



SUCCESSFUL SMALL BUSINESSES DEPLOY RELIABLE AND INNOVATIVE CLIENT HARDWARE

January 2025:

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Overview

In this knowledge brief, we'll look at the top strategies that leading small businesses are following in order to transform their client hardware capabilities. And we'll analyze the key benefits that these strategies are bringing to innovative small businesses.

Some small businesses may think that they can get by with older systems and technology that seems to be working OK, taking an "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" approach.

But innovation and transformation are a mandate for all businesses, no matter what their size. And as technologies such as AI push small businesses to modernize, they are finding that they need to also improve the computing hardware they are providing to their employees.

Small businesses aren't simply looking for the best deal or the fastest processors. Aberdeen research shows that small businesses want solutions that simplify and integrate their implementation of all client hardware, from laptops and desktops to displays and accessories. And, with the looming end of support for Windows 10, small businesses are looking for systems not only designed to run next-generation Windows at its highest level, but also a full suite of accessory hardware that will leverage new technologies and boost productivity.

They also want to ensure high levels of reliability, as our research shows that the number one reason small businesses leave client hardware providers is due to hardware failures. Conversely, our research also shows that when hardware providers meet the needs of small businesses, they are rewarded with repeat business.

What are the technologies and best practices that small businesses are leveraging to modernize their client computing? And are those who have innovated in laptops, desktops, and accessories seeing results from these modernization efforts?

Legacy Hardware Creates Productivity Hurdles

What's the opposite of innovative and cutting-edge? It's probably legacy and out-of-date. So it's no surprise that one of the top three reasons small businesses begin a modernization initiative is due to hardware nearing its end of life.

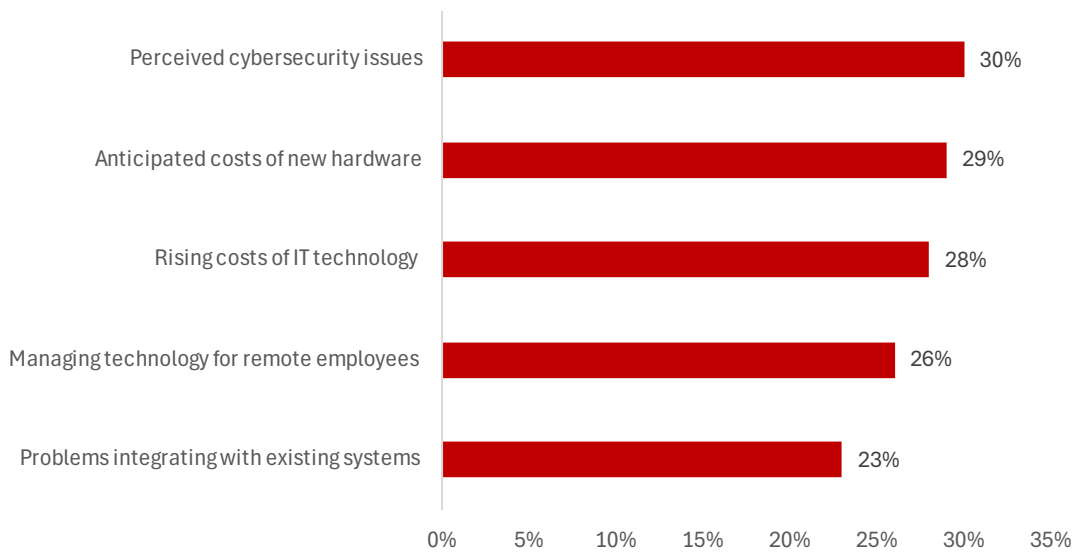
The journey to modernizing all aspects of client hardware, from laptops to desktops to accessories, doesn't follow a single path. Businesses need to

The number one IT goal for small businesses, selected by **52%** of survey respondents, is a PC refresh

evaluate every area impacted by legacy hardware and everything that can be improved by modernizing client hardware and doing a PC refresh.

When small businesses start to consider modernizing and upgrading these older hardware systems, they find many hurdles in their way. In Figure 1 below, we asked small businesses about the top challenges they face in their IT client hardware environments.

Figure 1: Top Client Hardware Challenges for Small Business IT



Source: Aberdeen Strategy & Research, 2025 n=400

Looking at this data, as is true for businesses of all sizes, small businesses have concerns around improving cybersecurity and lowering risks. The top three challenges are rounded out by pain points around costs, both in expected costs for modernizing hardware and in the rising costs of IT technology in general.

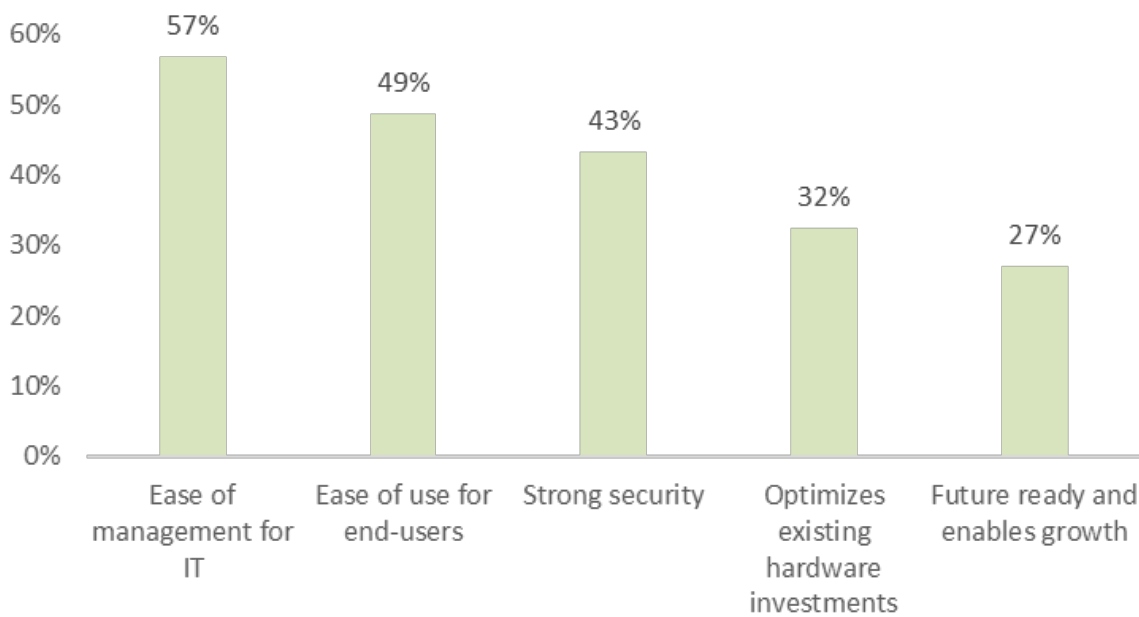
These hurdles are joined in the top five by critical issues related to managing today's hybrid and remote workforce and ensuring that new technologies integrate well with existing IT investments. And these concerns can be especially critical during PC refreshes and ensuring that all hardware that users touch has been updated effectively.

By analyzing small businesses that are leaders in managing and deploying client hardware systems, Aberdeen Strategy & Research has found a key characteristic of these successful organizations. These leaders are 2x more likely to not only have recently done a PC refresh and updated client hardware, but to also have a formal strategy in place to select the right hardware partners and effectively rollout new hardware.

How Unified and Reliable Client Hardware Builds a Strong Foundation for Growth

As small businesses adopt new technologies and work to modernize all of their client computing hardware, they know that selecting the right hardware and hardware providers means focusing on critical requirements and criteria. In our research, we've found that small businesses identified as hardware leaders, (meaning they are in the top 30% of key success metrics around performance, reliability, and productivity) consider these key elements when evaluating hardware modernization, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Key Client Hardware Requirements of Small Business IT Leaders



Source: Aberdeen Strategy & Research, 2025 n=179

These leaders are focused on reducing complexity and improving usability, for both IT staff and end-users. Looking at the data, we see that the top two requirements for client hardware are ease of management for IT and ease of use for users.

As always, strong security is a critical component of selecting any hardware, as small businesses have learned that nearly any connected device can be the cause of a data breach. We also see that small business leaders are looking to the future, both in having future-proof hardware and in optimizing spend and investments going forward.

By looking beyond speeds and feeds and focusing on key areas where hardware and a hardware provider can bring real value to a business, these small business leaders see a number of key advantages. With integrated, end-to-end hardware from a partner that understands the needs of small businesses, these leaders achieve improved outcomes, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Small Businesses Achieve Vital Outcomes with Modernized Client Computing

Small businesses that are leaders in client compute modernization are:

47%	more likely to reduce IT costs
2x	more likely to report competitive advantages
68%	more likely to lower cybersecurity risks
60%	more likely to see higher end-user productivity
2.2x	more likely to achieve high ROI for IT investments

With client hardware in place that is designed to run efficiently and reliably, these leading organizations are nearly 50% more likely than competitors to lower their overall IT costs. Similarly, with modernized laptops, desktops and accessories freeing IT staff for more strategic and valuable roles, these small businesses are 2.2x more likely to report high ROI for all of their IT investments.

With modernized systems avoiding issues like end-of-life support for patching holes and solving legacy issues, leading small businesses see reduced security risks. By enabling innovative capabilities such as AI, modernized client computing gives these businesses higher productivity, which leads to competitive advantages.

Key Takeaways

As we can see from these results, by modernizing all client computing and working with partners who offer a full suite of laptops, desktops and critical hardware devices, small business IT organizations can overcome challenges in costs, security and management when it comes to a PC refresh. With updated hardware designed to not only run efficiently and reliably but also enable cutting-edge technologies such as AI, these small businesses can become more productive and innovative, while ensuring security and cost savings.

With modernized client computing in place, leading small businesses can meet the demands and requirements of today's technologies and start on a path that lets them achieve all of their goals.

About Aberdeen Strategy & Research

Aberdeen Strategy & Research, a division of Spiceworks Ziff Davis, with over three decades of experience in independent, credible market research, helps **illuminate** market realities and inform business strategies. Our fact-based, unbiased, and outcome-centric research approach provides insights on technology, customer management, and business operations to **inspire** critical thinking and **ignite** data-driven business actions.

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