Digital Asset Treasuries Must Now Earn Their Keep

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The era of buying Bitcoin and calling it a treasury strategy is over.

By early 2026, more than 200 publicly listed companies hold digital assets on their balance sheets, collectively managing over $115 billion (DLA Piper, October 2025). The total market capitalisation of these companies reached approximately $150 billion by September 2025—a nearly fourfold increase from the year before. Yet several of these companies now trade at discounts to the value of the assets they hold. The market is sending a clear signal: accumulation alone is no longer enough.

Investors want to see capital discipline and economic return. Management teams have responded with share repurchase programmes and transparency metrics such as "BTC per share," designed to show the value a treasury adds beyond the token price (AMINA Bank Research, 2026). The shift from passive accumulation to active yield generation—from "DAT 1.0" to "DAT 2.0"—is now the defining theme of the sector.

Three broad models are emerging. Each carries a different risk–return profile and places distinct demands on governance, technical capability, and infrastructure.

Evolution of Digital Asset Treasuries, Image provided by Greengage, 2026

1. Infrastructure Participation and Staking

The most protocol-native approach involves staking tokens to support network consensus and earning rewards in return. For Bitcoin-focused treasuries, this increasingly extends to the Lightning Network and other native infrastructure that generates routing and liquidity-based fees. Staking requires careful analysis of the technical security and smart contract risks.

The numbers have grown quickly. Bitmine Immersion Technologies reported over 3 million staked ETH by early 2026, with total holdings of $9.9 billion and annualised staking revenue of approximately $172 million (SEC Filing, March 2026). Its proprietary validator network marginally outperformed the Composite Ethereum Staking Rate, demonstrating the edge that institutional-grade infrastructure can deliver even in a protocol-level yield environment.

SharpLink Gaming deployed $200 million of ETH into restaking infrastructure through EigenCloud, targeting enhanced yields by securing applications ranging from AI workloads to identity verification (SEC Filing, 2025). Restaking—where already-staked ETH is used to secure additional services—represents the frontier of what staking-based strategies can do, though it introduces additional slashing and smart contract risk that requires careful governance.

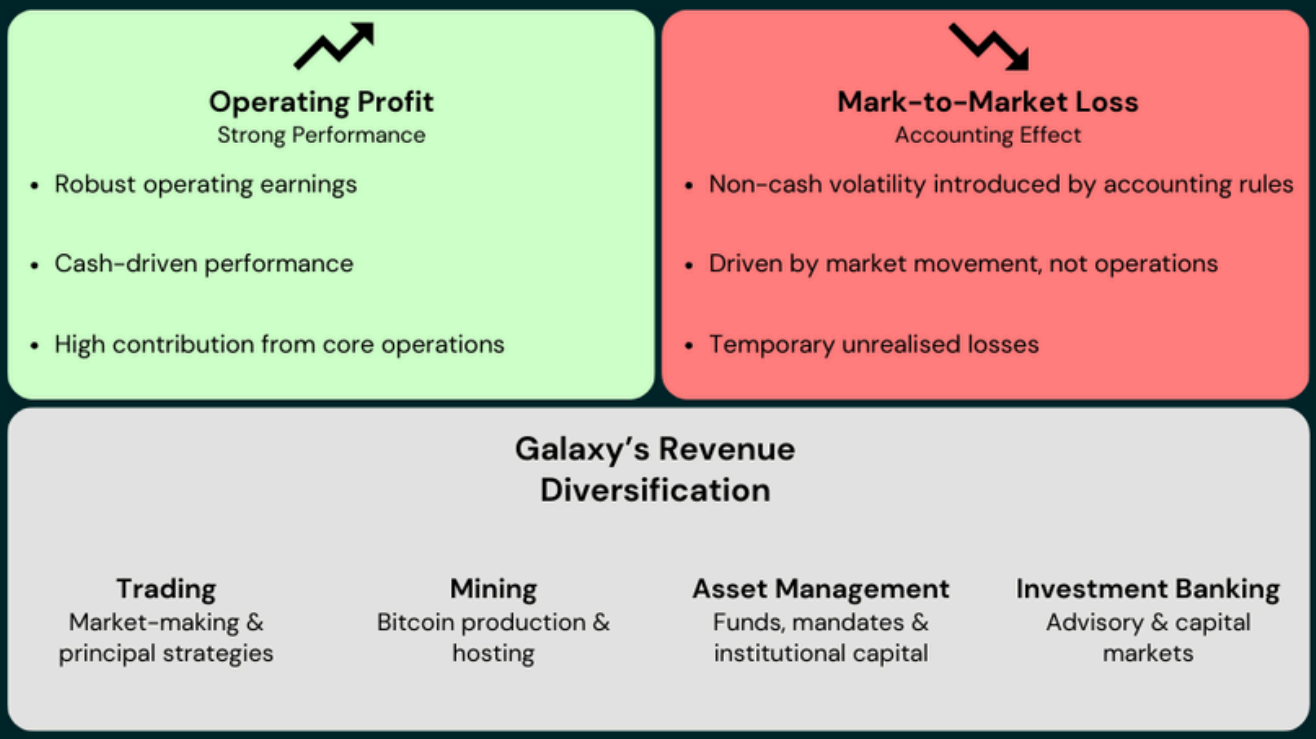
Key On-Chain Revenue Metrics, Image provided by Greengage, 2026

2. Active Trading and Market-Driven Income

A second set of strategies leverages market structure—funding-rate arbitrage, basis trading, and options premiums. These can be effective and often market-neutral, but they demand trading expertise, robust risk controls, and round-the-clock monitoring. The governance implications are significant: this approach effectively converts a treasury function into a trading operation. Like any trading function, it can be difficult to find skilled staff required to monitor complex positions and correlation risks.

One prominent Japanese listed company illustrates both the potential and the complexity. Holding over 35,000 BTC by the end of 2025, it generated the equivalent of approximately $55 million in Bitcoin income revenue through option-based strategies, with operating profit growth exceeding 1,600% year-on-year. Yet the same company recorded a substantial net loss due to non-cash mark-to-market revaluations under local accounting standards (TradingView; Kavout, 2026). For investors, this disconnect between operational cash flow and reported earnings makes evaluation materially harder—and underscores why governance and transparency matter as much as headline returns.

Galaxy Digital offers a contrasting hybrid model, combining its own digital asset treasury with institutional services including collateralised lending, strategic advisory, and infrastructure. In Q3 2025, Galaxy posted a record adjusted gross profit of over $730 million (Mint Ventures Research, 2025). Notably, the firm has diversified its yield sources beyond pure crypto by repurposing its Helios mining facility as an AI compute campus secured by long-term contracts—a signal that the most resilient treasuries may be those that derive income from multiple, uncorrelated sources.



Galaxy Revenue Diversification, Image provided by Greengage, 2026

3. Credit Deployment and Net Interest Margin

A third route treats digital assets as productive balance-sheet capital. The model involves borrowing against crypto holdings on a non-recourse basis, receiving liquidity in stablecoins, and deploying that liquidity into higher-yielding private credit. It preserves long-term exposure to the underlying asset while generating recurring interest income from short-duration, real-economy lending. In particular, this strategy demands expertise in yield, credit risk and fixed income.

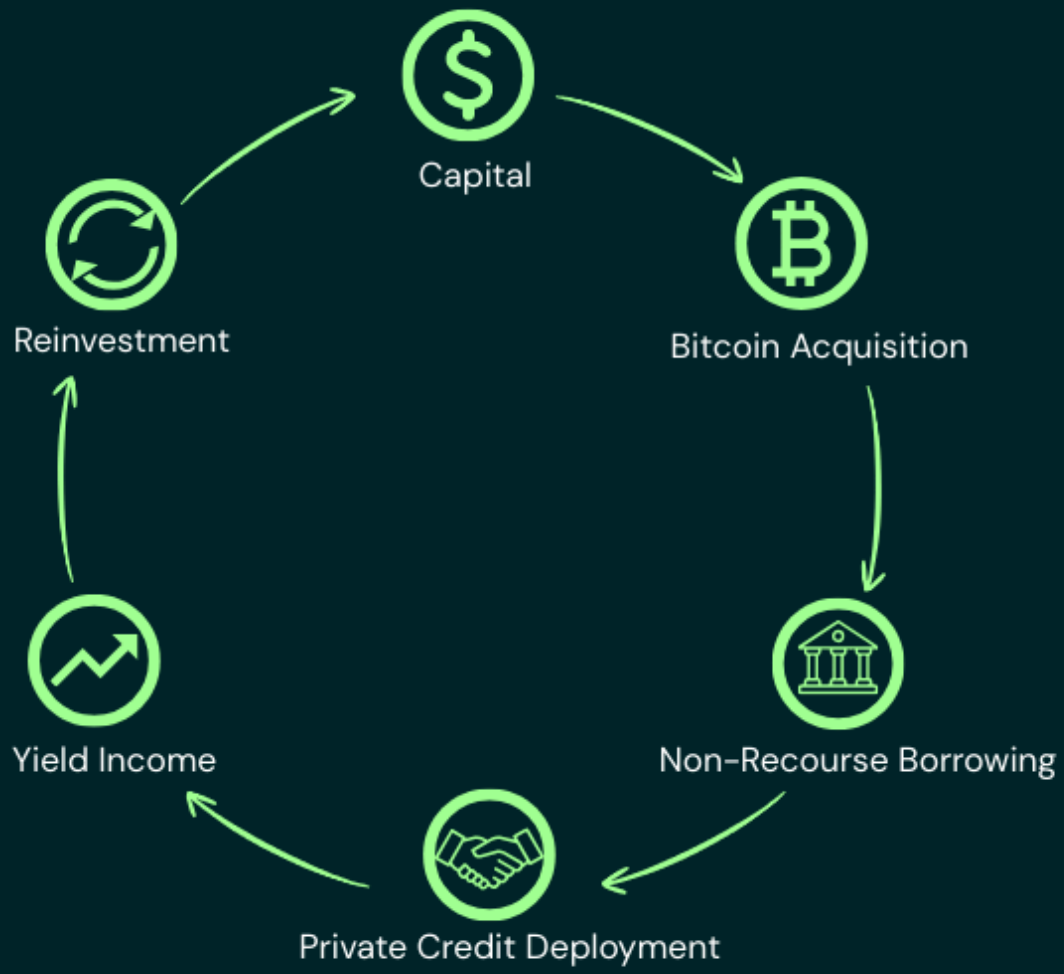
This is the approach we are building at Greengage. Our focus is on combining digital asset treasury management with the institutional financial infrastructure needed to originate and manage credit—an approach we see as distinct from the accumulation and trading models that have dominated the sector to date.

The mechanics draw directly from traditional banking: liquidity management, underwriting, governance, and controlled leverage. Under this type of model, a company acquires Bitcoin, borrows against those holdings on a non-recourse basis—meaning downside is limited to the collateral itself—and deploys the proceeds into diversified private credit portfolios supporting real-economy lending. If Bitcoin appreciates, the company retains the upside after repaying the loan, combining potential capital gains with recurring interest income. At Greengage, we are applying this framework with a particular emphasis on capital discipline, counterparty due diligence, and board-level governance oversight.

Component	Mechanism	Risk Management
Asset Acquisition	Purchase Bitcoin using raised capital	Capital discipline and defined parameters
Non-Recourse Loan	Borrow against BTC to receive stablecoin liquidity	Downside limited to loss of collateral
Credit Deployment	Deploy into diversified private credit portfolios	Short-duration, real-economy lending
Yield Recycling	Reinvest returns to compound the reserve	Ongoing board-level governance oversight

For credit deployment models to work credibly, they need to be grounded in operational financial infrastructure rather than built from scratch. The approach is most effective when it extends from an existing platform with real lending relationships and established client accounts. In our view, this is also an area where governance and due diligence frameworks are particularly important, given that capital is being deployed into third-party credit opportunities that must be assessed on a counterparty-by-counterparty basis.

The success of this model is also tied to the maturation of stablecoins as institutional infrastructure. By 2026, stablecoins underpin cross-border payments, real-time settlement, and T+0 clearing for enterprises (Foley & Lardner, January 2026). Coinbase Institutional projects total stablecoin market capitalisation could reach $1.2 trillion by 2028. For credit deployment strategies, stablecoins provide a sound medium for deploying capital into lending markets.



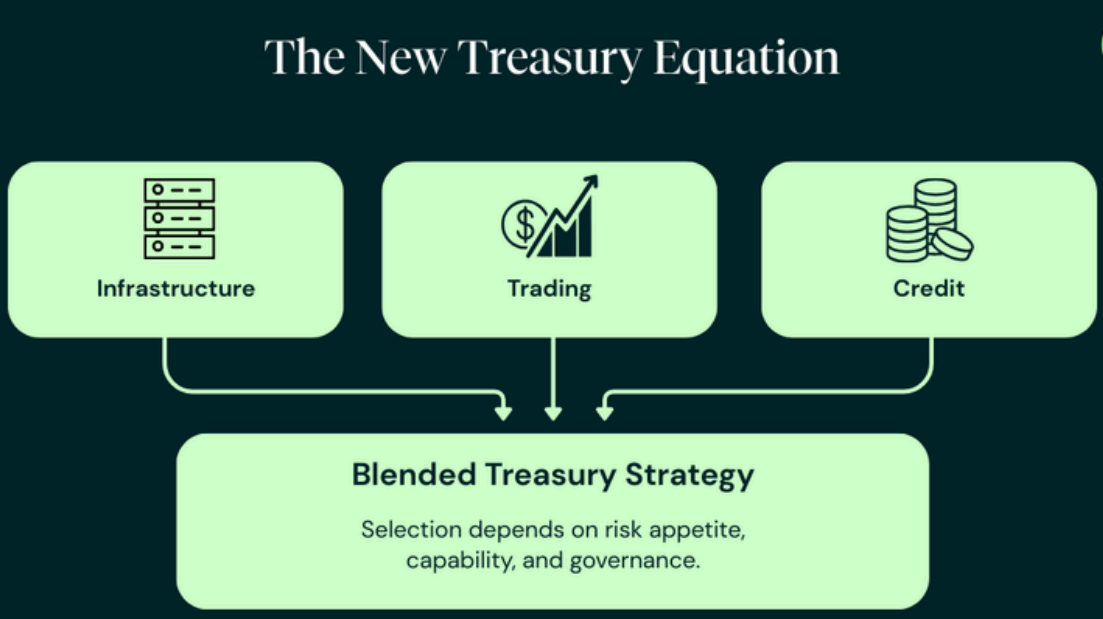
Capital Deployment Cycle, Image provided by Greengage, 2026

The New Measure of Maturity

Recent market conditions have reinforced a simple truth: price appreciation alone is not a treasury strategy. The growing range of yield solutions reflects a sector learning from its own history—sustainable income generation makes digital assets more productive components of a corporate balance sheet.

No single model is definitive. The most effective treasuries will blend approaches depending on risk appetite, operational capability, and governance structure. But the direction of travel is clear. Passive holding is no longer sufficient to justify digital assets' place on the balance sheet. Yield is becoming the central measure of treasury maturity —and the core factor in how the market values companies with digital asset exposure.

The winners in this next phase will not be the largest holders. They will be the most disciplined operators.



The New Treasury Equation, Image provided by Greengage, 2026

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