



The rising cost of PCs for business

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How outdated tech and the hefty price of replacing it hits small businesses the hardest

For years, businesses could count on relative stability in the PC market. Today, that predictability is harder to come by.

The growing demand for AI-ready technology is changing what businesses expect from their PCs. Today's work asks more of every device, and modern PCs built with Intel® Core™ Ultra processors help small teams meet that demand with responsive performance, strong battery life, and on-device AI that keeps people moving.

At the same time, market forces like constrained supply chains and fluctuating tariffs are making PCs harder to budget for. Those pressures can be tough for a small or medium-sized business to absorb.

The good news: AI tools can help compact teams get more done. The catch is that outdated machines can't keep up.

Stretch an aging device too long and it slows down, overloads, and drags productivity with it.

Technology must keep pace with competition, but budgets don't necessarily grow along with computing demands. That can make delaying a refresh or stretching an existing device another year feel like the obvious way to save.

But the purchase price is only part of the equation.

This report explains how small and medium-sized businesses can reduce the total cost of commercial PC ownership through Dell's durable hardware, built-in security, lifecycle services, and flexible payment models.

> UPFRONT COST YOU CAN SEE

The upfront price tag of a tech refresh

More advanced hardware and component prices make a refresh feel more expensive.

> HIDDEN COSTS YOU CAN FEEL

The real cost comes from putting it off



Maintenance costs

As devices age, they can need more maintenance and cost more to keep running. Add in supply and tariff swings, and a refresh can feel like a bigger expense than expected, even when a newer PC would pay for itself over time.



Productivity costs

Slow or unreliable technology can mean more downtime, interruptions and lost employee time.



Support costs

Every issue requires someone to troubleshoot it. That could be your dedicated IT employee or you, yourself, as a small-business owner with ten other things to do.

The longer an aging device stays in service, the more these hidden costs are felt. The goal, then, isn't simply to keep every PC as long as possible. It's to maximize the useful life and value of each technology investment.



The cost of unreliable technology

At The Niello Company, aging systems created daily IT disruptions across 11 luxury auto dealership locations. Slow, unreliable technology affected customer service, while IT employees spent most of their mornings responding to problems.

"Having slow and unreliable systems was inconvenient and embarrassing. That's not who we are, and in retail, downtime can mean a lost sale."

Matt Niello

IT Coordinator,

The Niello Company



THE
NIELLO COMPANY
Established in 1921

When technology costs more upfront, mileage matters.

The best business laptop for small businesses is dependable and reduces day-to-day disruptions. Durable hardware and a repairable design can help keep that device in service longer.

Dell PCs for business are designed with longevity, durability and serviceability in mind, meaning Dell looks beyond what a PC can do out of the box on day one.



Reliable

Technology that “just works”

Fewer interruptions and less time lost to troubleshooting means getting more work done that actually matters. Combined with Intel® Core™ Ultra processors, Dell Pro devices help employees stay productive through demanding multitasking, collaboration, and emerging AI workloads, with up to 22 hours of battery life to power a full workday.



Durable

Machines that hold up

Hardware built to last can withstand everyday wear and tear, helping you get more use from each purchase.



Repairable

Design that doesn't quit

Serviceable design can make individual components easier to repair or replace, potentially reducing downtime, repair expenses and unnecessary waste.

Reasons Dell Pro devices meet the moment

8.9/10

8.9 out of 10 customers¹ say their Dell Pro devices outperform competitors in reliability.

10 months

longer-lasting² vs. competitive systems.*

≤22 hours³

of battery life.

A small component can make a big difference.

Take the USB-C port. In Dell Pro PCs, modular USB-C ports are designed to be independently replaceable rather than soldered directly to the motherboard. If a port is damaged, the repair can focus on the affected component instead of replacing a much larger—and more expensive—part of the device.

¹Disclosure: Based on customers response to ESG's Dell Commercial Desktop and Laptop Device Perception Survey conducted from 1/3/2025- 1/25/2025 commissioned by Dell, targeted at qualified IT decision-makers with influence over their organization's desktop/laptop purchase decisions and knowledge of their organization's desktop/laptop support environment with a total of 900 surveys conducted including both Dell and non Dell customers and complemented with 5 in-depth interviews with Dell customers. Expires on 4/30/2027. Do not use in China, Colombia or Guatemala.

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The cost of security only becomes clear when something goes wrong.

Until there's a breach, it's easy to put off security measures. Especially if you're operating without a dedicated security professional or have an IT department of one. But still, the risk of a threat remains.

Security incidents can bring work to a halt and put business and customer data at risk. Even preventative

measures like routine security checks and device management carry a cost.

It's about protecting data, but also protecting productivity, employee time and the technology investment itself.

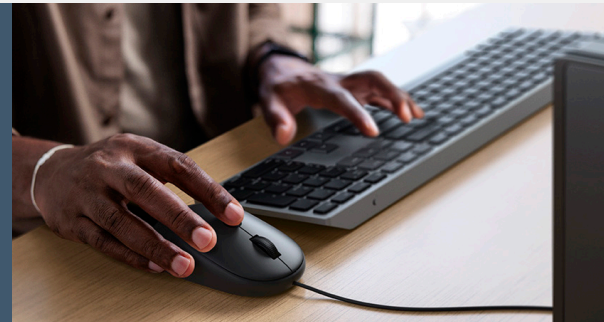
When you have limited IT resources, the goal is to build a maintainable protection layer into the device from the start.

Security works better in layers.

No single feature can protect your business from every threat.

At the hardware level

Dell commercial PCs include built-in firmware that protects identities, data and devices by default. Dell commercial PCs on Intel® processors help strengthen endpoint security with protections built into the device foundation, so growing teams get a maintainable layer of defense from day one.



At the software level

Add-on protection against threats like malware, phishing, and ransomware, plus additional security services as needs become more complex.

Managing your devices doesn't have to be manual.

Delete that spreadsheet of old device serial numbers, user logins, and software update logs.

The **Dell Management Portal** provides cloud-based visibility into all your Dell PCs and assigned users.

See all the devices your business has at a glance, and who they're assigned to without manually tracking every PC.

Push fixes, schedule software updates and security settings across all your PCs from one dashboard.

Devices with Intel® vPro® give you deeper hardware-level visibility and remote management, helping you push updates and resolve issues across your fleet in minutes rather than hours.

Why is manageability a cost issue?

Every manual technology task consumes valuable time. Manual methods of pushing out updates and policies can gunk up an entire workday. Dell Management Portal plus Microsoft Intune can help you do it in minutes.



Keep good technology working better, longer.

A reliable, durable, secure PC is a strong starting point. The way it is deployed, supported and maintained can help protect that investment throughout its life.

For growing businesses, that's particularly important because managing technology rarely falls to a large, dedicated IT department.

Your office manager or operations lead may be responsible for keeping employees productive while simultaneously managing everything else the business needs.

Dell services can help take some of that work off their plate.

Make onboarding easy with Dell ProDeploy.

A new PC only creates value once it's in your employee's hands and ready to work.

Dell ProDeploy Suite for PCs provides affordable deployment services designed to make setup faster and more flexible, helping you get new devices to both on-site and remote employees smoothly while reducing internal work.



The business value

Less time getting technology ready. More time putting it to work.



Stay productive with Dell ProSupport for small businesses.

Once devices are deployed, keep them performing reliably.

Dell ProSupport Suite for PCs helps you identify and address device issues, monitor device health and resolve problems early.



The business value

Less reactive troubleshooting. Less downtime.

What should you do with old PCs?

Dell Asset Recovery Services provide a secure way to retire equipment while recovering residual value from eligible hardware. Devices can be securely wiped and directed toward reuse or responsible recycling.

That means old PCs don't have to spend the next five years stacked in a storage closet—and the value remaining in them doesn't necessarily have to disappear either.



Case study

The San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo takes a planned approach to its device lifecycle, rotating staff laptops on a three-year cycle and repurposing retired systems for volunteers and interns. The approach helps the organization continue extracting value from devices after their first assignment ends.



WOULD YOU RATHER

One large upfront expense or a moderate monthly payment?

Consider the certainty of knowing exactly what your technology spending will be this quarter, the next quarter and on and on. Technology costs aren't just rising; they're getting harder to project. A monthly subscription service model can help.

Consider Dell APEX PC as a Service* vs. buying PCs outright.

Instead of purchasing all of your technology upfront, **Dell APEX PC as a Service (PCaaS)** provides subscription-based access to PCs with the option to include displays, accessories and critical services, for a predictable payment over the subscription term.

Why consider a subscription?



Get what you need now

Equip employees with the technology the business needs today, rather than delaying a necessary refresh because of high upfront costs. Choosing systems built with Intel® Core™ Ultra processors helps you invest in AI-ready performance today while building a more future-ready foundation for tomorrow's workloads.



Make costs more predictable

Lock in today's price to protect against future fluctuations and spread your tech spend over the subscription term for greater visibility into ongoing costs.



Add the services you need

Hardware can be paired with services that reduce IT costs for small businesses such as ProDeploy, ProSupport and Asset Recovery to support more of the device lifecycle.



Build in flexibility

Choose terms that align with business needs and create a more structured approach to future technology planning.



*Payment solutions provided and serviced by Dell Financial Services L.L.C. or its affiliate or designee ("DFS") for qualified customers. Offers may not be available or may vary in certain countries. Where available offers may be changed without notice and are subject to product availability, applicable law, credit approval, documentation provided by and acceptable to DFS and may be subject to minimum transaction size. Offers not available for personal, family or household use. Dell Technologies and the Dell Technologies logo are trademarks of Dell Inc. Restrictions and additional requirements may apply to transactions with governmental or public entities.

Products that are built to last. Services that help keep them working. And a purchasing model that can bring it all together.

Make your technology budget work harder.

You can't control supply chain constraints, tariffs, or the broader economic forces shaping the PC market. What you can control is how thoughtfully you invest in the technology that drives your business forward. That starts with looking beyond the sticker price to the value a device delivers across its entire life. Choose reliable PCs built with Intel® Core™ Ultra processors, add the right services, and pick a payment model that fits, and every dollar works harder for your business.



Choose technology built to last

Prioritize reliable, durable and repairable devices that can deliver value over a longer useful life.



Protect it—and make it easier to manage

Build security and manageability into the technology strategy so that keeping your devices protected doesn't create unnecessary work.



Keep it productive

Use deployment and support services to reduce disruption and help technology perform throughout the lifecycle.



Choose how you want to pay

When upfront costs are the challenge, consider flexible purchasing and subscription options that can make technology spending more predictable.

Spend less time worrying about technology—and more time growing your business.

Dell brings together smart, reliable PCs, built-in security and flexible services to help you get the technology you need, protect your investments and adapt as your needs change.

Whether you're replacing a few aging laptops, equipping a growing team or planning your next PC refresh cycle, the right strategy isn't simply about spending less.

It's about getting more from every dollar you spend.

Explore Dell Pro devices with Intel® Core™ Ultra processors to find the right fit for your team. →

1 Based on customers response to ESG's Dell Commercial Desktop and Laptop Device Perception Survey conducted from 1/3/2025- 1/25/2025 commissioned by Dell, targeted at qualified IT decision-makers with influence over their organization's desktop/laptop purchase decisions and knowledge of their organization's desktop/laptop support environment with a total of 900 surveys conducted including both Dell and non Dell customers and complemented with 5 in-depth interviews with Dell customers.

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3 Based on testing using the Mobile Mark 30 battery life benchmark comparing Dell Pro 5 14 and Dell Pro 14 Plus, April 2026. Dell Pro 5 14 was tested with Intel 336H vPro CPU, UMA graphics, 32GB LPDDR5 memory, WUXGA Non-Touch OLED display (dark mode) and 70 Whr battery. Dell Pro 14 Plus was tested with Intel U5 236V vPro CPU, UMA graphics, 16GB LPDDR5x memory, WUXGA Non-touch Super Low Power display, and 55Whr battery. For more information about this benchmark test, visit www.bapco.com. Actual battery life may be significantly less than the test results and varies depending on product configuration and use, software, usage, operating conditions, power management settings and other factors. Maximum battery life will decrease with time. The stated Watt Hour (Whr) is not an indication of battery life.