals at once, including objects, faces, postures, and upper-body movement.	For the physical economy, multitask models provide broader real-time protection. One system can spot multiple unsafe behaviors at once, reduce false alerts, and expand to new behaviors quickly.

Now, let's understand how the different types of AI shape the physical economy.



TREND 1

The dashboard era ends and conversational AI takes over.



From data overload to insights in seconds

What's changing: ChatGPT didn't just introduce a new way to search for information — it changed what everyone expects from their data. Instead of clicking through dashboards, hunting for the right report, and piecing together answers across disconnected systems, leaders can ask a question in plain language and get a clear response immediately.

That shift has now made its way into physical operations.

Why it matters: For years, people have been drowning in data they don't know how to use. Physical organizations generate more metrics than ever across safety, maintenance, fuel, utilization, and spend — but turning information volume into decisions hasn't been easy. For organizations with moving vehicles, distributed assets, and crews in constant motion, data is everywhere. Yet turning it into actionable decisions remains a challenge. When data is scattered, insight gets delayed and teams are forced to act without clarity.

What's next: Physical operations leaders are finally taking control of their data, turning it into something useful. Instead of digging through dashboards or waiting on custom reports, they can simply query their own data and get real insights in seconds. That's what conversational AI

is all about. It gives leaders a faster path to the meaning behind the numbers — and the ability to cut, compare, and evaluate performance without relying on analysts.

With products like [Motive Analytics](#), conversational AI breaks down silos and can pull connected insights across safety, operations, and spend. Leaders can spot trends and outliers fast, ask follow-up questions that get to the “why,” and see clear visuals that make it easier to share findings and act with confidence.



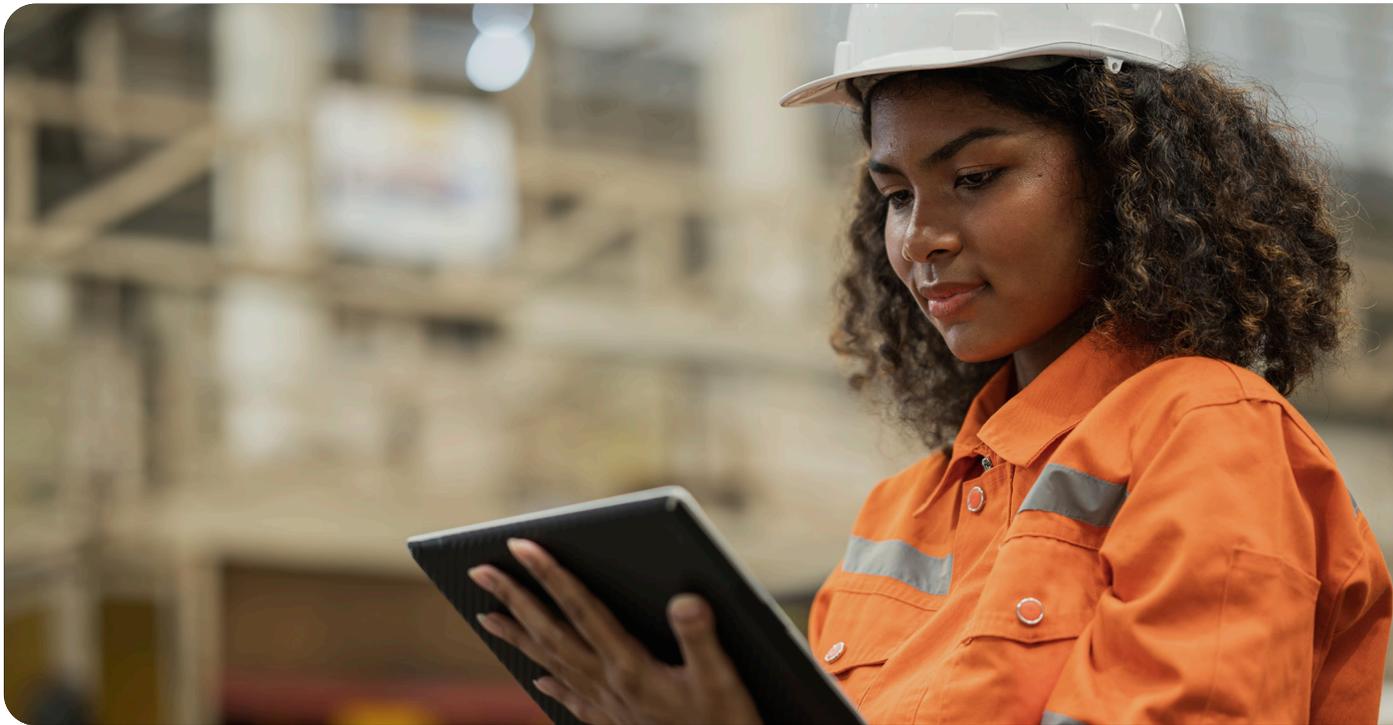
The future of physical economy intelligence isn't another dashboard. It's the ability to ask a question in the moment and get the answer you need — instantly, clearly, and with enough context to act.”

Michael Benisch
Vice President, Artificial Intelligence at Motive



TREND 2

Automation becomes the new operating leverage.



Automation speeds the pace of execution.

2026 is the year AI creates a new way of working in physical operations. For the last few years, most AI value has shown up as insight: [accurate detection](#), [better reporting](#), faster answers.

But leaders don't just need better information. In their day-to-day, they need actual time back. Between safety follow-up, maintenance coordination, route and service exceptions, fraud concerns, and customer escalations, the work is constant. And many of the most expensive failures aren't caused by missing data — they're caused by delays, manual handoffs, and fragmented execution.

What's changing: In 2026, we'll see a huge shift toward automation. This is the year AI moves beyond answering simple queries to helping work actually get done. Instead of stopping at insights or alerts, AI increasingly supports follow-through — [reducing manual steps](#), keeping workflows moving, and helping teams respond faster when it matters.

In the new operating model for the physical economy, leaders and teams:

- Spend less time chasing information or coordinating across systems.
- See faster response when risk, downtime, or cost begins to surface.
- Experience more consistent execution as organizations scale.

Why it matters: Physical operations leaders have already seen [strong ROI from AI](#) — especially in safety and cost reduction. Now, they're unlocking time savings at scale and turning that time into an operational advantage.

[Motive's 2026 ROI Report](#) shows customers saving 25 hours per week on average, equivalent to 150+ workdays annually, by reducing manual work, [automating driver coaching](#) at scale, and simplifying how teams operate. As AI expands across more workflows, those time savings compound. Teams spend less time reacting and more time focusing on higher-value work — [improving safety outcomes](#), [executing faster and better](#), and [serving customers](#) more consistently.

What's next: Automation will accelerate adoption of AI across physical operations faster than in the digital economy — just as safety AI delivered faster, clearer ROI in the physical world first. Why? Because the stakes for AI tools that actually help teams execute are simply higher in the physical world.

With critical needs across safety, operations, finance, and workforce management, busy operators could fall behind without the tools to reduce manual work, turn information into action faster, and free up time to address strategic priorities.



TREND 3

Edge AI shifts management from reactive to proactive.



Anticipating risk, optimizing performance

In the physical economy, operations don't fail because leaders lack information. They fail because information doesn't translate into action. Safety teams see risk, but too often, it's only after an incident occurs. Operations teams see performance, but not always what to change in time. Finance teams see costs, but rarely the behaviors behind them.

Each team has insight — but insight alone isn't enough.

What's changing: [Edge AI](#) is pushing real-time intelligence into the real world. Instead of relying on cloud processing or after-the-fact reporting, AI is running directly inside the vehicle — making instant decisions, while there's still time to prevent a serious outcome. [Unsafe behaviors](#), such as distraction, drowsiness, close following, or cell phone use, are detected in the moment, without relying on the cloud or human intervention.

As AI prioritizes what matters and guides the next best decision in the moment, managers can move from reactive to [proactive management](#). They're stepping in earlier instead of chasing issues after the fact. And because these systems continuously learn across drivers, vehicles, and conditions, the intelligence gets sharper over time.

Early examples of this shift are apparent in advancements like the [AI Dashcam Plus](#), where in-cab AI and [automation](#) make prevention possible in ways less-advanced systems simply can't.

It might look like using vehicle temperature data to [detect prolonged idling](#), alerting a driver to shut off the engine before fuel is wasted. Or using [forward collision warnings](#) to surface risk early enough to intervene before a near-miss becomes an incident.

Why it matters: Teams don't need more alerts. They need help preventing problems before they lead to incidents, downtime, or wasted spend. That's where edge AI changes the economics of operations. It surfaces what matters most while it's happening, guides next steps, and helps leaders step in earlier — with prevention built into the day-to-day.

What's next: Edge AI moves deeper into prediction — with use cases like pedestrian warnings and [more advanced fatigue detection](#) that can prompt a driver to take a break before risk escalates and they fall asleep at the wheel. Improvements in how the system “sees” the road will raise the bar again.

With stereo vision, two road-facing lenses create human-like depth perception, helping AI judge how quickly the distance to vehicles and objects is changing. This will sharpen [Forward Collision Warning](#), [Lane Swerving](#), and [Close Following](#) alerts — giving drivers earlier, more reliable warnings.



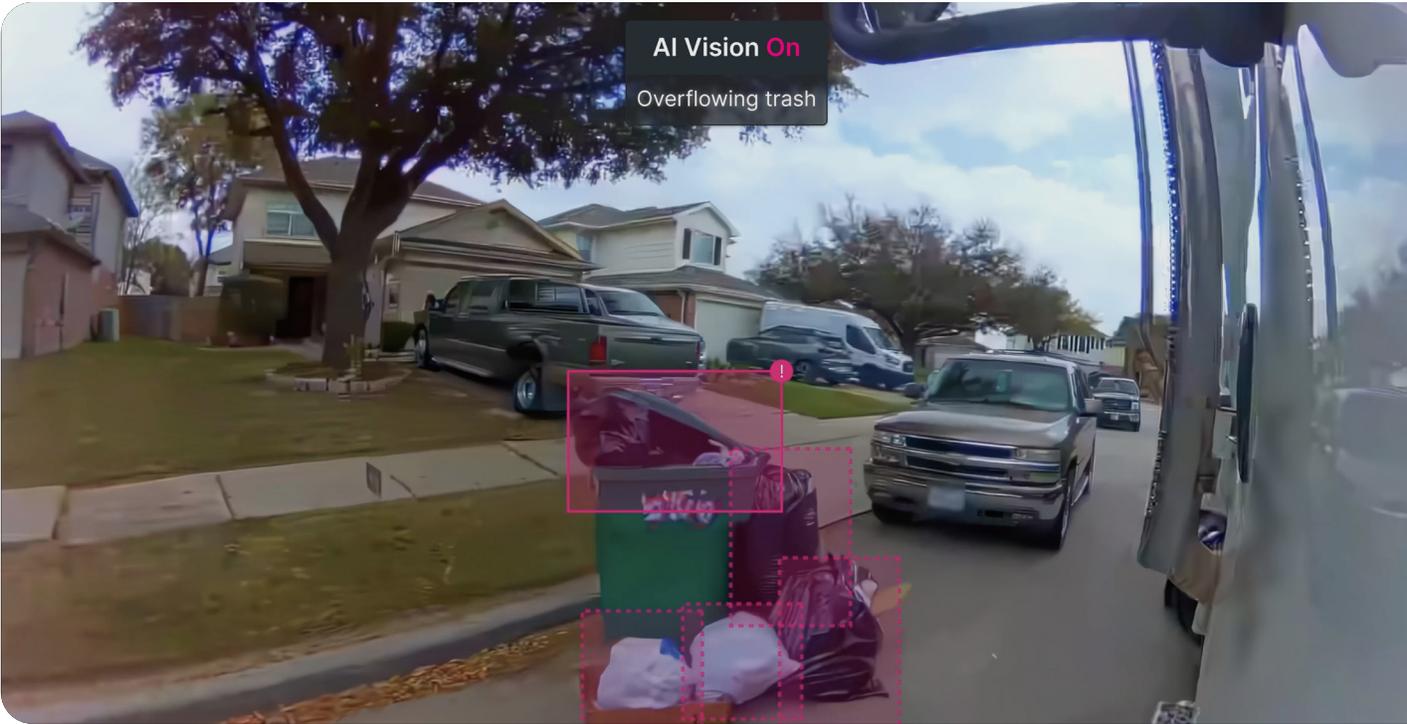


The shift we're driving is predictive instead of reactive — the ability to intervene or warn drivers in the moment before a high-risk event occurs and prevent it, rather than just detecting it after the fact.”

Gautam Kunapuli
Engineering Manager at Motive

TREND 4

AI vision enables operational awareness at scale.



Get visibility into every corner of your operation as it happens versus after the fact.

[Computer vision](#) has already proven its value in fleet safety. What changes in 2026 is where that value expands next, beyond driver behavior, into the high-frequency moments that shape service quality, compliance, and execution in the field.

Instead of using video mainly to review what happened after an incident, [AI vision](#) is starting to surface what's happening while it's unfolding — so teams can respond faster. Its impact is most notable in waste management and construction, where small gaps quickly lead to major costs, risks, or customer impacts.

What's changing: As AI vision expands into broader, more operational use cases, it's improving [waste operations](#), [construction quality control](#), and [customer service verification](#). Along the way, we're seeing how AI vision unlocks a new level of operational awareness — making it possible to verify what's happening in the field in near real time, in ways that were historically difficult or impossible.

With [accurate AI detection](#) and real-time alerts, organizations can get clarity faster on what's happening in the field. In waste management, that means spotting overflowing containers and confirming that

loads stay clean and compliant. When issues go unnoticed, the consequences add up quickly.

Small breakdowns in these high-frequency moments lead to cascading costs — things like missed pickups, route inefficiency, and customer friction. AI vision enables earlier detection of problems, tighter execution, and documentation of what happened without slowing crews down. It even enables organizations to bill for extra services and capture additional revenue.

For industries like construction, proving service, quality, and compliance — especially when questions arise — is critical. [Staker Parson, a CRH company](#), uses the [Motive AI Dashcam](#) to capture important aspects of their business on video. They use it to verify service, ensure product quality, and prove that protocols are being followed. With data pulled from the Motive Dashboard, Staker Parson can easily confirm delivery times and even document concrete quality.



With video in our corner, we've been able to answer questions about service and quality. The results have been incredible.”

Cristian Zuniga
Telematics Site Champion at Staker Parson

Motive has also helped [Ernst Concrete](#) better manage customer service issues. Video from Motive AI Dashcams helps highlight the texture of the concrete being poured.

For organizations specializing in waste and recycling services, recycling contamination and bin overflow are operational blind spots that often lead to wasted time, higher costs, and unsatisfied customers. AI-powered detection helps organizations in the physical economy catch issues early and act — before they disrupt collection and processing and lead to complaints.

And as these use cases expand, camera coverage becomes a strategic advantage.



It's like pancake batter. It's called 'the slump' in [the] concrete [industry]. The video gives feedback to our quality control team so they can analyze the product and address any customer service issues about delivery or quality."

Paul Fly
Director of Risk and Safety at Ernst Concrete

Why it matters: Physical operations are full of moments that are expensive, precisely because they're hard to verify. Waste contamination. Overflow. Missed or unverified service. Most of these issues don't show up neatly in a dashboard. They show up as rework, downtime, customer escalations, or safety exposure after the fact.

AI vision changes that by creating a new layer of visibility grounded in what actually happened. It helps teams respond faster, strengthen compliance, and maintain excellent customer service — without waiting for a report, a dispute, or an incident to reveal the gap.

What's next: Expect AI vision models to expand gradually, with early releases focused on high-impact, real-world problems — especially in waste and construction. The goal isn't more video. It's more operational visibility. As vision becomes more capable, it will translate what the camera sees into feedback teams can use to reduce waste, improve compliance, and operate with greater precision.





This isn't only about AI accuracy moving beyond the vehicle. It's about applying computer vision to completely different operational problems."

Michael Benisch
Vice President, Artificial Intelligence at Motive

TREND 5

Deeper adoption of AI drives bigger ROI for physical operations.



AI value shows up fastest where the stakes are highest.

Industries moving the physical economy forward — transportation and logistics, construction, energy, utilities, field services, food and beverage, and many more — operate in high-stakes, high-cost environments where safety, efficiency, and profitability are constantly at risk.

What's changing: For knowledge workers, value from AI investments has been slow to emerge, and [worries about an AI bubble are growing](#), even as investment increases. While nearly two-thirds of respondents [in one survey](#) said they had yet to start scaling across the enterprise, physical economy leaders don't need any convincing about the value of AI. They've seen the [rapid returns AI](#) is creating for their organizations, and they're fully invested. So the ROI story is playing out differently in the physical economy.

Why it matters: Every day in physical operations carries real consequences. ROI is what separates AI that only looks impressive from AI that actually changes outcomes.

The proof is already in the numbers.

[Motive's 2026 ROI Report](#), based on a survey of 351 customers across industries in North America, shows how physical operations leaders are seeing measurable gains across safety, productivity, and profitability — up to 2x faster than in the past.

Dig deeper into our [2026 ROI Report](#) to see how some physical economy businesses are reporting outsized results like these at scale¹:



The speed of return matters. By automating tasks and consolidating operations into a single, unified system, organizations are recouping their investment faster — **in as little as 2.5 months²** for fleets with 1,000+ vehicles, and **about five months on average³** across all respondents.



With Motive, we've achieved cost savings of approximately \$1.3M annually in direct losses. Including indirect costs, such as downtime, injured employees, and legal expenses, our total savings reach about \$6.5M. That's a 2,000% return on investment.

Paul Fly
Director of Risk and Safety at Ernst Concrete

What's next: Last year was about proof. Customers saw real ROI from AI in physical operations, and leaders across industries are now fully bought in. This year is about scaling that impact even further.

The next great returns will come from expanding AI across the entire operation, as organizations apply AI and automation across more workflows, more vehicles, more assets, and more categories of spend. What began as targeted gains in a few areas has evolved into a broader mandate and question — what else can AI help us do?

Customers are also extending AI beyond the vehicle, into [workforce management](#), [jobsite operations](#), and other day-to-day operations. As they do, they're asking Motive to help automate more tasks, streamline more workflows, and surface the right actions — both in and out of the field.

¹ The numbers below are based on survey data and customer case studies. Please see our [2026 ROI Report](#) for methodology.

² Based on answers from survey respondents with fleets of 1000+ vehicles in [the Motive 2026 ROI Report](#).

³ Based on the [Enterprise Grid® Report for Fleet Management | Fall 2025](#)

The future belongs to AI-powered platforms that can anticipate and automate, not just report.



Going forward, organizations in the physical economy won't evaluate platforms based on features alone. They'll evaluate whether the AI layer is reliable enough to help the platform perform across safety, operations, and finance — consistently and in real time. In short: *Does this help us get real work done?*

If AI lives inside one tool or one workflow, you get isolated benefits. When the AI layer [lives in the platform](#), the impact compounds. Everything becomes easier to manage intelligently at scale. And it's hard to overstate the competitive advantage of fleet operations moving faster while continuously making smarter decisions.

Go deeper on platform AI and start maximizing ROI.

The next wave of ROI in physical operations won't come from one-off tools. It will come from having AI embedded across the entire platform, spanning vehicles, equipment, workforce, and spend.

Download the [2026 Motive ROI Report](#) for a deeper look at how customers are scaling AI and automation across their operations, and recouping their investment faster.



About Motive

Motive builds technology to improve the safety, productivity, and profitability of businesses that power the physical economy. The Motive Integrated Operations Platform combines IoT hardware with AI-powered applications to automate vehicle and equipment tracking, driver safety, compliance, maintenance, spend management, and more. Motive serves nearly 100,000 businesses, across a wide range of industries, including trucking and logistics, construction, oil and gas, food and beverages, field services, agriculture, passenger transit, and delivery. Visit gomotive.com to learn more.