

The Business Value of Microsoft Surface



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BUSINESS VALUE HIGHLIGHTS

Click any link and look for the ► symbol on the corresponding page. Use the Return to Highlights button to return to this page.

1.28X

net benefits-to-cost ratio

\$3,780

in additional benefits per
Surface device

7.3 hours

of higher productivity per device
and improved Copilot use

5.5 hours

of higher productivity
per device and
improved use of other
GenAI tools/solutions

1.7

other Windows-based
devices consolidated
per Surface device

36%

higher residual value

25%

more efficient device
management and security

28%

improved device repairability

Executive Summary

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, equipping employees with the right technology isn't just a necessity — it's a competitive advantage. IT teams are constantly under pressure to balance rapid innovation with operational efficiency while meeting evolving employee expectations. The emergence of generative AI (GenAI), shifting workplace priorities, and increasing cybersecurity threats make this challenge even more complex. Forward-thinking organizations tackle these demands head-on by investing in PCs offering premium experiences. These modern devices don't just power daily tasks — they enhance collaboration, streamline workflows, and provide cutting-edge security features to safeguard company data. The latest premium PCs also integrate GenAI capabilities, providing employees with smarter tools that boost efficiency and creativity and can change fundamental work processes.

IDC compared the costs, performance, and user impact for organizations using Microsoft Surface devices with other Windows-based devices. Its research demonstrates that organizations more than make up the cost of purchasing Surface devices through device efficiency and effectiveness gains. The benefits of using Surface include device consolidation and use cost savings, staff efficiencies, and higher user productivity. The ability to improve Copilot, other GenAI tools, and Microsoft 365 (M365) usage while giving mobile employees a better device for their purposes drives significant value in terms of higher productivity.

IDC calculates that study participants will realize overall benefits worth a net value of almost 1.28 times the cost of purchasing and deploying Surface devices. This equates to three-year average benefits of \$3,780 per Microsoft Surface device, which more than justifies study participants' investment in and use of Surface devices in the following areas:

- **IT efficiency benefits:**

These include reduced device purchase costs through consolidation and improved repairability, as well as staff efficiencies from streamlined and seamless deployments, management, support, and security activities.

- **Device savings benefits:**

These include higher residual device values, lower warranty* and energy costs, and necessary savings on accessories to increase device functionality and accessibility.

- **Employee experience benefits:**

These include the value of achieving higher employee productivity through the optimized use and the strong feature performance of Copilot and other GenAI tools designed to run on Surface devices. Interviewed organizations also cited the value of productivity gains from enhanced mobility, optimized meetings, and improved device availability with Surface.

Situation Overview

The way businesses operate, employees work, and IT supports the enterprise continues to undergo a massive transformation.

Some of the key changes include:

- **Continued hybrid and remote work:**

Work is no longer tied to a single location. Employees expect seamless transitions between home and office, requiring devices that support high-quality video conferencing, crystal-clear audio, and extended battery life. Reliable connectivity and mobility are now essential, not optional.

- **Security in an evolving threat landscape:**

Aging hardware leaves companies vulnerable to cyberthreats. IDC's Microsoft-funded survey from June 2024 showed that among the long list of concerns that keep U.S. IT decision-makers (ITDMs) up at night, security was at the top (58%). Modern PCs integrate advanced security at the hardware, firmware, and operating system levels, reducing risk while making security more effortless for employees. Features such as biometric logins enhance protection without compromising convenience.

* Extended warranties provide additional coverage beyond the standard warranty period for an additional fee.

- **The rise of PCs with AI capabilities:**

Artificial intelligence, including GenAI, is redefining how work gets done. Companies are rapidly adopting AI-driven tools that enhance efficiency and automate repetitive tasks. A November 2024 Microsoft-sponsored IDC InfoBrief (IDC #US52699124) found that, on average, an organization realizes a return of \$3.7 for every \$1 it invests in GenAI. A new generation of PCs — PCs with AI capabilities — is optimized for AI thanks to the addition of neural processing units (NPUs) that quickly, efficiently, and securely run AI workloads on the PC itself. The June 2024 survey showed that more than half of U.S. ITDM respondents were very interested/extremely interested in PCs with AI capabilities. Independent software vendors (ISVs) are currently rewriting their software to leverage NPUs, and IT should plan accordingly when buying new PCs that they expect to keep for the next three to four years to remain competitive in today's continuously evolving tech landscape.

- **Moving beyond legacy systems:**

Many businesses are still running aging Windows 10 devices that they acquired in the early days of the pandemic. The June 2024 IDC survey showed that one in four companies had notebook PCs overdue for a refresh. These outdated systems can't keep up with modern security standards or today's collaboration needs. Upgrading to new PCs unlocks better performance, improved cameras and audio, and a list of productivity-enhancing features.

- **Improved IT efficiency and smarter device management:**

As hybrid work is here to stay, IT teams are stretched thin supporting users in the office, at home, and everywhere in between. To succeed, they must streamline device procurement, deployment, and management. AI-driven automation improves the efficiency of IT operations, reduces downtime, and accelerates maintenance, security updates, and system rollouts.

- **Building a more sustainable installed base:**

A key benefit of today's modern notebook PCs is an increased focus on efficiency. For employees, this means systems that run longer on a single charge; for employers, it means less power draw per system per day, which can lead to real energy savings that also help efforts to meet company environmental, social, and governance targets.

- **Enabling a modern workforce:**

Technology should empower employees, not hold them back. The best modern devices are designed for collaboration and creativity, with AI-driven enhancements running right on the PC. Today, OS-based AI features such as auto framing, portrait blur, and voice focus leverage the NPU, a new silicon piece. We'll soon see more apps begin to use that same NPU to run AI workloads on the PC instead of in the cloud. Buying PCs for your company should no longer be a one-size-fits-all exercise. Understanding the current and future workloads of your different types of employees is essential to making the right investments.

Microsoft Surface for Business

Surface devices are designed for productivity, featuring high-performance displays, high-quality audio and video for collaboration, and intuitive pen and touch interfaces. Their user-friendly, repairable design ensures longevity and ease of maintenance. The Surface for Business lineup offers versatile form factors with the latest silicon to support professionals from the office to the frontline.

M365 Copilot and Surface — better together:

Every Surface device runs Windows and integrates seamlessly with M365, enhancing productivity and security. M365 Copilot, Microsoft's AI-powered assistant, further boosts efficiency by automating tasks, analyzing data, and enabling natural language interactions across M365 apps.

M365 also streamlines IT management with enterprise mobility and security tools such as Microsoft Entra ID, Microsoft Advanced Threat Analytics, and Microsoft Intune for identity, security, and device management. Microsoft Surface helps companies embrace modern business computing by combining premium hardware, AI-driven tools, and enterprise security.

The Business Value of Microsoft Surface

Study Firmographics

IDC conducted in-depth interviews and survey research to understand the incremental impact for organizations using Surface devices compared with other Windows-based PCs. IDC designed both streams of research to assess how the use of Surface devices impacted device costs, staff time requirements, device performance, and users.

IDC carried out in-depth interviews with 15 organizations that had provided Microsoft Surface devices to a significant number of employees. It conducted online survey research with 528 organizations that used Surface devices and 75 organizations that used other Windows-based PCs only.

Table 1 provides an overview of the interviewed organizations’ firmographics and Surface usage, showing that these organizations were generally large, with an average of 6,245 employees (a median of 4,500 employees) and an annual revenue of \$2.01 billion (a median of \$1.30 billion). These organizations provided perspectives on Surface usage from diverse geographies and industry verticals, representing the North American; Europe, Middle East and Africa; and Asia/Pacific regions and the healthcare (2), retail (2), manufacturing (2), financial services, financial technology, government, higher education, insurance, natural resources, professional services, SaaS, securities, and investment sectors. They reported significant use of Microsoft Surface devices, providing an average of more than 3,000 devices (3,102) to employees and an 8% annual growth in their Surface environments.

TABLE 1
Firmographics of Interviewed Organizations

Firmographics	Average	Median
Number of employees	6,245	4,500
Annual revenue	\$2.01B	\$1.30B
Number of current Microsoft Surface devices	3,102	1,500
Annual growth in Microsoft Surface devices	8%	5%
Countries	United States (5), Canada, United Kingdom (4), Australia (4), India	
Industries	Healthcare (2), retail (2), manufacturing (2), financial services, financial technology, government, higher education, insurance, natural resources, professional services, SaaS, securities, investment	

n = 15; Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews, January 2025

Survey research covered similar topics to the in-depth interviews via a web survey. A total of 603 organizations participated, answering various questions about their Surface and other Windows PC environments. The companies in this survey also represented diverse geographies, industry verticals, and company sizes.

Choice of Microsoft Surface Devices

Interviewed organizations described the criteria behind their decision to provide Microsoft Surface devices to employees instead of other Windows-based PCs. They made their purchasing decisions based on the overall value proposition, which included total cost assessment and user and business enablement — revealing that their decision criteria often differ from the more straightforward review of initial device costs that drive the device purchasing decisions of many organizations.

Interviewed Microsoft customers consistently cited factors such as Surface devices' seamless integration with Microsoft 365 and other Microsoft products and the strong performance of cutting-edge solutions such as Microsoft Copilot, which enhanced the user experience and resulted in higher employee productivity. They also valued the devices' lightweight design and high-resolution screens, which support mobility, making them ideal for employees who frequently work away from their desks and those who seek device agility beyond mobility. Additionally, Surface devices offer robust security features crucial for organizations with high cybersecurity requirements. Their overall performance, ease of deployment, and lower maintenance costs compared with other Windows-based devices also contributed to being the preferred choice.

Interviewed Microsoft customers provided the following insights into their considerations:

Good device for mobile workers (financial services):

“The enhanced productivity from the multimode functionality of the device, which functions as both a laptop and a tablet, allows employees to adapt to different work environments. This versatility is very valuable in dynamic work settings.”

Strong performance for Copilot and other important applications (retail):

“The performance of Surface devices, especially with AI features like Copilot, is significantly better, with faster boot times and smoother operation of Office applications.”

Seamless functionality, strong security (manufacturing):

“The functionality of Microsoft devices is seamless with the Microsoft business suite, offering excellent security features and user experiences. These are key drivers for our choice.”

Functionality and versatility (financial technology):

“Surface devices' multimode functionality, serving as both a laptop and tablet, boosts productivity by allowing employees to adapt to various work environments. This versatility is invaluable in dynamic work settings.”

Microsoft Surface's Business Value and Quantified Benefits

IDC's study demonstrates that organizations find significant value in providing Microsoft Surface devices to their employees over other Windows-based PCs due to enhanced employee experience, its associated productivity gains, and cost and operational efficiencies. Microsoft Surface devices integrate well with core business applications such as M365, provide increased accessibility to mobile employees, and offer strong performance of GenAI tools such as Microsoft Copilot. These factors contribute to higher usage and substantial productivity gains associated with employees' deepening use of Copilot and other GenAI tools for their day-to-day work. Surface devices are ideal for mobile workers because they provide strong security and performance in addition to features that resonate with them. They enable device consolidation, easy deployment, streamlined management, robust security features, and reduced support overhead, resulting in overall cost and time savings in IT operations. These benefits increase organizational productivity and lower the total cost of device ownership.

Figure 1 (next page) quantifies the value that study participants gained from using Surface devices compared with other Windows-based PCs.

IDC calculates that organizations will realize benefits worth \$3,780 per Surface device over three years, which equates to a net value of 1.28 times the direct investment costs, in the following areas of value:

- **Employee experience benefits:**

These include net employee productivity gains from working faster and more effectively through the improved use of Copilot and other GenAI tools. Employees also realize value through enhanced mobility and improved device accessibility and availability. IDC quantifies these benefits to be worth an average of \$2,103 per Surface device over three years.

- **IT efficiency benefits:**

These include the value of consolidating other devices and staff efficiencies across deployment, management, security, and support activities. IDC calculates the value of these cost savings and staff efficiencies at an average of \$1,349 per Surface device over three years.

- **Cost savings:**

These include higher residual device value, optimized warranty costs due to strong device reliability, energy cost savings, and reduced spending on device accessories. IDC expects the combined total cost savings to be an average of \$327 per Surface device over three years.

► FIGURE 1

Total Three-Year Benefits Versus Investment Costs per Surface Device

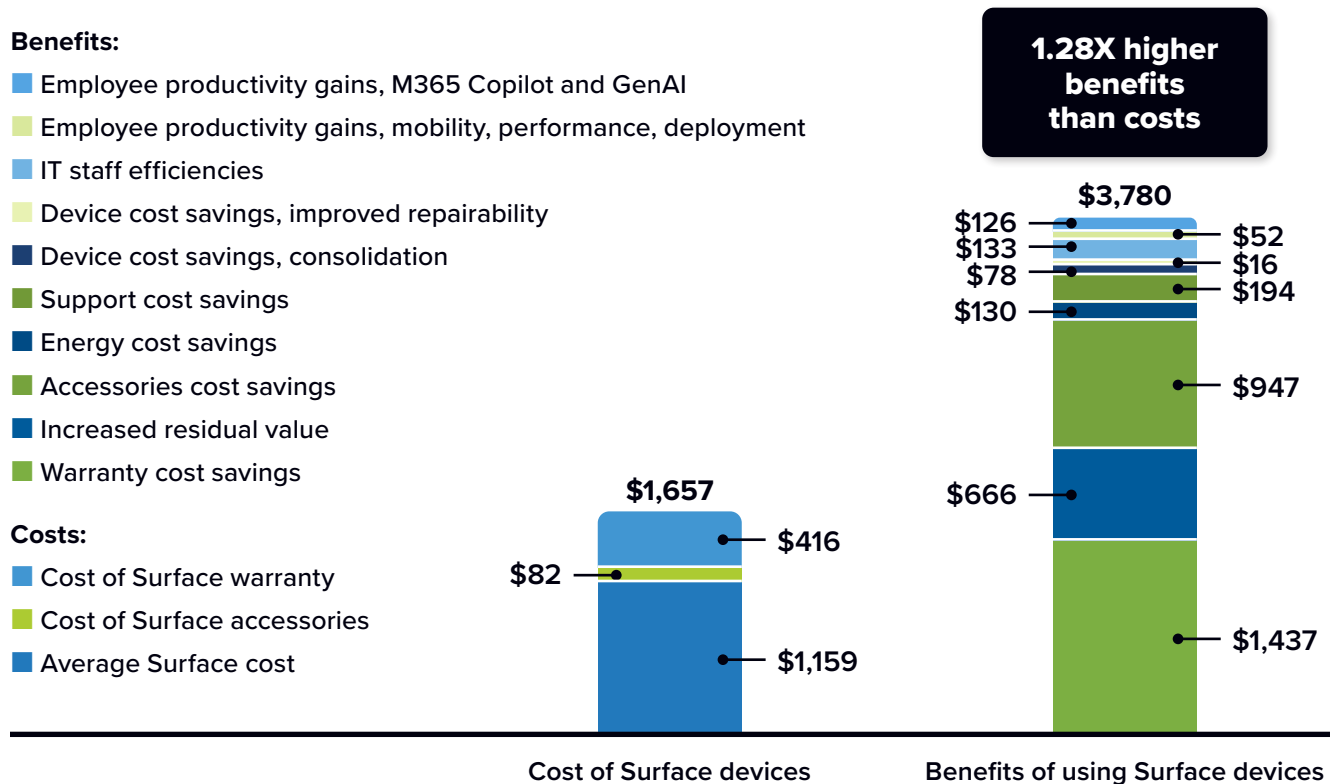
(\$ per Surface device over three years)

Benefits:

- Employee productivity gains, M365 Copilot and GenAI
- Employee productivity gains, mobility, performance, deployment
- IT staff efficiencies
- Device cost savings, improved repairability
- Device cost savings, consolidation
- Support cost savings
- Energy cost savings
- Accessories cost savings
- Increased residual value
- Warranty cost savings

Costs:

- Cost of Surface warranty
- Cost of Surface accessories
- Average Surface cost



n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

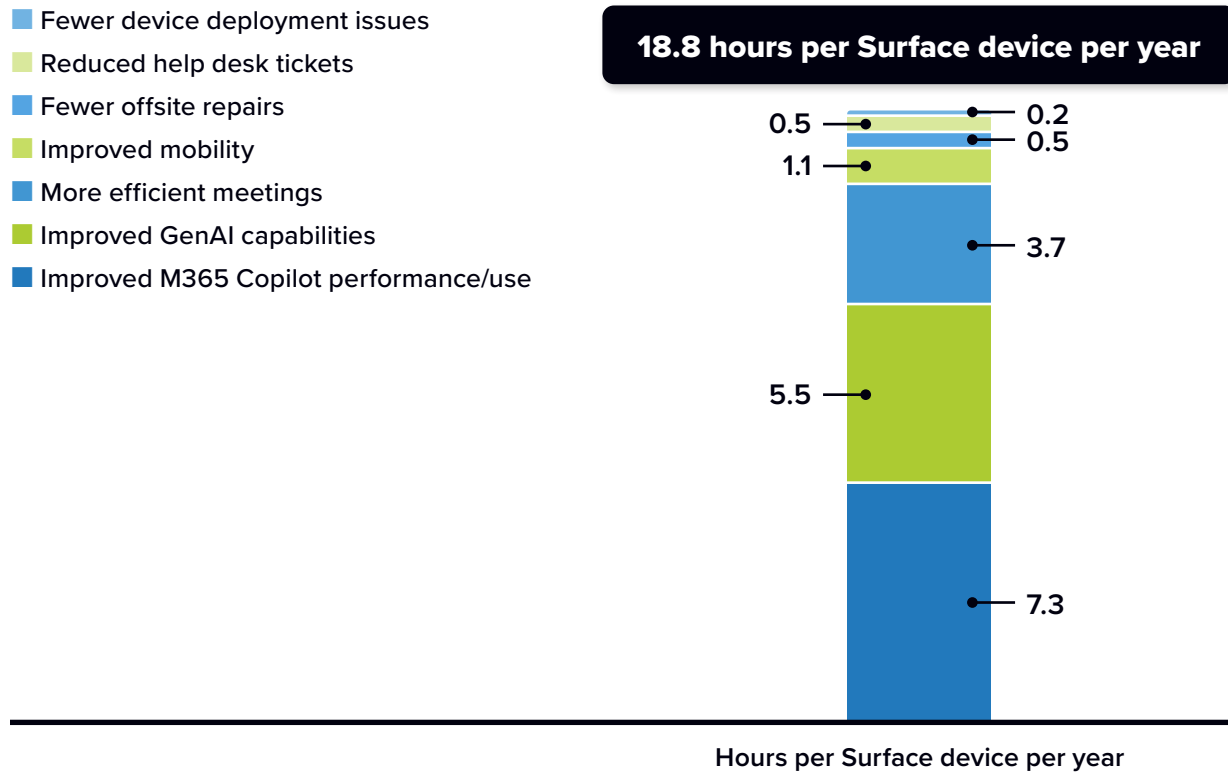
For an accessible version of the data in this figure, see [Figure 1 Supplemental Data](#) in Appendix 2.

Employee Experience Benefits

IDC's research demonstrates that Microsoft Surface devices significantly enhance employee experience and productivity compared with other Windows-based PCs. The strong integration, accessibility, and performance of GenAI tools such as Microsoft Copilot on Surface devices increase usage and result in substantial productivity gains. Employees who use Surface devices also benefit from strong device quality, which minimizes lost productive time due to outages and part failures. Surface devices offer improved mobility, security, and performance, making them ideal for mobile workers and increasing overall productivity. IDC calculates that organizations using Surface devices gain an average of 25.5 hours of increased net productivity per device per year, making employees who leverage Surface devices substantially more effective than those using other Windows-based PCs (see **Figure 2**, next page).

FIGURE 2**Total User Productivity Gains per Surface Device**

(Hours per Surface device)



n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

For an accessible version of the data in this figure, see [Figure 2 Supplemental Data](#) in Appendix 2.

Employee Experience Benefits: Use of Copilot and GenAI Tools

Like most organizations, study participants aim to encourage employees' increased and innovative use of GenAI tools, including Microsoft Copilot. They understand that Copilot and other GenAI solutions have the potential to handle significant amounts of day-to-day work and drive use cases with substantial productivity and business impacts. However, employees' willingness to use these solutions and drive maximum impact often depends on factors such as how Copilot and other GenAI tools perform and their accessibility and integration with other applications and workstreams.

Although study participants — similar to many organizations — are generally early in the adoption of Copilot and other GenAI solutions, they consistently reported that their employees make greater and more effective use of these solutions with Surface devices than with other Windows-based PCs.

Study participants cited various factors for the higher value they achieved with Surface devices, repeatedly emphasizing Copilot and other GenAI solutions' strong integration, accessibility, and performance on Surface devices.

Study participants provided numerous examples of why Surface devices outperform other Windows-based PCs for Copilot and GenAI:

Strong Copilot capabilities as use increases (government):

"Copilot is powerful for us because it keeps data private and doesn't train on our data. Surface's Copilot+ PC model processes many AI tasks on-device. As we transition to fully utilizing AI, these Surface and Copilot+ devices will be crucial for us."

Integration with Teams means higher productivity gains (manufacturing):

"Surface devices have made our employees more mobile and productive. Integration with Microsoft Copilot and Teams boosts performance by 30%–40%, improving key business applications."

Strong performance due to integration (financial services):

"Copilot is seamlessly integrated with Surface devices, and the performance is fast. On a normal PC, I see a bit of a lag, but on Surface devices, it's fast ... Also, with Surface devices, we can use Copilot to investigate better ways of doing things and investigate apps that are there but we've never used."

Increased value of using Copilot with other applications (healthcare):

"We use Copilot on Surface devices to empower our workforce, particularly for clinicians' note-taking on the EMR and summarizing notes. Its native integrations and compatibility with our ecosystem allow us to leverage more value from our technology."

Ease of use and access to Copilot (SaaS):

"Copilot is a Microsoft-driven tool, and Surface keyboards have a dedicated key for it. This ease of use reduces IT workload. Without the button, users would ask how to access Copilot. This homogeneity is beneficial."

Table 2 (next page) demonstrates why study participants capture value through employee productivity gains from using Copilot and other GenAI tools with Microsoft Surface devices. Employees with Surface devices are more likely to use Copilot (38% more likely to have a M365 Copilot license) and other GenAI solutions (45% more likely to use them). Higher usage ties back to the factors this paper describes above, including more seamless integration with and access to Copilot and other GenAI solutions and the value of a strong experience with these solutions on Surface devices.

When combined with higher productivity associated with employee use of Copilot and GenAI solutions — as employees leverage the significant capabilities these tools bring — IDC’s results show that study participants capture much higher productivity gains with Surface devices for use of M365 Copilot (7.3 hours per device per year, 78% higher) and other GenAI solutions (5.5 hours per device per year, 22% higher).

► **TABLE 2**
Surface Benefits for M365 Copilot and Other GenAI Usage

Benefits	Other Windows PCs	Microsoft Surface	Difference	Benefit
M365 Copilot Benefits				
Percentage of devices with M365 Copilot license	15%	21%	6%	38%
Average employee productivity gain from using M365 Copilot	22%	28%	6%	28%
Value of higher net employee productivity, three years per device	\$1,057	\$1,877	\$820	78%
Number of hours, higher employee productivity per device per year	9.5	16.8	7.3	78%
Other GenAI Benefits				
Percentage of devices used for other GenAI	38%	54%	17%	45%
Value of higher net employee productivity, three years per device	\$2,781	\$3,398	\$617	22%
Number of hours, higher employee productivity per device per year	24.9	30.4	5.5	22%

n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

Employee Experience Benefits: Improved Mobility

Many interviewed organizations cited Surface devices as a strong match for their mobile workforce as a primary reason behind their choice. They consistently noted that Surface devices are lightweight and secure, include options for strong 5G connectivity, and have a premium design that does not sacrifice performance at all. As a result, they chose Surface devices for employees who are regularly on the go but still require the strongest possible laptop experience.

Numerous interviewed organizations described the value of Surface devices for their mobile workers:

Right levels of security and mobility for employees who travel (financial services):

“As a financial services company, security and mobility are crucial. Our sales and client support teams travel frequently, and the lightweight devices’ mobility is essential, allowing them to conduct business from the airport. They are very satisfied with this.”

Flexibility and mobility in clinical settings (healthcare):

“For the use cases we have in our clinical settings, Surface devices provide more flexibility in terms of mobility ... The Surface devices are better in terms of integration with the old Windows environment and the EMR systems we have, and the touch-screen capability and resolution are better.”

Lightweight, premium-type device (SaaS):

“Surface devices are lighter, preferred by our sales and traveling teams. Their sleek look resembles MacBooks. Flexible configurations allow customization for different roles, providing the same device, which simplifies management and IT tasks.”

Because Surface devices provide such a strong experience for mobile workers, study participants reported higher productivity gains associated with mobile work for these employees. **Table 3** (next page) shows that they attributed 11% higher productivity gains through mobile enablement to Surface devices, which contributed to 13% higher overall productivity gains through mobility.

TABLE 3

Surface Benefits for Mobility

Benefits	Other Windows PCs	Microsoft Surface	Difference	Benefit
Percentage of devices that mobile workers used	32%	32%	N/A	N/A
Average productivity gain from mobile working	9%	10%	1%	11%
Value of higher net productivity, three years per device	\$946	\$1,065	\$119	13%
Number of hours, higher productivity per Surface device per year	8.5	9.5	1.1	13%

n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

Employee Experience Benefits: Improved Performance and Availability

Study participants also linked increased employee productivity to improved functionality, performance, and availability of Surface devices compared with other Windows-based PCs.

Benefits include:

- **More efficient meetings:**

Surface device functionality and integration enable more judicious and efficient meetings, resulting in average meeting-related time savings of 15%. Specifically, organizations referenced the value of meeting synopsis capabilities through Copilot, on-the-fly searches and actions employees took during meetings, and the ability to create high-quality interactive whiteboard environments with cameras, pens, and other features.

- **Reduced support requirements:**

Due to improved device performance with Surface, users lose an average of 20% less productive time during direct help desk support and 66% less productive time when devices require offsite repair. Study participants cited Surface devices' intuitive usability and their strong resiliency and performance in minimizing the resources necessary for device support.

IT Efficiency Benefits

Organizations using Microsoft Surface devices reported experiencing significant IT efficiency benefits compared with using other Windows-based PCs. Surface devices enable device consolidation, reducing the need for multiple devices and lowering the associated costs. They also offer ease of deployment through integrated solutions such as Microsoft Intune and Autopilot, saving time and reducing errors. Additionally, Surface devices provide streamlined management and robust security features and reduce support overhead — saving overall costs and time in IT operations.

IT Efficiency Benefits: Device Consolidation

Many study participants reported replacing more than one device with a single Microsoft Surface device. They noted that in many cases, employees required numerous devices to match the levels of functionality, access, and performance of a single Surface device, including through the two-in-one offering. This not only enabled them to purchase fewer devices for their employees but also lowered the costs associated with device warranties, support, and accessories.

Interviewed Microsoft customers spoke about Surface devices' value in terms of consolidation:

Device consolidation (retail):

"Surface devices have enabled us to consolidate multiple devices for some employees, reducing the need for separate tablets."

Device consolidation and power efficiencies (natural resources):

"We've reduced costs by replacing two devices with one device ... Surface devices require around 10%–15% less power than previous/other Windows-based devices, saving on power costs."

Table 4 (next page) demonstrates the value of device consolidation. IDC's research shows that 29% of Surface devices replace more than one other Windows-based PC or device on average, meaning that a typical Surface device replaces 1.7 other devices on average. This means study participants could purchase considerably fewer devices in total, reducing their overall spending on device purchases by an average of 14% (\$194 in savings per Surface device purchased) despite the typically higher initial purchase cost of Surface devices.

► TABLE 4

Surface Benefits for Device Consolidation

Benefits	Other Windows PCs	Microsoft Surface	Difference	Benefit
Average number of devices required per Surface device	1.7	1.0	0.7	43%
Average cost per device	\$776	\$1,159	(\$383)	-49%
Total calculated weighted cost per Surface device	\$1,354	\$1,159	\$194	14%

n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

IT Efficiency Benefits: Ease of Deployment

Study participants cited the ease with which they can deploy Surface devices compared with other Windows-based devices as an important area of value. Their ability to leverage integrated deployment functionality from solutions such as Microsoft Intune and Autopilot enabled more seamless and timely Surface device delivery to users. As a result, not only did deployments require less staff time, but employees experienced fewer errors and problems that could hinder their ability to use their devices.

Interviewed Microsoft customers detailed the deployment benefits that Surface devices provided:

Ease of deployment with Intune and Autopilot (financial services):

“The integration with Microsoft Intune and the Autopilot deployment process allows us to deploy our devices quicker and at a lower cost.”

Deployment ease and consistency (SaaS):

“Using Autopilot and Intune with Surface devices is more efficient, with fewer bugs and hiccups. We don’t need to modify them much — they just work.”

Zero-touch provisioning enabling fast deployment (healthcare):

“Surface devices have significantly reduced deployment time with zero-touch provisioning through Autopilot, saving us four to six hours per device.”

Table 5 shows the overall cost of deploying Surface devices compared with other Windows-based PCs. On average, study participants required 21% less staff time for deployment and saved an average of \$49 in other costs, such as deployment services per Surface PC, resulting in 45% average savings per deployed Surface device.

TABLE 5
Surface Benefits for Device Deployment

Benefits	Other Windows PCs	Microsoft Surface	Difference	Benefit
Hours to deploy per device	2.1	1.7	0.4	21%
Cost of staff time to deploy per device	\$111	\$88	\$23	21%
Other deployment cost savings	\$49	N/A	\$49	100%
Total device deployment costs per device	\$161	\$88	\$73	45%

n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

IT Efficiency Benefits: Management, Security, and Support Efficiencies

Study participants consistently cited the ease of managing Surface devices and improved security and performance as important value drivers. In terms of day-to-day management, interviewed Microsoft customers noted the value of integrating Intune and other functionalities compared with other types of devices. They also spoke positively about the impact of standardizing on high-quality and high-performing Surface devices.

Study participants noted:

Standardized environment that reduces device overhead (higher education):

“We chose Surface devices to standardize our devices and management, aiming to reduce support overhead and ensure consistency across the range.”

Strong management integration (professional services):

“Surface devices are ready for Intune management, unlike other manufacturers that may need manual maintenance for unique drivers. Microsoft Surface devices work seamlessly with Intune, requiring minimal manual involvement.”

Single pane of glass to manage with Intune (natural resources):

“Management is nicer because it’s built right in to our Intune portal. It pulls all of our Surface devices and puts them in one single pane of glass. We couldn’t do that with other PCs.”

Interviewed organizations also consistently provided strong positive feedback on Microsoft Surface devices’ robust security benefits, including substantial encryption capabilities, NFC support, security features such as BitLocker and biometric authentication, and seamless integration with UEFI and Intune for enhanced control. These features ensure data protection, the easy application of security policies, and reduced patching frequency, making Surface devices suitable for sensitive workloads and compliance requirements.

Interviewed organizations cited:

Strong encryption capabilities (manufacturing):

“Surface devices provide excellent hard drive encryption, protecting our business data even if the device is lost. This security feature is a significant benefit.”

Ease of applying security (natural resources):

“Surface devices are more secure, especially with UEFI. Securing them is easy with built-in policies that automatically apply upon deployment.”

Robust security and compliance with built-in features (financial technology):

“Using Surface devices enhances security and compliance with built-in features like BitLocker and biometric authentication through Windows Hello. These devices offer robust security.”

Table 6 (next page) shows the efficiencies study participants reported they achieved in terms of device management, security, and support. IDC calculates that interviewed Microsoft Surface customers required 25% less staff time on average to manage and secure a device per year and 20% less staff time to support equivalent device environments.

► TABLE 6

Surface Benefits for Device Management, Security, and Support

Benefits	Other Windows PCs	Microsoft Surface	Difference	Benefit
Device Management and Security				
Devices per FTE	84.2	111.6	27.4	33%
Hours to manage per device per year	22.3	16.8	5.5	25%
Cost of staff time to manage per device, three years	\$3,561	\$2,687	\$874	25%
Device Support				
Hours to support per device per year	2.5	2.0	0.5	20%
Cost of staff time to support per device, three years	\$400	\$322	\$78	20%

n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

Savings Benefits

Interviewed Microsoft Surface customers reported saving additional costs related to device quality and functionality compared with other Windows-based PCs. Importantly, they linked higher device residual value to Surface devices, meaning they can potentially capture more of their initial investment costs with Surface at the end of their device life cycles. They also noted that Surface devices have slightly lower extended warranty costs, consume less energy, and are more repairable, which helps organizations reduce costs and attain sustainability objectives. Finally, customers stated that their Surface devices require additional accessories, such as device docks, external cameras, headsets, and extra power supplies, less frequently than other Windows-based devices, a cost benefit that is enhanced by requiring fewer Surface devices to provide equivalent functionality to employees.

Interviewed Microsoft Surface customers provided specific examples of these device cost savings and optimizations:

Higher residual value (retail):

“Surface devices are more expensive, but after three years, their resale value makes them worthwhile. The initial purchase cost balances out when we sell them back.”

Cost efficiencies by avoiding accessories (financial technology):

“Overall, Surface devices are about 20% cheaper because their two-in-one compatibility reduces the need for additional peripheral devices like microphones and cameras.”

Energy efficiencies and cost saving (government):

“Switching to Surface devices resulted in energy savings of more than \$50 per year per device, highlighting their low power usage and sustainability.”

Long battery life (professional services):

“Surface device batteries outperform competing laptops, allowing us to use them longer than preferred. They continue to perform admirably beyond the desired three-year life cycle.”

Study participants reported that Surface devices have an average 36% higher residual value than other Windows-based PCs, highlighting how they maintain their value over time. Thus, even though study participants can potentially sell 1.7 other Windows-based PCs for every Surface device at the end of their useful lifespans, they still receive \$52 more (17% more) from Surface devices on average (see **Table 7**). As **Figure 3** on page 24 shows, Surface devices’ higher residual value is a key way in which opex advantages help offset any perceived price advantage of devices that initially cost less to purchase.

► **TABLE 7**
Surface Benefits for Device Residual Value

Benefits	Other Windows PCs	Microsoft Surface	Difference	Benefit
Average residual value per device	23%	31%	8%	36%
Total calculated residual value per Surface device	\$309	\$362	\$52	17%

n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

The ability to efficiently run Surface devices also provides benefits for study participants. Not only do Surface devices have a slightly lower average warranty cost (10%) relative to their purchase price, but more consolidated Surface environments compound these warranty cost savings (\$126 savings per Surface device; 23% savings). Likewise, study participants incur lower energy costs with Surface devices, resulting in 21% average savings worth an additional \$16 per device over three years (see **Table 8**).

TABLE 8
Surface Benefits for Device Warranty and Energy Costs

Benefits	Other Windows PCs	Microsoft Surface	Difference	Benefit
Average annual warranty cost as % of device purchase price	13%	12%	1%	10%
Total calculated warranty cost per Surface device, three years	\$542	\$416	\$126	23%
Energy cost per device per year	\$25	\$20	\$5	21%
Three-year cost of energy per Surface device	\$76	\$60	\$16	21%

n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

Finally, IDC's research shows that, because of Surface devices' strong functionality, study participants do not have to equip them as frequently with additional accessories, such as device docks, external cameras, headsets, and extra power supplies. This limits extra spending on these accessories and improves these devices' cost-value proposition (see **Table 9**, next page).

TABLE 9

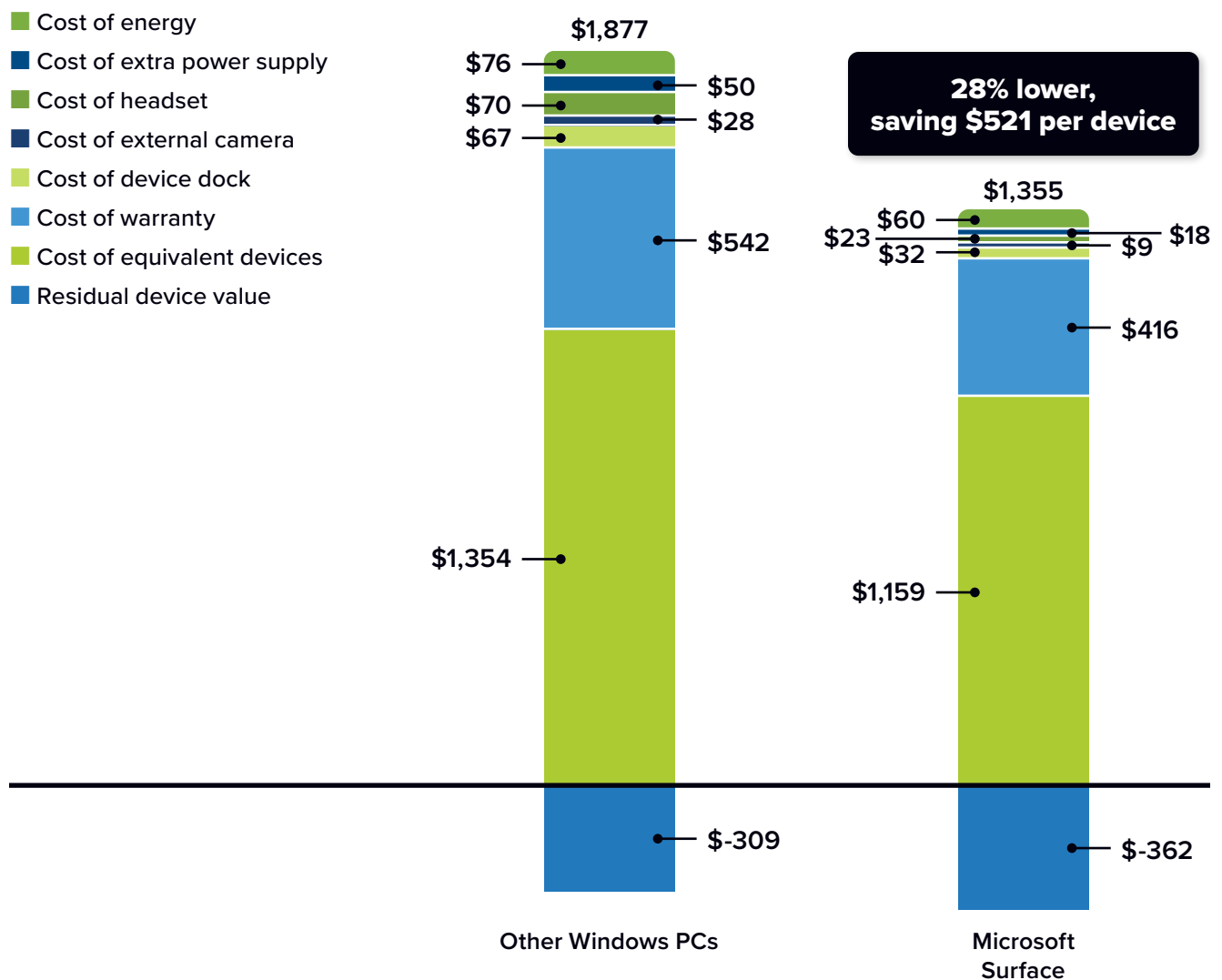
Surface Benefits for Accessory Requirements

Benefits	Other Windows PCs	Microsoft Surface	Difference	Benefit
Revised calculated change that Microsoft Surface device requires additional device dock	85%	40%	45%	53%
Calculated three-year cost of device docks per Surface device	\$67	\$32	\$35	53%
Revised calculated change that Microsoft Surface device requires additional external camera	41%	13%	28%	69%
Calculated three-year cost of external cameras per Surface device	\$28	\$9	\$19	69%
Revised calculated change that Microsoft Surface device requires additional headset	72%	24%	48%	67%
Calculated three-year cost of headsets per Surface device	\$70	\$23	\$47	67%
Revised calculated change that Microsoft Surface device requires additional power supply	55%	20%	35%	64%
Calculated three-year cost of power supplies per Surface device	\$50	\$18	\$32	64%
Total calculated three-year cost of accessories per Surface device	\$215	\$82	\$133	62%

n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

The cost savings that these factors generate together mean that Surface devices cost considerably less on average to buy and run than other Windows-based PCs. As **Figure 3** shows, IDC calculates that, including residual value, the average Surface device costs 28% less (\$521 less) to buy and run than other comparable Windows-based PCs even though a single Surface device often costs more than a single Windows PC from another OEM (see cost per device in **Table 4**).

► **FIGURE 3**
Total Three-Year Cost per Device
(\$ per Surface device)



n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

For an accessible version of the data in this figure, see [Figure 3 Supplemental Data](#) in Appendix 2.

Challenges/Opportunities

In today's uncertain macroeconomic environment, the increasing allocation of shrinking IT budgets to companywide AI initiatives is a key challenge. As a result, some organizations may offset costs by reducing spending on PC hardware, viewing it as a secondary priority. However, our research indicates that this approach is short sighted. Skimping on PC investments can hinder employee productivity, collaboration, and overall efficiency, ultimately limiting the full potential of AI-driven transformations.

Forward-thinking organizations recognize the opportunity of deploying premium PCs. These modern systems are essential to unlocking AI's full value in the workplace to create a competitive advantage for your company in a competitive environment. Investing in high-performance devices empowers employees with faster processing, advanced security, and AI-ready capabilities, enhancing productivity and satisfaction. Premium PCs also support seamless cloud integration, superior collaboration tools, and improved mobility, ensuring that teams can work efficiently regardless of their location.

By prioritizing the right technology investments and working with key ISVs to ensure that business-critical apps receive updates to leverage local AI capabilities, companies can boost workforce efficiency, reduce IT overhead, and enhance security — all while positioning themselves for long-term success in an AI-driven business landscape.

Conclusion

Surface devices align with broader market trends such as GenAI, hybrid work, and cybersecurity, making them a strategic choice for organizations. These devices have capabilities and features that can enhance collaboration, streamline workflows, and integrate AI capabilities, which in turn can boost efficiency and creativity across organizations.

Financially, IDC's analysis demonstrates that Surface devices offer significant value over other Windows-based PCs. IDC's study shows that using Surface devices leads to device-related cost savings, staff efficiencies, and higher employee productivity and effectiveness, with a net value of 1.28 times the purchase cost for these benefits. This translates to three-year average benefits of \$3,780 per device thanks to the improved use of M365 Copilot and GenAI tools; enhanced mobility; and cost savings and efficiencies tracing back to the high-quality, efficient, and secure nature of Surface devices.

Appendix 1: Methodology

IDC used its standard business value/ROI methodology for this project. This methodology involved gathering data from organizations currently using Surface devices and/or other Windows-based PCs.

Based on interviews with organizations using Surface and other Windows-based PCs, IDC performed a three-step process to calculate the ROI and payback period:

- 1. IDC gathered quantitative benefit information during the interviews using a comparative assessment of the impact of using Surface devices instead of other Windows-based PCs.** In this study, the benefits included device-related cost savings, IT staff efficiencies, and higher user productivity.
- 2. IDC created a complete investment (three-year total cost analysis) profile based on the interviews.**
- 3. IDC calculated the ROI and payback period.** It conducted a depreciated cash flow analysis of the benefits and investments for the organizations' use of Surface devices compared with the use of other Windows-based PCs over a three-year period.

IDC based the payback period and ROI calculations on several assumptions as follows:

- Time values were multiplied by burdened salary (salary + 28% for benefits and overhead) to quantify efficiency and manager productivity savings. For this analysis, IDC used its standard assumptions of an average fully loaded salary of \$100,000 per year for IT staff members and an average fully loaded salary of \$70,000 per year for non-IT staff members. IDC assumed that employees work 1,880 hours per year (47 weeks x 40 hours).

All dollar figures in this White Paper are in US\$.

Note: All numbers in this document may not be exact due to rounding.

Appendix 2: Supplemental Data

This appendix provides an accessible version of the data for the complex figures in this document. Click “Return to original figure” below each table to get back to the original data figure.

FIGURE 1 SUPPLEMENTAL DATA

Total Three-Year Benefits Versus Investment Costs per Surface Device

Benefits	Cost of Surface Device	Benefits of Using Surface Devices
Average Surface cost	\$1,159	N/A
Cost of Surface accessories	\$82	N/A
Cost of Surface warranty	\$416	N/A
Warranty cost savings	N/A	\$126
Increased residual value	N/A	\$52
Accessories cost savings	N/A	\$133
Energy cost savings	N/A	\$16
Support cost savings	N/A	\$78
Device cost savings, consolidation	N/A	\$194
Device cost savings, improved repairability	N/A	\$130
IT staff efficiencies	N/A	\$947
Employee productivity gains, mobility, performance, deployment	N/A	\$666
Employee productivity gains, M365 Copilot and GenAI	N/A	\$1,437

n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

[Return to original figure](#)

Appendix 2: Supplemental Data (continued)

FIGURE 2 SUPPLEMENTAL DATA
Total User Productivity Gains per Surface Device

User Productivity Gains	Hours per Year per Surface Device
Improved M365 Copilot performance/use	7.3
Improved GenAI capabilities	5.5
More efficient meetings	3.7
Improved mobility	1.1
Fewer offsite repairs	0.5
Reduced help desk tickets	0.5
Fewer device deployment issues	0.2

n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

[Return to original figure](#)

FIGURE 3 SUPPLEMENTAL DATA
Total Three-Year Cost per Device

Costs	Other Windows PCs	Microsoft Surface
Residual device value	-\$309	-\$362
Cost of equivalent devices	\$1,354	\$1,159
Cost of warranty	\$542	\$416
Cost of device dock	\$67	\$32
Cost of external camera	\$28	\$9
Cost of headset	\$70	\$23
Cost of extra power supply	\$50	\$18
Cost of energy	\$76	\$60

n = 15 (in-depth interviews), n = 603 (survey); Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews and Quantitative Survey, January 2025

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About the IDC Analysts



Tom Mainelli

Group Vice President, Device and Consumer Research, IDC

Tom Mainelli heads the Device and Consumer Research group, overseeing a wide array of hardware and technology categories that cater to both home and enterprise markets. His team's research spans PCs, tablets, smartphones, wearables, smart home devices, thin clients, displays, and virtual/augmented reality headsets. He also co-manages IDC's Supply-Side Research team, which monitors display and ODM production across various categories. IDC's Consumer Research, anchored by the Consumer Market Model, employs regular surveys and proprietary models to forecast numerous consumer-focused activities and spending across hardware, software, and services. As Group Vice President, Tom collaborates closely with company representatives, industry contacts, and other IDC analysts to provide comprehensive insights and analysis on a diverse range of commercial and consumer topics. A frequent speaker at public events, he travels extensively, enjoying every opportunity to engage with colleagues and clients worldwide.

[More about Tom Mainelli](#)



Linn Huang

Research Vice President, Devices and Displays, IDC

Linn tracks market trends and industry developments that impact the worldwide and U.S. markets for PCs, thin clients, and monitors. He participates in cross-research streams that cover all device categories.

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Matthew Marden

Research Vice President, Business Value Strategy Practice, IDC

Matthew is responsible for carrying out custom business value research engagements and consulting projects for clients in a number of technology areas with a focus on determining the return on investment of their use of enterprise technologies. Matthew's research often analyzes how organizations are leveraging investment in digital technology solutions and initiatives to create value through efficiencies and business enablement.

[More about Matthew Marden](#)

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