Smarter technology for all

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Built for business on the Intel vPro® platform

Powerful PCs help small businesses drive innovation and efficiency

Employee devices set the foundation for effective use of advanced technologies that keep small businesses growing.

Introduction

Technology drives efficiency and connection across every industry. With the sudden boom of AI, every business is rushing to find new and exciting applications for the advanced technology. Automation can cut down labor in mundane tasks and nearly every corporation can get predictive insights with the click of a button. To seize the benefit of any of these advanced platforms, though, a business first needs computers they can trust.

Reliable hardware is your access point to advanced apps and services, and it is a cornerstone of any business technology strategy. The question every smaller organization needs to ask is how to find the partner that helps you build your technology strategy. It's

an important decision, and it needs adequate consideration without disrupting operations. Managing a small business is hard enough, technology choices need to empower efficiency without taking up too much budget or man-hours.
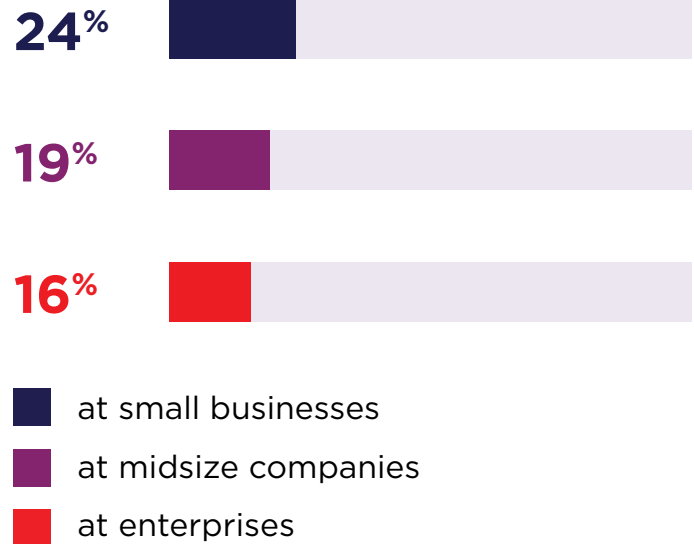
This white paper summarizes key considerations for small businesses selecting end user devices, from tablets to laptops and desktops. We examine larger trends shaping small business buying patterns, the value of performance for employee productivity, and support services to look for in PC brands. Discover how PCs can help small businesses lay a foundation for innovative technology and how Intel vPro® and Lenovo help organizations achieve their goals.

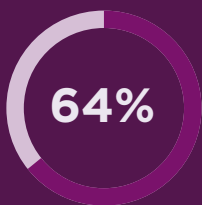# Technology is at the heart of small business growth

In an economy where innovation reigns supreme, small businesses already harness cutting-edge technology to gain customers and remain competitive. Ninety-three percent of small businesses in the United States use at least one technology platform, and higher use of solutions correlates with growth in sales, profit, and employment.[1] These digital tools boost operational efficiency, and small businesses increasingly rely on them to make the most of their lean workforce.

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the top digital platforms that small businesses rely on are social media, accounting software, and marketing platforms.[1] In the age of automation, though, there is a growing selection of tools to help small business do more without the staff of an enterprise. HR systems can be used to manage remote onboarding and employee development. E-commerce tools make it easier to sell without brick-and-mortar stores. Small businesses that use some version of AI already see a higher chance to grow profit over non-AI users.

Portion of technology budget dedicated to hardware:[2]

24%

19%

16%

■ at small businesses

■ at midsize companies

■ at enterprises

To focus on innovating with software and tools, small businesses first need to find devices that simply work. Reliable laptops that don't need constant attention from IT or recurring investment in support services are foundational to integrating new technology. That's why small businesses spend a significantly larger portion of IT budgets on hardware compared to enterprises. Finding the right devices for employees is the first step toward a future of growth and innovation.

64% of small businesses agree technology is a key factor in achieving their business objectives.[3]

Efficient tools can streamline operations

As small businesses embark on their technology journeys, the key to success lies in efficient adoption and management. When purchasing PCs for employees, utilization is a major consideration. Nearly everyone has experience buying technology for personal use, but purchasing looks much different when buying devices for staff at a growing business.

When the deployment of employee devices is conducted seamlessly, it can have an exponential effect on employee experience, productivity, and efficiency. A study conducted by Forrester on behalf of Intel and Lenovo found that PCs play a critical role in employees' engagement with their daily work. Out of all the respondents to the study, 69% shared that devices impact customer satisfaction, 62% said they lead to revenue growth, and 55% agreed they improve employee retention.[4]

From imaging devices to deployment to employees, the provisioning process can impede these benefits, especially among small businesses with limited IT resources. Ensuring a laptop is equipped with the right software, security, and credentials can take time and effort, but the right support makes it easier. Small businesses can utilize automated imaging and advanced deployment services to streamline the process. Windows Autopilot, included in the Microsoft 365 Business Premium subscription, is an example of one such tool that helps small businesses get employee devices running faster and with less hassle.

Many laptop brands offer accessible tools and support to help make sure IT management is seamless for small businesses. Business advisors help strategize for laptop deployment, whether it is to one employee or a dozen. Laptops designed for businesses are also built with essential IT management technology. Intel vPro® comes with built-in remote management to support employees from anywhere. Device management capabilities play a large role as to whether laptops will streamline operations or slow them down.

These tools don't just end at provisioning. Often services like Lenovo Premier Support can extend the IT support capabilities and resources of small businesses. PC brands utilize both technical experts and advanced AI to solve IT issues before they result in downtime. Tools that make sure business technology just works allow small business leaders to focus on what really matters, from improving products to driving sales.

Employee productivity is shaped by helpful software

Not only is management important, but employees also need to have the powerful devices they need to get their work done. For example, a product designer needs a workstation with superior graphics and high processing power while a sales representative needs a 2-in-1 laptop for flexible business on the go. PCs are foundational technology for productivity, and they need to be personalized to each user. From processing finance data quickly to storing hundreds of high-resolution marketing images, specialized capabilities empower employees in their roles.

No matter the size of the business, employees want technology that simply works. Nearly half of employees report being frustrated by the technology they are provided at work, and a quarter even consider quitting because of it.[5] Even one employee deciding to leave can significantly impact a lean operation, so every laptop needs to be selected and maintained with productivity in mind. Processing power and memory are the top qualities to look for in devices to ensure employee satisfaction, but even battery life and cameras can ease friction depending on the role.

When it comes to software, integration and ease of use are just as important as device performance. From Microsoft productivity tools to advanced AI-powered software, technology needs to run uninterrupted. Integration of software is a huge factor in employee experience according to 43% of employees and 53% of IT professionals.[4] Not only that, but centralized applications can improve collaboration.

Even though there is a lot to focus on to ensure employee productivity, small businesses can rely on solution providers to navigate the complexities. They provide strategic support to select the right device and the right software. Together, Lenovo and Microsoft ensure an optimized software support model, and Intel vPro® boosts employee effectiveness across workloads and applications.

Laptop brands can even prevent old devices from slowing down business. PC performance can be monitored behind the scenes with programs like Lenovo Smart Performance to optimize devices without any action needed from business leaders. Lifecycle management programs also help recycle devices as their power dwindles to ensure employees never miss a beat.

Secure endpoints keep businesses running

Even with powerful technology that empowers workers, a single cyberattack can hinder a small business long term. While threats impact every business, small organizations have fewer resources at their disposal to defend against and recover from an incident. That means every device needs protection at every layer. Especially as an organization starts to utilize big data and analytics — as many small businesses already do — endpoint protections need to be put in place to protect valuable information from a breach.

Endpoints like laptops and mobile devices are common targets of attacks. Hackers will send an employee an email that looks legitimate, but when the email is opened it will contain a request for credentials or a suspicious link that downloads malware. These social engineering attacks on business emails are growing in frequency, and along with system intrusions and basic web application attacks they make up 92% of breaches aimed at small businesses.[6]

Because laptops can often be a target for attacks, any device needs to have multiple layers of protection. Strong hardware level security can be an important step to defending an organization, and 77% of small businesses report it as the second feature they consider when buying new devices.[7] These built-in defenses can help protect the devices at its core.

Strong PC protections integrate across firmware and the operating system to cover users at every level. Intel vPro® provides unique out-of-the box hardware-based security measures that actively monitor for threats. Software protections can defend against email and web-based browser attacks with containment technology. By preventing unauthorized access to devices, advanced protections help a small business protect its employees, customers, and its reputation.

Built for Business

Intel vPro® is the business computing foundation that integrates hardware and software technologies to give IT greater control over PCs while keeping users productive. It can keep PCs and data more secure with hardware-enhanced protections, right out of the box.

With built in remote management, IT can support employees working from anywhere—without having to touch the PC. End users can get the performance they need for any task, no matter the location, thanks to optimized wireless connections and intelligent allocation of workloads tailored to applications and how people use them. All in an integrated solution with the broadest choice of designs and support for multiple operating systems.

Boost IT efficiency and maximize user productivity with professional-grade PCs built on Intel vPro®.

A strategic partner goes a long way

The best thing that any small business can do to ensure they get the power and security they need is to find a solution provider that acts as a strategic partner. The relationship should be more than just a single transaction; it's a collaboration that supports a business through its technology journey. Especially for businesses that have limited IT resources, a solution provider needs to align with the goals of a small business to provide invaluable guidance and resources.

Working with a solution provider should start with expert guidance from a business advisor. Most PC brands offer a wide swath of offerings with unique specs for different types of users, and an advisor should be able to help business leaders find the right solution for their needs. A strategic partner will help small businesses make informed decisions about their fleet of devices.

More advanced offerings include a wide range of resources to support IT personnel. From reducing helpdesk ticket volumes to assisting with troubleshooting, support services minimize the burden on technical staff. PC brands offer highly trained experts and AI-assisted troubleshooting to get employees back to work sooner. These offerings can also include lifecycle management to optimize PC performance and managed services to help businesses get the most out of software like Microsoft 365.

Technology can quickly get difficult to manage at small businesses. No matter what resources are set aside for IT, end-to-end services can help organizations get the most out of technology investments.

Conclusion

Reliable devices with comprehensive services pave the way to an innovative future for any small business. Not only do powerful PCs allow employees to access advanced software and new AI tools but also protect them through the process. Small businesses deserve the right tools to help them foster growth and excel in a digital age.

Embrace new technology to enable your small business success with Lenovo. Easy to integrate and easier to manage, our best-in-class solutions help small businesses reach their goals in a changing digital marketplace. Stay a step ahead of the competition with world-class technology, increased efficiency, improved productivity, and fortified cybersecurity. Count on Lenovo to set you up for success, now and in the future.

Harness the power of Lenovo devices built for business with Intel vPro®.

Find Small Business Solutions

Built for business on the Intel vPro® platform

Smarter technology for all

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