

New Technology: The Projected Total Economic Impact™ Of Windows 365 Link

Cost Savings And Business Benefits Enabled By Windows 365 Link

A FORRESTER NEW TECHNOLOGY PROJECTED TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY
COMMISSIONED BY MICROSOFT, JULY 2025

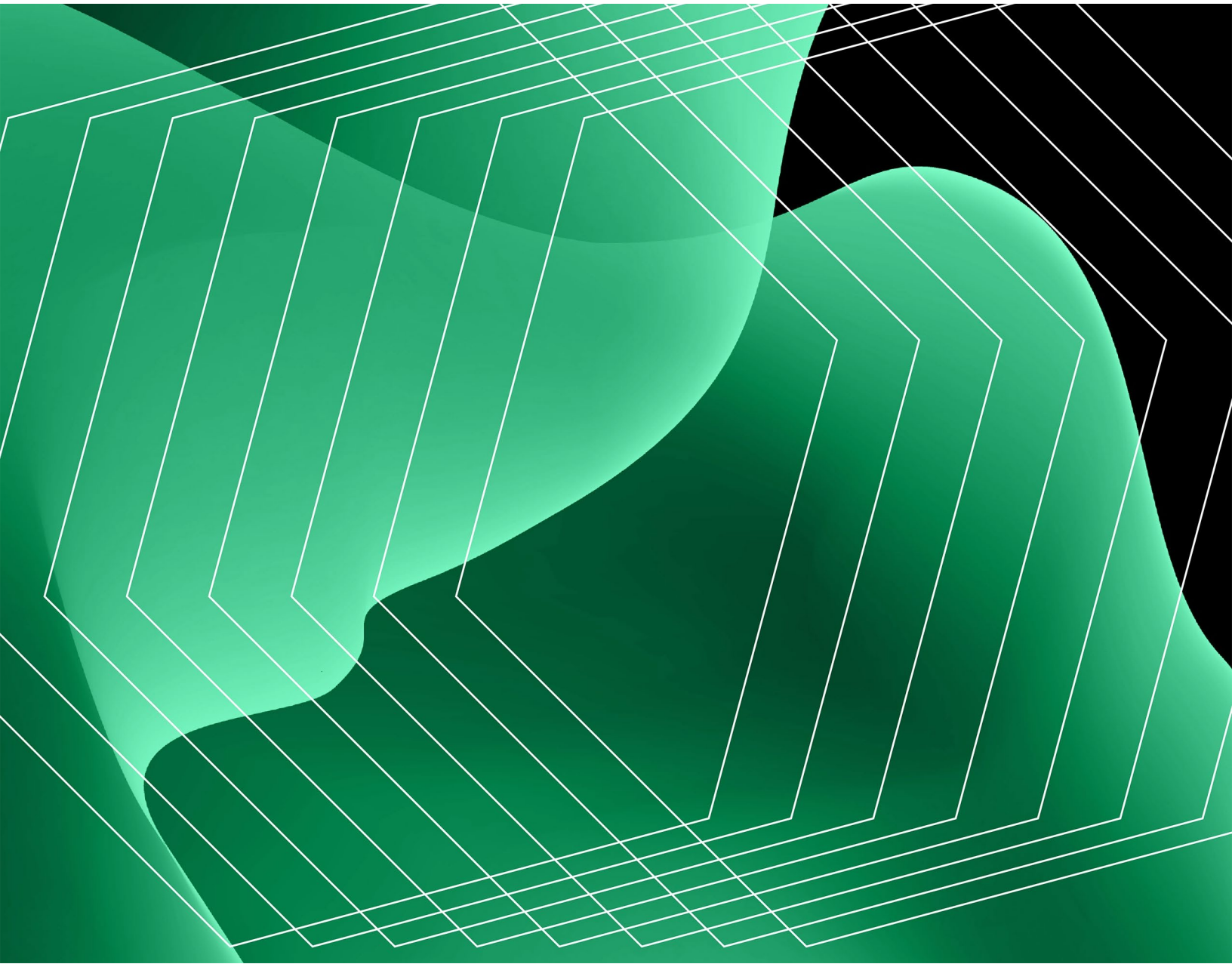


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ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

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Executive Summary

Shared PCs are a cost-effective way to extend the benefits of technology to frontline workers (and others), but they can create serious security, accountability, and efficiency issues for organizations. Without individual logins, it's difficult to implement security best practices like least-privilege for users or enforce multifactor/complex authentication. Tracking user activity, enforcing compliance, or preventing unauthorized access is similarly difficult. These challenges not only increase the risk of data breaches and audit failures but also slow down operations and complicate IT support. To stay secure and productive, organizations are looking to adopt simpler, more secure methods for managing shared access.

[Windows 365 Link](#) is a simple, secure, and purpose-built device that connects users directly to Windows 365, enabling them to work in a familiar Windows desktop with responsive experiences delivered from the Microsoft Cloud. Well suited for frontline workers and desk-based knowledge workers in shared workspaces, it stores no local data, runs no local apps, supports passwordless authentication, and is designed to withstand ongoing use. It performs well for video conferencing and video playback due to local processing, and it supports high-fidelity Microsoft Teams meetings. It requires minimal configuration and can be managed alongside other devices using Microsoft Intune.

Microsoft commissioned Forrester Consulting to conduct a Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) study and examine the potential return on investment (ROI) enterprises may realize by deploying Windows 365 Link.¹ The purpose of this study is to provide readers with a framework to evaluate the potential financial impact of Windows 365 Link.



Return on investment (ROI)
109%–195%



Net present value
\$2.6M–\$4.6M

To better understand the benefits, costs, and risks associated with this investment, Forrester interviewed six decision-makers with experience using Windows 365 Link and surveyed 212 IT decision-makers and end-user managers with experience or interest in using Windows 365 Link. For the purposes of this study, Forrester aggregated the interviewees' and survey respondents'

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

experiences and combined the results into a single [composite organization](#) which is a \$4-billion, multinational conglomerate with 2,000 employees and 500 contractors.

Interviewees said that prior to using Windows 365 Link, their organizations used shared PCs in environments such as call centers, production sites, retail back rooms, and shared or unassigned desks in an office. This exposed their organizations to security risks and unexpected downtime for the PCs and, in some cases, their business operations. It also resulted in unproductive time and user frustration as employees signed in and out of accounts and applications repeatedly. Desk-based employees at the interviewees' organizations also used dedicated desktops and laptops, incurring high hardware and maintenance costs.

After using Windows 365 Link in preview with Windows 365 Enterprise or Windows 365 Frontline, the interviewees told Forrester they expected their employees to be able to work more productively, securely, and cost effectively. They expect key results from the investment to include increased end-user and IT team productivity, lower hardware costs, and enhanced security — especially on shared devices.

“It’s security, cost efficiency, and sustainability benefits in one little black box.”

GLOBAL SERVICE OWNER, VIRTUAL DESKTOP INFRASTRUCTURE, MANUFACTURING

KEY FINDINGS

Quantified benefits. Six-year, risk-adjusted present value (PV) quantified benefits for the composite organization include:

- **Increased end-user productivity, saving 22% to 30% of unproductive time and delivering a projected \$2.4 million to \$3.3 million in financial benefit.** At the composite, employees using Cloud PCs in a variety of different use cases sign on more quickly, have a more responsive connection, and experience less downtime due to hardware-related service issues.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Strengthened security, saving a projected \$1.5 million to \$1.7 million.** The Windows 365 Link is a thin-client-like device that is purpose-built to connect to Windows 365 (and nothing else) and is automatically updated by Microsoft. As such, it cannot hold any data and supports passwordless authentication. In addition, software is limited to only what is required to connect to Windows 365. These safeguards effectively remove most of the attack vectors that result in security incidents for the composite organization.
- **Reduced hardware costs, returning a projected \$758,000 to \$1.2 million to the business.** The Windows 365 Link device is \$349, which is less expensive than the composite organization's legacy traditional PCs and thin clients, which can require an additional investment in IT resources to manage the thin client's operating system software. The device's projected six-year lifecycle allows the composite organization to use it for twice as long as its current fleet of PCs. It is also easier and less expensive to ship and has lower ongoing maintenance and repair costs.
- **Increased IT team productivity, delivering a projected \$139,000 to \$235,000 in financial benefit.** The composite organization's IT team spends less time on desktop maintenance tasks with the Windows 365 Link devices than they would on traditional PCs, making 1,500 to 2,400 hours available for higher-value work. The composite's IT team configures its Windows 365 Link devices in minutes, saving hours of time that would otherwise be spent on provisioning and decommissioning a traditional PC. IT also spends less time on hardware-related service tickets and repairs.
- **Accelerated onboarding time, delivering \$102,000 to \$537,000 in financial benefit.** The same quick configuration benefit that saves IT time also allows new desk-based employees at the composite organization to be productive more quickly, allowing them to become productive up to one week faster. Rather than waiting — sometimes up to a week — for their new PC to be configured and shipped, a Windows 365 Link device is ready in minutes. The composite organization also stores devices onsite and gets new employees working immediately by simply plugging in the device.

Unquantified benefits. Benefits that provide value for the composite organization but are not quantified for this study include:

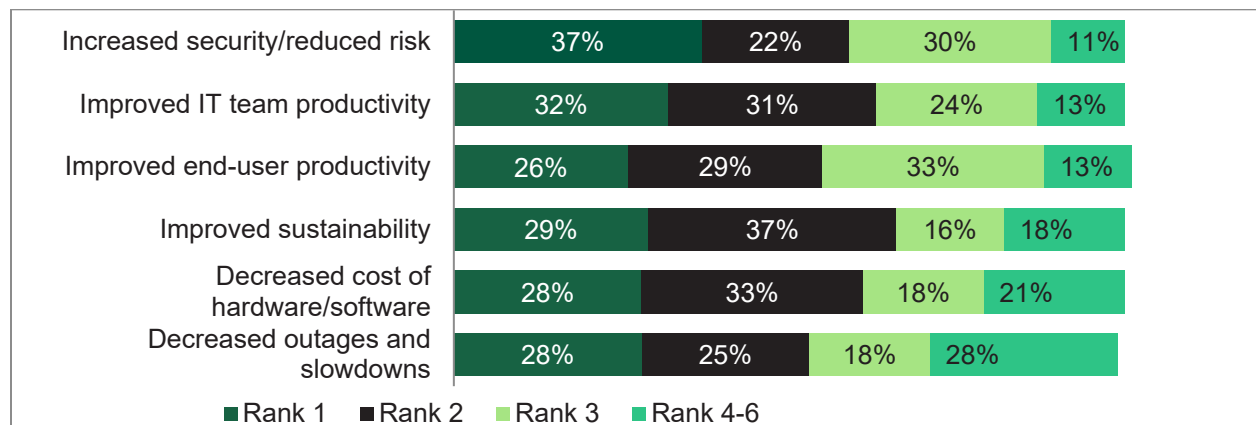
- **Enhanced business continuity.** In factories, retail stores, and similar locations, a nonfunctioning PC also often means an interruption in operations, which can be much more costly and disruptive than the simple loss of employee productivity. The Windows 365 Link device's stability and durability minimize these outages for the composite organization.

“A laptop is not intended to operate 24/7. There are things that can break. It can overheat. In a factory, it’s dirty, so the display and keyboards get dirty. I see less break/fix on a Windows 365 Link device than I see on the laptop just because of the nature of it. I mean, this is a black box.”

GLOBAL SERVICE OWNER, VIRTUAL DESKTOP INFRASTRUCTURE, MANUFACTURING

- **Ability to use less skilled technicians for device deployment, maintenance, and decommissioning.** Because Windows 365 Link requires minimal configuration, it is easy to move from one location to another — the device only needs to be plugged in to start working. Instead of requiring a service ticket and a devices technician, servicing or configuration is addressed at the composite by technical staff that are already onsite or even frontline employees/supervisors.
- **Improved sustainability.** Windows 365 Link devices use less material than a traditional PC, contain more recycled materials, consume less power, and stay in service longer. The result is an improved sustainability posture for the composite organization.

Top Ranked Expected Benefits Of Windows 365 Link



Base: 155 IT decision-makers at firms with experience or interest in using Windows 365 Link
 Note: Listed by weighted average rank
 Source: A commissioned survey conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Microsoft, April 2025

Costs. Six-year, risk-adjusted PV costs for the composite organization include:

- **Windows 365 service licenses and Windows 365 Link devices for affected employees worth \$2.1 million.** The composite organization purchases 645 devices in Year 1 at the list price of \$349 each (595 for immediate use and 50 to be stored for future use by new employees or to replace broken devices). It does not need to buy any additional devices for the rest of the six-year period of the analysis. Because the device only works with Windows 365, the composite organization also purchases Windows 365 Enterprise or Windows 365 Frontline licenses for the use cases it has identified.
- **Planning and implementation costs worth \$277,000 planning and implementing the deployment of Windows 365 Link devices.** A group of six mid- to senior-level IT decision-makers identifies use cases, pilots, and manages the rollout of the devices upfront. There is also a small time commitment from affected employees to learn about and adjust to using the device instead of the PC they previously used.

Forrester modeled a range of projected low-, medium-, and high-impact outcomes based on evaluated risk. This financial analysis projects that the composite organization accrues the following six-year net present value (NPV) for each scenario by enabling Windows 365 Link devices:

- Projected high impact of a \$4.6 million NPV and projected ROI of 195%.
- Projected medium impact of a \$3.6 million NPV and projected ROI of 152%.
- Projected low impact of a \$2.6 million NPV and projected ROI of 109%.



ROI

109%–195%



BENEFITS PV

\$4.9M–\$7.0M



PNPV

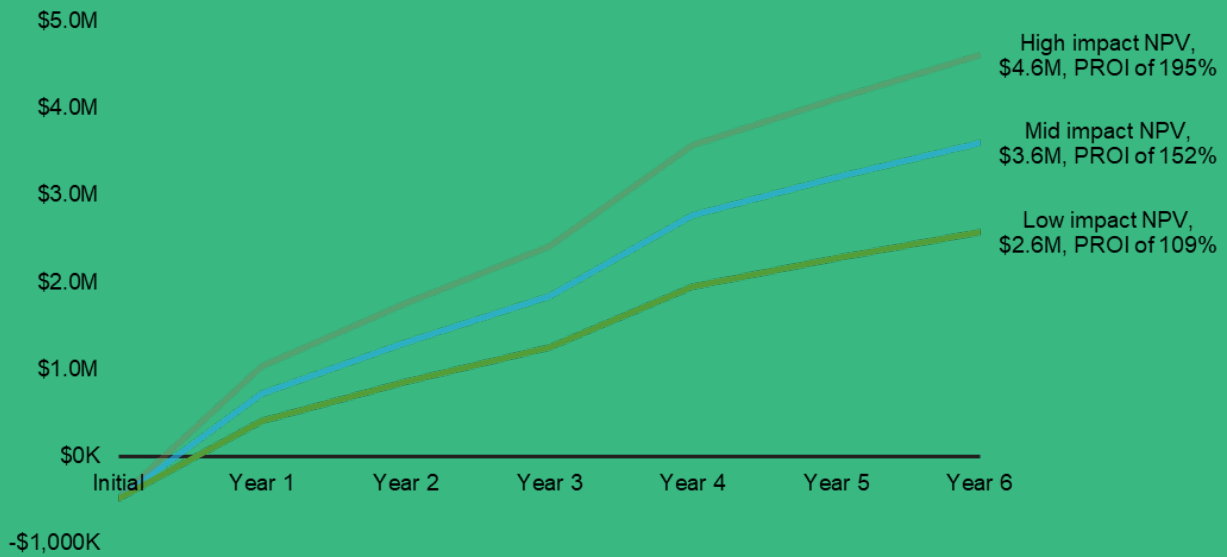
\$2.6M–\$4.6M



TOTAL COSTS

\$2.4M

Six-Year Projected Financial Analysis For The Composite Organization



TEI FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

From the information provided in the interviews, Forrester constructed a Total Economic Impact™ framework for those organizations considering an investment in Windows 365 Link.

The objective of the framework is to identify the cost, benefit, flexibility, and risk factors that affect the investment decision. Forrester took a multistep approach to evaluate the impact that Windows 365 Link can have on an organization.

DISCLOSURES

Readers should be aware of the following:

This study is commissioned by Microsoft and delivered by Forrester Consulting. It is not meant to be used as a competitive analysis.

Forrester makes no assumptions as to the potential ROI that other organizations will receive. Forrester strongly advises that readers use their own estimates within the framework provided in the study to determine the appropriateness of an investment in Windows 365 Link.

Microsoft reviewed and provided feedback to Forrester, but Forrester maintains editorial control over the study and its findings and does not accept changes to the study that contradict Forrester's findings or obscure the meaning of the study.

Microsoft provided the customer names for the interviews but did not participate in the interviews.

1. Due Diligence

Interviewed Microsoft stakeholders and Forrester analysts to gather data relative to Windows 365 Link.

2. Interviews

Interviewed six representatives at organizations using Windows 365 Link to obtain data about costs, benefits, and risks.

3. Composite Organization

Designed a composite organization based on characteristics of the interviewees' organizations.

4. Financial Model Framework

Constructed a financial model representative of the interviews using the TEI methodology and risk adjusted the financial model based on issues and concerns of the interviewees.

5. Case Study

Employed four fundamental elements of TEI in modeling the investment impact: benefits, costs, flexibility, and risks. Given the increasing sophistication of ROI analyses related to IT investments, Forrester's TEI methodology provides a complete picture of the total economic impact of purchase decisions. Please see Appendix A for additional information on the TEI methodology.

The Windows 365 Link Customer Journey

Drivers leading to the Windows 365 Link investment

Interviews			
Role	Industry	Region	Number Of Employees
Global service owner, virtual desktop infrastructure	Manufacturing	Global	100,000
Cloud endpoint solutions lead	IT services	EMEA, UK HQ	200
Head of workplace design	Manufacturing	Global, Germany HQ	20,000
Solutions architect, end-user services	Energy	Global, Canada HQ	5,000
General manager, corporate IT	Information services	Global, Japan HQ	2,800
Modern workplace product manager	Telecommunications	Global, New Zealand HQ	3,000

KEY CHALLENGES

Before deploying Windows 365 Link, most interviewees told Forrester that their organizations used both physical PCs as well as virtualization in one or more use cases, accessing them with traditional desktops, laptops, kiosks, and/or thin clients. The most popular use cases included call centers, retail back rooms, production environments, and hotdesking or hoteling situations where employees worked from an office but did not have assigned desks or individual devices.

Interviewees and survey respondents noted how their organizations struggled with common challenges, including:

- **End-user productivity issues.** Interviewees described problems such as slow log-on times, repeated app launches on shared PCs, and inability to connect and be productive due to hardware failure. The global service owner of virtual desktop infrastructure at a manufacturing company shared, “If a laptop gets broken, it can take hours to get it back online ... I would say up to a day.” Frontline workers’ productivity was also hampered by limited access to collaboration tools, inconsistent connectivity (especially over Wi-Fi,

which was not always available in field environments), and disrupted access to their virtual machines.

- **Security and compliance risks.** Several interviewees shared that their organizations commonly used shared accounts for production and other frontline workers, creating significant security vulnerabilities. The global service owner of virtual desktop infrastructure in manufacturing reported: “We are using physical machines like typical desktops and laptops in combination with shared accounts, like a generic account. Those shared accounts are a security risk for us.” Bring-your-own-device (BYOD) situations introduced compliance risks, especially in regulated industries like healthcare and the public sector. The cloud endpoint solutions lead at an IT services company explained: “[My client] couldn’t use BYOD because they’d lose cyber essentials compliance with those unmanaged devices connecting. Their options were to do it anyway and risk failing an audit, or to buy more expensive third-party products and integrate them. With Windows 365 Link, they can provide an inexpensive device and go about their day knowing they have a solution that actually adheres to those security principles.”
 - **High hardware and lifecycle costs.** Shared desktop machines used as kiosks in retail and production environments were overpowered and expensive for the limited tasks required. Machines in harsh environments, such as factories, field locations, and retail stores, led to high replacement and repair costs for the interviewees’ organizations. The solutions architect for end-user services at an energy company pointed out: “When you go to a mine site, there’s oil, there’s dirt, there’s mud, there’s grease, and those things track. So now that damages the physical hardware.” Shorter device lifespans for physical PCs (usually three years for laptops and desktops) increased total cost of ownership compared to the Windows 365 Link device’s projected six years.
 - **IT operational burden.** Device provisioning was time-consuming, often taking hours per machine largely due to complex imaging and patching processes for desktops, laptops, or even traditional thin clients. The cloud endpoint solutions lead at an IT service company estimated, “We could take up to five days to provision and deliver a PC.” Managing shared desktop machines also created overhead costs associated with user profile management and security. Finally, break/fix support required IT personnel to travel or be onsite, which wasn’t always feasible. As the cloud endpoint solutions lead in IT services explained, “The time they used to spend resolving those kinds of break/fix issues with, let’s say, a thin client or a BYOD or whatever ... that’s just not getting ticketed anymore because of Windows 365 Link.”
-

- **Logistics and asset management.** Shipping and tracking traditional PCs for contractors was costly and unreliable for many of the interviewees' organizations and lost or unreturned devices were common with temporary or remote workers. The solutions architect at an energy company elaborated: "With a disparate workforce spread across North America, we rely on people leaders to let us know when a person's gone and to get the hardware back. That doesn't always happen, so keeping command and control of your physical assets is always a challenge. We had one situation where a vehicle was found to have six old laptops in it."

"Get a device, clear a device, clean the device, prep the device, ship the device — across all the different sites, that time adds up. With the Windows 365 Link device, we save most of that time."

SOLUTIONS ARCHITECT, END-USER SERVICES, ENERGY

COMPOSITE ORGANIZATION

Based on the interviews and survey, Forrester constructed a TEI framework, a composite company, and an ROI analysis that illustrates the areas financially affected. The composite organization is representative of the interviewees' and survey respondents' organizations, and it is used to present the aggregate financial analysis in the next section. The composite organization has the following characteristics:

- **Description of composite.** The global consumer goods manufacturing company earns \$4 billion in revenue annually, with a full-time workforce of 2,000 employees. It uses a total of 500 contractors to perform specialized knowledge-worker tasks and seasonal manufacturing maintenance activities. In addition to its six manufacturing facilities, it runs 25 retail flagship stores in major cities and three customer service call centers. The factories operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week while call centers run 24 hours a day on weekdays and stores are open 16 hours a day, 360 days a year. These operations are geographically distributed around the world.

- **Deployment characteristics.** After spending several months testing, running proofs of concept in the various settings where Windows 365 Link will be deployed, and planning for the deployment, the composite organization purchases 645 devices for use with Windows 365 Enterprise or Windows 365 Frontline. It replaces shared desktops in factories, call centers, and retail stores and also replaces individual knowledge worker desktops that are coming to the end of their lifecycle (approximately 30% of all knowledge worker PCs). The composite also maintains a total of 50 devices, stored locally, to be used as replacement devices that can be installed/deployed by local technicians or shift workers as required.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

\$4 billion in annual revenue

2,000 employees and 500 contractors

Includes a mix of 1,200 frontline workers and contractors (in retail, factory, and call centers) and 1,300 knowledge workers and contractors

Currently uses both dedicated and shared desktops, laptops, and other devices (e.g., kiosks, tablets, thin clients)

Analysis Of Benefits

Quantified benefit data as applied to the composite

Total Projected Benefits								
Benefit	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total	Present Value
Total projected benefits (low)	\$1,464,439	\$944,359	\$944,359	\$1,464,439	\$944,359	\$944,359	\$6,706,314	\$4,940,952
Total projected benefits (mid)	\$1,809,667	\$1,118,797	\$1,118,797	\$1,809,667	\$1,118,797	\$1,118,797	\$8,094,522	\$5,972,589
Total projected benefits (high)	\$2,141,729	\$1,288,885	\$1,288,885	\$2,141,729	\$1,288,885	\$1,288,885	\$9,438,998	\$6,971,247

INCREASED END-USER PRODUCTIVITY

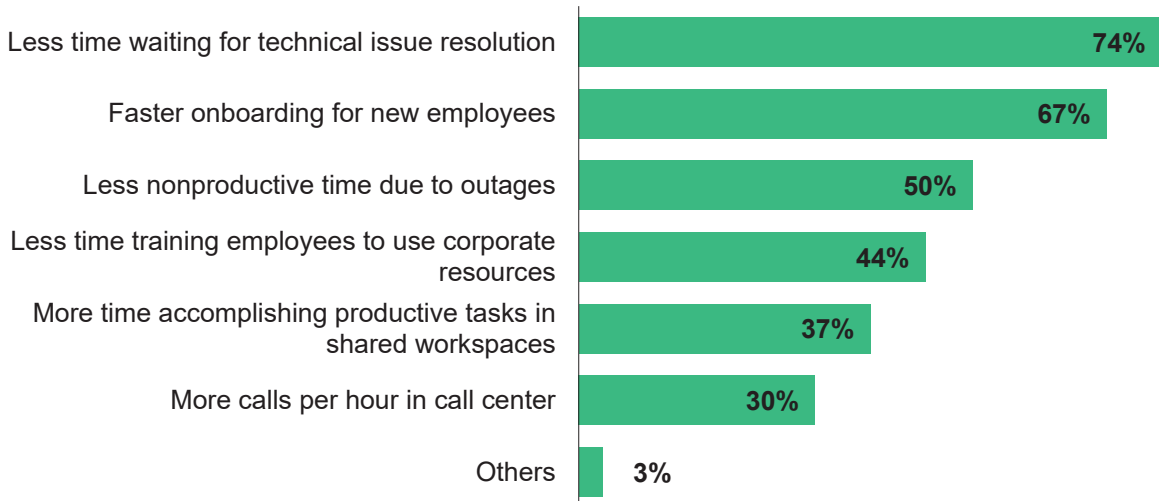
Evidence and data. Interviewees told Forrester that their end users experienced productivity improvements during their preview of Windows 365 Link, and that they expected those improvements to continue or grow as their deployment continued. Survey respondents also indicated that they expected significant growth in productivity for end users across a spectrum of use cases. They attributed these increases to the following factors:

- Interviewees noted the Windows 365 Link device allowed employees to connect quickly to a persistent Windows 365 Cloud PC that provided all the applications they needed and that “remembered” their previous actions. This was especially important for workers who used a shared device to complete multiple distinct tasks throughout the day, such as shipping and receiving packages or monitoring computer-assisted production lines. The head of workplace design at a manufacturing organization told Forrester: “They use Windows 365 Link to connect to their own Windows 365 Cloud PC where all the applications run. And when they move to the next station, they just sign in and they’re back exactly at the same place where they left off previously. This brings a much better workflow for the end users and saves a lot of time for them.”

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

- Interviewees reported that all the users at their organizations experienced faster and more trouble-free logins with a Windows 365 Link device than with their traditional PCs. This was a particular advantage for employees in customer-facing jobs. The modern workplace product manager at a telecommunications company put it this way: “In traditional PCs, you have to open Windows, unlock it with a PIN, use facial recognition, whatever, and then you’ve got to go open the app and then launch your Windows 365 Cloud PC, so you are already at step three, maybe step four. You’ve got a customer waiting, getting more and more frustrated. The login experience is a lot slicker with Windows 365 Link.”

“In which of the following ways do you expect end-user productivity to increase with Windows 365 Link?”



Base: 151 IT decision-makers and end-user managers at firms with experience or interest in using Windows 365 Link who expect end-user productivity to increase

Source: A commissioned survey conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Microsoft, April 2025

“We estimate Windows 365 Link will be five to 10 times better for our end users [than current thin clients]. It will provide faster connections, better web conferencing, will be flexible to use for new hires, and compatible with various devices.”

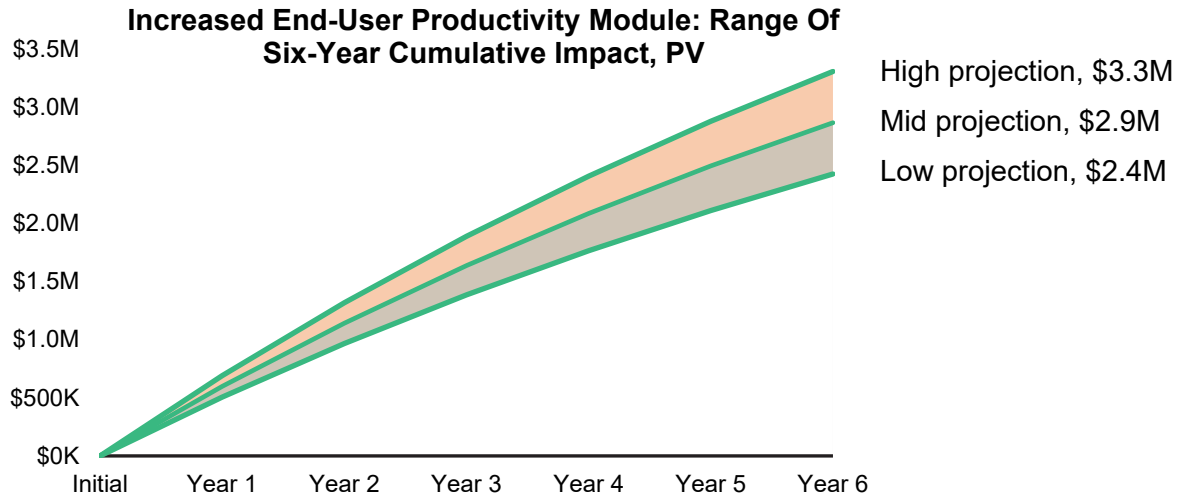
GENERAL MANAGER, CORPORATE IT, INFORMATION SERVICES

Modeling and assumptions. Based on the interviews and survey, Forrester assumes the following about the composite organization

- Call center employees lose 6% of their time to connectivity, login, and device failure issues related to sharing desktops and Windows accounts. The fully burdened hourly rate for call center employees is \$35.²
- Frontline production workers lose 20 minutes per shift to similar connectivity, login, and device failure issues when they use shared devices and passwords. The fully burdened hourly rate for frontline production workers is \$31.³ These employees work in three shifts per day, 365 days a year.
- Frontline retail employees also lose 20 minutes per shift to these issues. The fully burdened hourly rate for frontline retail employees is \$22.⁴ These employees work in two shifts a day, 360 days per year (with limited closings for major holidays).
- The average desk-based employee loses 3% of their working time to these issues. The fully burdened hourly rate for a desk-based employee is \$55.⁵ These employees work 2,080 hours per year.
- Seasonal production contractors and desk-based contractors lose productivity at the same rate as their employed counterparts, but they bill the organization at a weighted average rate of \$86 per hour.
- Windows 365 Link devices used with Windows 365 provide the composite organization with improved stability and faster, more reliable connectivity, which cuts between 22% and 30% of these employees' nonproductive time.
- The composite organization recaptures 50% of the time these employees save.

Results. This yields a six-year projected PV ranging from \$2.4 million to \$3.3 million.

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS



Increased End-User Productivity								
Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
A1	Total unproductive call center hours	Survey	18,720	18,720	18,720	18,720	18,720	18,720
A2	Fully burdened hourly rate for a call center employee	US Bureau of Labor Statistics	\$35	\$35	\$35	\$35	\$35	\$35
A3	Total unproductive factory hours	Survey	73,000	73,000	73,000	73,000	73,000	73,000
A4	Fully burdened hourly rate for a factory employee	US Bureau of Labor Statistics	\$31	\$31	\$31	\$31	\$31	\$31
A5	Total unproductive desk worker hours	Survey	13,104	13,104	13,104	13,104	13,104	13,104
A6	Fully burdened hourly rate for a desk worker	US Bureau of Labor Statistics	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$55
A7	Total unproductive retail hours	Survey	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
A8	Fully burdened hourly rate for a retail employee	US Bureau of Labor Statistics	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22	\$22
A9	Total unproductive contractor hours	Survey	8,949	8,949	8,949	8,949	8,949	8,949

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

A10	Blended fully burdened hourly rate for a contractor	Composite	\$86	\$86	\$86	\$86	\$86	\$86
A11	Subtotal: Unproductive end-user hours	$(A1 \cdot A2) + (A3 \cdot A4) + (A5 \cdot A6) + (A7 \cdot A8) + (A9 \cdot A10)$	\$5,068,534	\$5,068,534	\$5,068,534	\$5,068,534	\$5,068,534	\$5,068,534
A12 _{LOW}			22%	22%	22%	22%	22%	22%
A12 _{MID}	Percentage of unproductive time saved with Windows 365 Link	Interviews	26%	26%	26%	26%	26%	26%
A12 _{HIGH}			30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
A13	Productivity recapture	TEI standard	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
A _t _{LOW}			\$557,539	\$557,539	\$557,539	\$557,539	\$557,539	\$557,539
A _t _{MID}	Increased end-user productivity	$A11 \cdot A12 \cdot A13$	\$658,909	\$658,909	\$658,909	\$658,909	\$658,909	\$658,909
A _t _{HIGH}			\$760,280	\$760,280	\$760,280	\$760,280	\$760,280	\$760,280
Six-year projected total: \$3,345,234–\$4,561,680			Six-year projected present value: \$2,428,228–\$3,311,218					

STRENGTHENED SECURITY

Evidence and data. One of the first benefits of Windows 365 Link the interviewees mentioned was the security benefits. These were also valued highly by survey respondents. Cybersecurity was a top concern at the interviewees' organizations, and the use of shared devices and passwords, as well as the increasing use of personal devices by contractors and employees doing remote work, exacerbated these potential issues. Interviewees told Forrester that Windows 365 Link addressed their security concerns in a number of ways. It did not allow users to run any apps locally or store any data locally on the device; it was purpose-built for use with a Windows 365 Cloud PC, so there was little reason for someone to steal it; it did not have users with local administrator rights so no one could tamper with or override security policies; and it supported passwordless authentication, minimizing the chance of bad actors using stolen credentials.

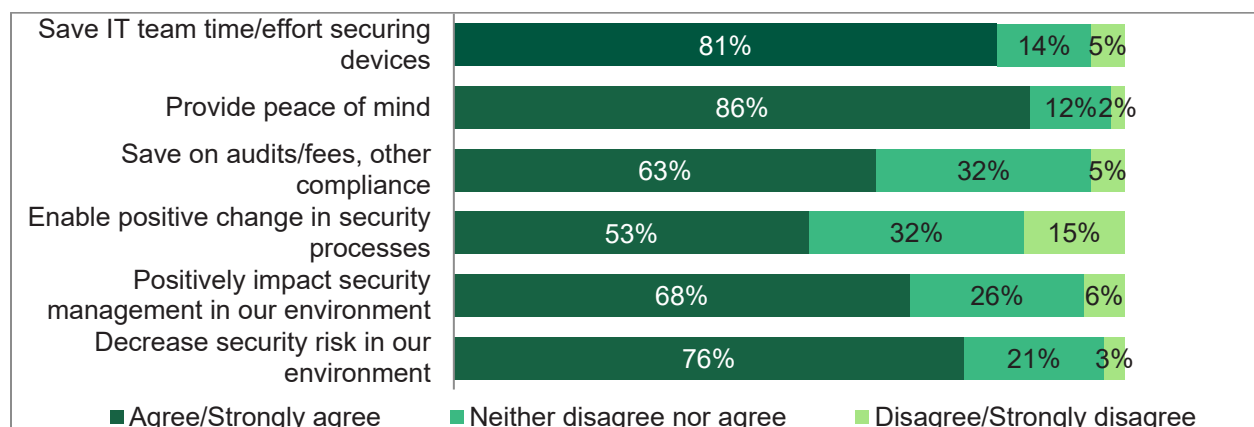
- The head of workplace design at a manufacturing company described the features that increased security for their organization: "It's a big value from a security perspective because the operating system makes sure there is no user data on the endpoint. It's

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

encrypted by default. It has a TPM [Trusted Platform Module] built in. So, basically, they took care of everything that in a regular scenario we need to think about in terms of how we want to secure this platform.”

- Regarding the low security impact of a stolen device, the global service owner of virtual desktop infrastructure at a manufacturing company explained: “Security is very strong because there is no data. We can even put Windows 365 Link devices in external warehouses or give them to suppliers that need to access our computers. With traditional PCs, because they’re not in our company location, we cannot 100% control the physical security. If devices get stolen, there is a security risk. But with Windows 365 Link, if somebody steals it, all right, you lost \$350, but that’s it. There’s no danger. I think that’s one of the key strengths of the device.”
- The modern workplace product manager at a telecommunications company was particularly pleased with the fact that the device is “locked down” from a security standpoint: “When we move to a Windows 365 Link device, then they don’t get a device that they can mess around on in-store. I manage everything via Microsoft Intune and there are no local administrators, so it’s a lot more secure. Your challenge and response activities plus the lifecycle of the operating system are better managed as well.”
- Finally, the head of workplace design in manufacturing appreciated the reduced workload the device created for their security team: “We just went through their documentation where they say, ‘Okay, by default, this setting is on, this is on, and this is on. For us, that was great — we don’t need to spend any work on securing that platform.”

Expected Security Benefits Of Windows 365 Link

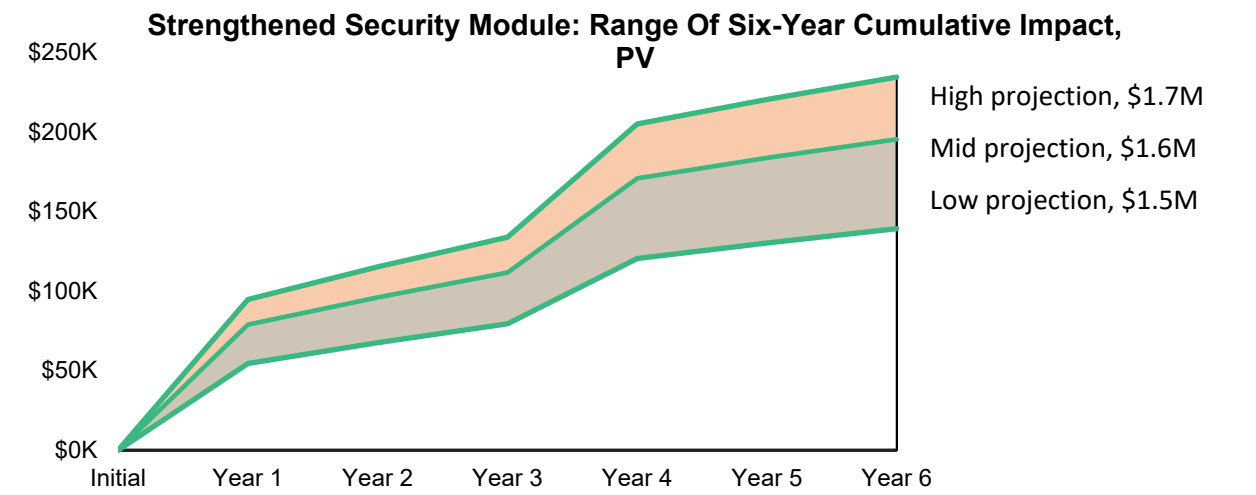


Base: 145 IT decision-makers at firms with experience or interest in using Windows 365 Link who think it will improve security
 Source: A commissioned survey conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Microsoft, April 2025

Modeling and assumptions. Based on the interviews and survey, as well as proprietary Forrester research into security risks, Forrester assumes the following about the composite organization and its exposure to a security breach:

- Given the composite organization’s size, the likely average internal and external costs of a security breach would be \$3,685,000.⁶
- The likelihood that the composite organization will experience a breach in any given year is 66%.⁷
- The use of Windows 365 Link devices will address 50% of the composite organization’s physical device attack vectors.⁸
- The penetration of Windows 365 Link devices as a percentage of all the devices in the composite organization is 30%, and those devices will protect it against the security threats it can address between 90% and 99% of the time.
- In addition, the fact that the Windows 365 Link devices are integrated with the composite organization’s security and compliance policies automatically (as they are managed through Microsoft Intune) means that the security team saves time setting, configuring, and updating policies for the devices:
 - Security team members would have spent 40 hours per month on these tasks before Windows 365 Link devices. These tasks were performed by technicians. The fully burdened hourly rate for technicians is \$80.
 - The composite organization recaptures 50% of that time savings in other productive work from the security team.

Results. This yields a six-year projected PV ranging from \$1.5 million to \$1.7 million.



“There’s not another device that integrates into the compliance engine of Microsoft Intune like Windows 365 Link does.”

CLOUD ENDPOINT SOLUTIONS LEAD, IT SERVICES

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

Strengthened Security								
Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
B1	Total internal and external cost of breaches for the composite	Forrester research	\$3,685,000	\$3,685,000	\$3,685,000	\$3,685,000	\$3,685,000	\$3,685,000
B2	Likelihood of experiencing one or more breaches	Forrester research	66%	66%	66%	66%	66%	66%
B3	Percentage of breaches from attack vectors Windows 365 Link device can address	Forrester research	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
B4	Windows 365 Link devices as a percentage of all devices deployed	Interviews	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
B5	Annual risk exposure addressable with Windows 365 Link	$B1*B2*B3*B4$	\$364,815	\$364,815	\$364,815	\$364,815	\$364,815	\$364,815
B6 _{LOW}			90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
B6 _{MID}	Reduced risk of exposure to breach with Windows 365 Link	Interviews	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
B6 _{HIGH}			99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%
B7	Hours of security policy/configuration tasks eliminated by Windows 365 Link device	Interviews	480	480	480	480	480	480
B8	Fully burdened hourly rate for a security team member	TEI standard	\$80	\$80	\$80	\$80	\$80	\$80
B9	Productivity recapture	TEI standard	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Bt _{LOW}			\$347,534	\$347,534	\$347,534	\$347,534	\$347,534	\$347,534
Bt _{MID}	Strengthened security	$(B5*B6)+ (B7*B8*B9)$	\$365,774	\$365,774	\$365,774	\$365,774	\$365,774	\$365,774
Bt _{HIGH}			\$380,367	\$380,367	\$380,367	\$380,367	\$380,367	\$380,367
Six-year projected total: \$2,085,204–\$2,282,202			Six-year projected present value: \$1,513,601–\$1,656,597					

REDUCED HARDWARE COSTS

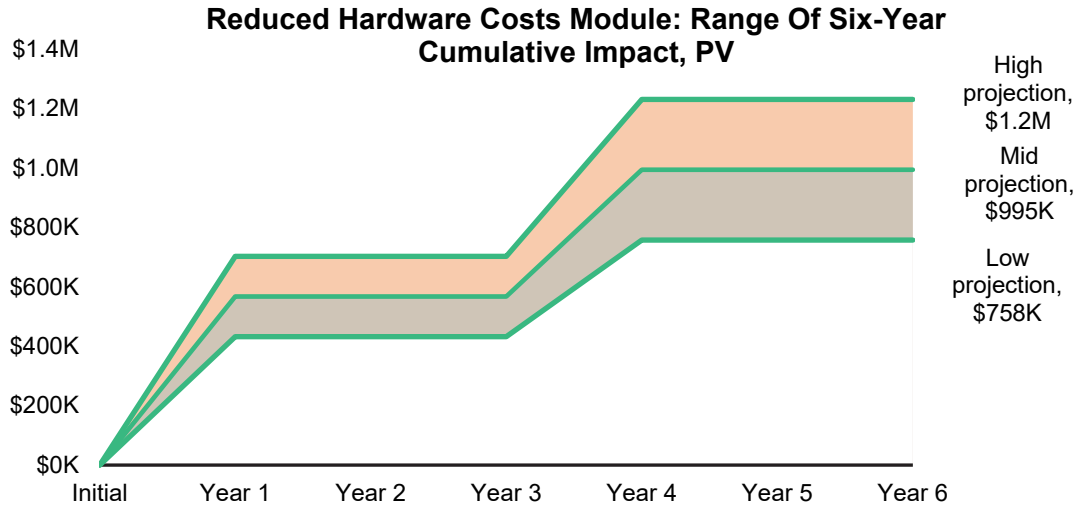
Evidence and data. Interviewees were well aware of the difference in cost between a Windows 365 Link device and a desktop or laptop that might otherwise be used to access virtual machines, and several mentioned that its availability could be a factor driving increased adoption of Windows 365 within their organizations. Interviewees noted that while a decision-maker in a business unit might balk at paying for a Windows 365 license when they needed to also pay for an expensive device to access it, Windows 365 Link's price made it easier to justify the purchase of the license. Interviewees cited several factors that contributed to the device's cost advantage, including a low purchase price, reduced cost of shipping a smaller and lighter device, and its extended six-year lifecycle.

The head of workplace design at a manufacturing company explained: "Everyone gets their own Windows 365 Cloud PC that they connect to from the Windows 365 Link device and that they can also access from their own PC at home. Therefore, we do not need to equip everyone with a desktop or laptop.

Modeling and assumptions. Based on the interviews and survey, Forrester assumes the following about the composite organization:

- Before deploying Windows 365 Link, the composite organization would have purchased 595 desktops, which would have come off lease within 12 to 18 months. It would then have replaced those machines in Year 4 as their lifecycle ended.
- Depending on the use cases for the 595 machines and the buying power of the composite organization, their average cost could range from \$700 to \$1,200 each.
- The average cost to ship each machine, including packaging, postage, and insurance, would be \$100.
- The composite organization avoids buying these machines in favor of replacing them with Windows 365 Link devices, thus saving 100% of that cost.

Results. This yields a six-year projected PV ranging from \$758,000 to \$1.2 million.



“The costs are already lower than a laptop or desktop and, with the extended life cycle time, it’s far less expensive even if you factor in the cost of the Windows 365 license.”

GLOBAL SERVICE OWNER, VIRTUAL DESKTOP INFRASTRUCTURE, MANUFACTURING

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

Reduced Hardware Costs								
Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
C1	Desktops for employees converting to Windows 365 Link devices	Composite	595	0	0	595	0	0
C2 _{LOW}			\$700	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$700
C2 _{MID}	Average cost of replaced hardware	Interviews	\$950	\$950	\$950	\$950	\$950	\$950
C2 _{HIGH}			\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200
C3	Cost to ship hardware	Interviews	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
C _t _{LOW}			\$476,000	\$0	\$0	\$476,000	\$0	\$0
C _t _{MID}	Reduced hardware costs	$C1*(C2+C3)$	\$624,750	\$0	\$0	\$624,750	\$0	\$0
C _t _{HIGH}			\$773,500	\$0	\$0	\$773,500	\$0	\$0
Six-year projected total: \$952,000–\$1,547,000			Six-year projected present value: \$757,842–\$1,231,493					

INCREASED IT TEAM PRODUCTIVITY

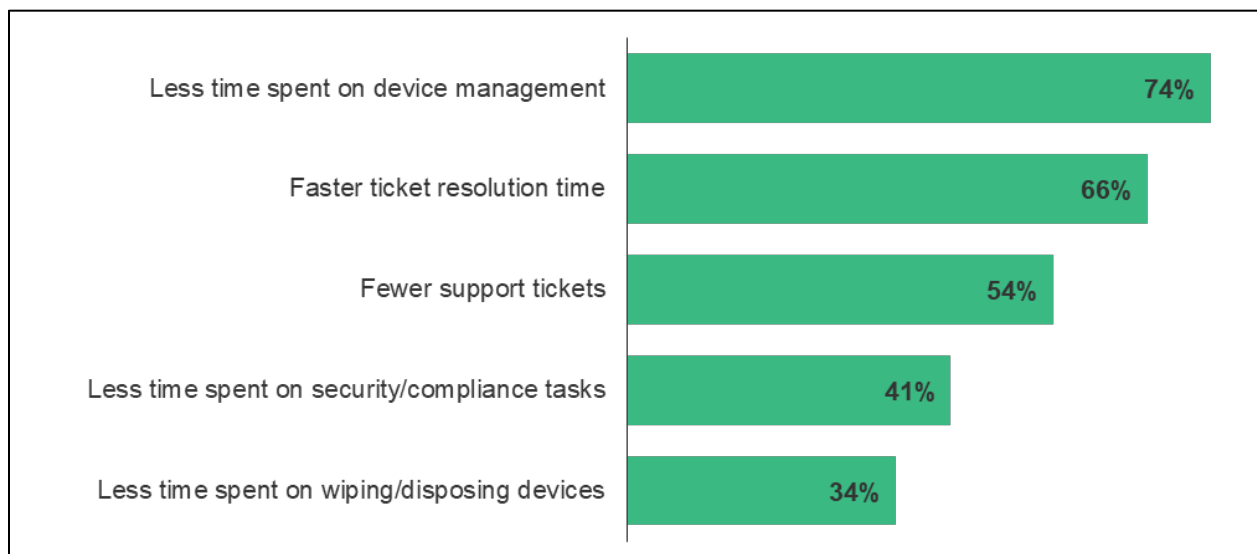
Evidence and data. Interviewees and survey respondents alike identified several ways in which they expected Windows 365 Link to save time and mental energy for their IT technicians. These ranged from freeing the team up from day-to-day break/fix calls (including the time to travel to and from remote sites) and service tickets to eliminating hours spent provisioning and decommissioning physical PCs.

- The head of workplace design at a manufacturing company exclaimed: “We don’t even need to touch [the Windows 365 Link devices] today. They can go directly to the business department for installation. In contrast to this, for shared devices, we need to preload them, attempt to autopilot, and all the other preparation work that needs to be done before they go out to the end user and get installed.”
- The modern workplace manager at a telecommunications company explained how important it was for his team to be relieved of much of the ongoing maintenance of the desktops and laptops that the Windows 365 Link devices replaced: “We want to remove those break-fix problems from our remit because we’re a small team. We can’t afford to be constantly building these devices and sending them out and then making sure that they keep working in the hostile and dusty environment of the store.”

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

- A cloud endpoint solutions lead at an IT services firm said: “It’s the setup that really blows everyone away. The setup’s fast. It takes minutes — I’d even say seconds.”
- The global service owner of virtual desktop infrastructure at another manufacturing company pointed out the advantages of Windows 365 Link for the IT team even over a thin client: “I need to have [a third-party operating system] on a thin client, so I need a service provider who can do this. He needs to set up the infrastructure. I need a server somewhere where I can manage it. It’s additional infrastructure on top of what we have with virtual machines, and then the operating system also needs to be maintained.”

“Which of the following do you expect your IT team to experience with Windows 365 Link?”



Base: 103 IT decision-makers at firms with experience or interest in using Windows 365 Link who expect it to improve IT team productivity

Source: A commissioned survey conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Microsoft, April 2025

Modeling and assumptions. Based on the interviews and survey, Forrester assumes the following about the composite organization:

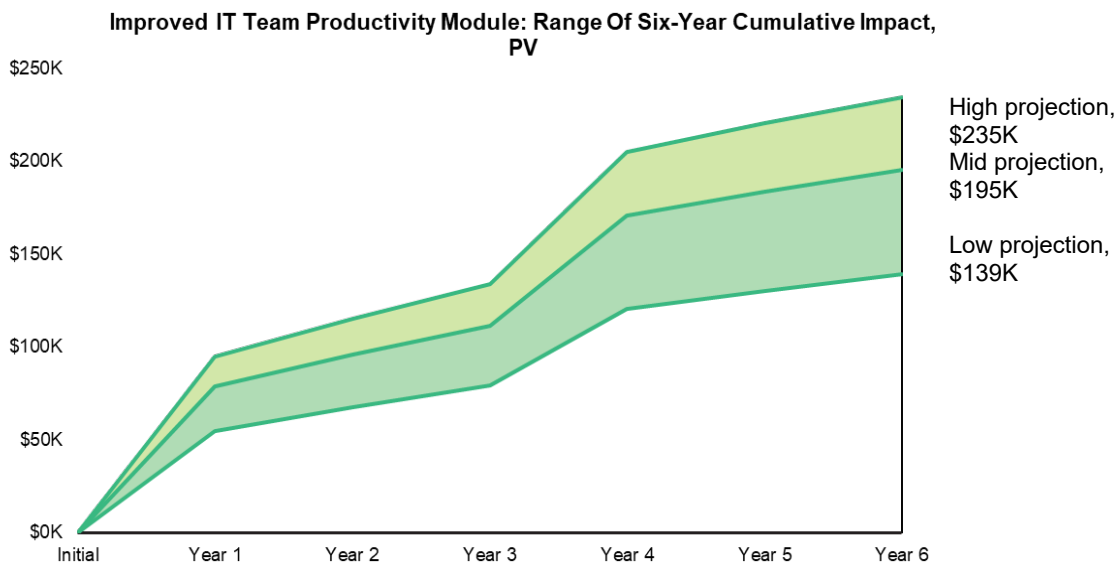
- Before deploying Windows 365 Link, IT spent 4 hours per desktop provisioning and then decommissioning/disposing of the asset. Using Windows 365 Link saves the IT team from 50% to 90% this time.
- The composite organization would have replaced 595 desktops in Year 1, which are instead replaced with Windows 365 Link devices. The IT team would have spent time decommissioning the outgoing desktops and provisioning the new desktops. It also

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

would have decommissioned and provisioned 44 desktops that would have been issued to new replacement employees due to turnover in Years 2 and 3.

- In Year 4, the IT team would have again decommissioned the 595 desktops coming off lease and provisioned the 595 new machines replacing them. It also saves decommissioning and provisioning time for the total 88 machines provided to new employees in Years 5 and 6.
- In addition to decommissioning and provisioning time, the IT team also saves time on the ongoing maintenance of hardware. With desktops in place, the team spends an average of 3 hours per repair on 12 hardware-related breakdowns per month across the organization (432 hours). They also spend an average of 30 minutes resolving each of 185 help desk tickets per month related to hardware.
- After deploying Windows 365 Link, the team saves between 20% and 30% of this ongoing maintenance time.
- The fully burdened hourly rate for IT team members is \$80.
- The composite recaptures 50% of this time savings in other productive work from the IT team.

Results. This yields a six-year projected PV ranging from \$139,000 to \$235,000.



“There is no need for us to configure any policies specifically for the Windows 365 Link device. The device is purpose-built to enable the endpoint to do what it should do and nothing else. Microsoft is also taking care of all the updates, so there is no need for us to monitor them. It just works.”

HEAD OF WORKPLACE DESIGN, MANUFACTURING

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

Increased IT Team Productivity								
Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
D1	Hours required to provision new desktops	Interviews	3	3	3	3	3	3
D2	Hours required to decommission old desktops	Interviews	1	1	1	1	1	1
D3	Desktops that would have been provisioned each year	Composite	595	44	44	595	44	44
D4	Desktops that would have been decommissioned each year	Composite	595	44	44	595	44	44
D5	Subtotal: IT time spent on provisioning/ decommissioning	$(D1+D2)*D3$	2,380	176	176	2,380	176	176
D6 _{LOW}			50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
D6 _{MID}	Percentage of IT time saved on device setup and decommissioning	Interviews	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
D6 _{HIGH}			90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
D7	Hours spent on onsite break/fix travel and repair	Interviews	432	432	432	432	432	432
D8	Hours spent on ticket resolution	Interviews and survey	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110
D9	Subtotal: Hours spent on IT desktop maintenance tasks	D7+D8	1,542	1,542	1,542	1,542	1,542	1,542
D10 _{LOW}			20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
D10 _{MID}	Percentage of IT time saved on desktop maintenance tasks	Interviews	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
D10 _{HIGH}			30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
D11	Fully burdened hourly rate for an IT team member	TEI standard	\$80	\$80	\$80	\$80	\$80	\$80
D12	Productivity recapture	TEI standard	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Dt _{LOW}			\$59,936	\$15,856	\$15,856	\$59,936	\$15,856	\$15,856
Dt _{MID}	Increased IT team productivity	$(D5*D6+D9*D10)*D11*D12$	\$86,820	\$20,700	\$20,700	\$86,820	\$20,700	\$20,700
Dt _{HIGH}			\$104,184	\$24,840	\$24,840	\$104,184	\$24,840	\$24,840
Six-year projected total: \$183,296–\$307,728			Six-year projected present value: \$139,237–\$234,509					

ACCELERATED ONBOARDING TIME

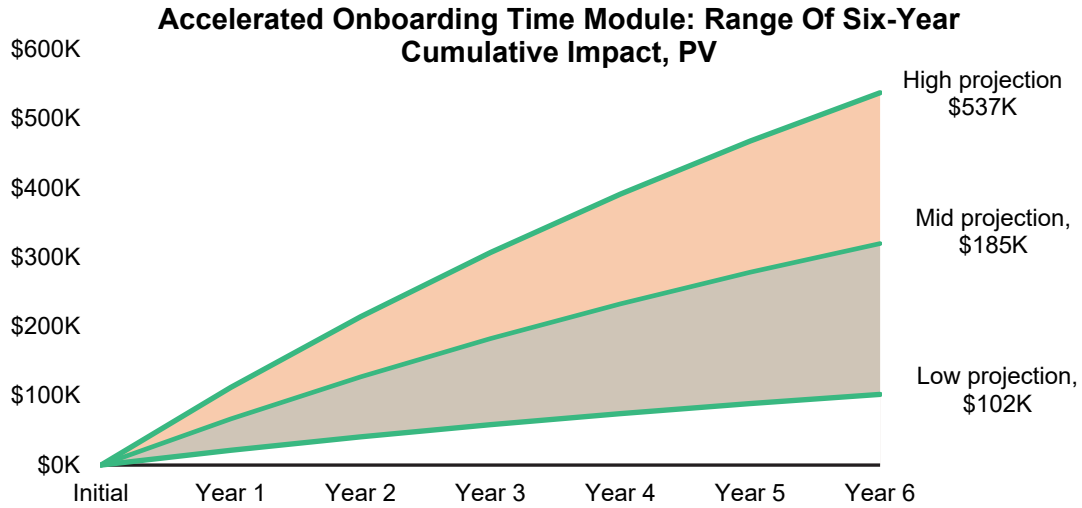
Evidence and data. Interviewees repeatedly called out a specific type of end-user productivity benefit with Windows 365 Link devices: the ability to get new employees — especially desk-based knowledge workers — up and running on their computers as quickly as possible to start contributing their talents to the company. Because Windows 365 Cloud PCs and Windows 365 Link devices require minimal setup and provisioning — and because Windows 365 Link devices are inexpensive enough to keep a supply of spares on hand in multiple locations — new employees only needed to wait less than an hour for IT to spin up a Cloud PC and they can plug in their device and get to work.

- The cloud endpoint solutions lead at an IT service firm explained: “Windows 365 Link is always going to be faster and more efficient because there’s no configuration. You just sign in and you’re off and running. It took me two weeks the last time I did a full 5,000 user deployment [before Windows 365 Link]. ... Windows 365 Link has all that bundled into the box.”
- The head of workplace design in manufacturing recalled: “Our device setup time went from 1.5 hours down to 10 to 15 minutes. It’s at least 60% to 70% less time that IT here needs to invest to get those Windows 365 Link devices from the box out to the field working.”

Modeling and assumptions. Based on the interviews and survey, Forrester assumes the following about the composite organization:

- The organization adds 44 new desk-based knowledge workers each year as a result of normal turnover (10% for employees, 25% for contractors).
- Provisioning and delivering new desktops for an employee used to take between one to five business days but it now takes no more than 30 minutes with Windows 365 Link and Windows 365, so newly onboarded human resources can access their Windows 365 Cloud PC and get to work almost immediately.
- The fully burdened hourly rate for these employees (rate for contractors) is \$71.

Results. This yields a six-year projected PV ranging from \$102,000 to \$537,000.



Faster time to put devices into service

60% to 70%

“I’ve been doing this for a very long time and, previously, it would take us days or weeks to get a device image ready to do something like this. The Windows 365 Link device is very much a no fuss, clean experience. It’s easy for IT, and easy for users.”

CLOUD ENDPOINT SOLUTIONS LEAD, IT SERVICES

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

Accelerated Onboarding Time								
Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
E1	New employees provided with Windows 365 Link	Composite	44	44	44	44	44	44
E2 _{LOW}			8	8	8	8	8	8
E2 _{MID}	Hours waiting for access before Windows 365 Link	Interviews	24	24	24	24	24	24
E2 _{HIGH}			40	40	40	40	40	40
E3	Hours waiting for access with Windows 365 Link	Interviews	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
E4	Fully burdened hourly rate for a new employee	TEI standard	\$71	\$71	\$71	\$71	\$71	\$71
E _{t,LOW}			\$23,430	\$23,430	\$23,430	\$23,430	\$23,430	\$23,430
E _{t,MID}	Accelerated onboarding time	$E1*(E2-E3)*E4$	\$73,414	\$73,414	\$73,414	\$73,414	\$73,414	\$73,414
E _{t,HIGH}			\$123,398	\$123,398	\$123,398	\$123,398	\$123,398	\$123,398
Six-year projected total: \$140,580–\$740,388				Six-year projected present value: \$102,044–\$537,430				

UNQUANTIFIED BENEFITS

Interviewees and survey respondents mentioned the following additional benefits that their organizations experienced but were not able to quantify:

- Enhanced business continuity.** Interviewees noted that the value of fast and easy installation for Windows 365 Link devices extended far beyond the ability to keep employees working online. In manufacturing and retail operations, in particular, a breakdown or loss of connectivity could hold up business operations. As the head of workplace design in manufacturing related: “Production is operating 24/7, 365 days a year, which means if a desktop breaks in the night shift or on the weekend, there is no one who can help and that could lead to delays in production. What we see with the Windows 365 Link is we can basically put some spare devices in the business department, somewhere locked in a shelf. If one of the devices malfunctions or breaks or whatever, they can replace it on the spot themselves.”

“What does your business continuity strategy look like? If you are down to physical machines and if you don’t already have them all preprovisioned, which a lot of folks don’t, then you’re at the mercy of that provisioning time.”

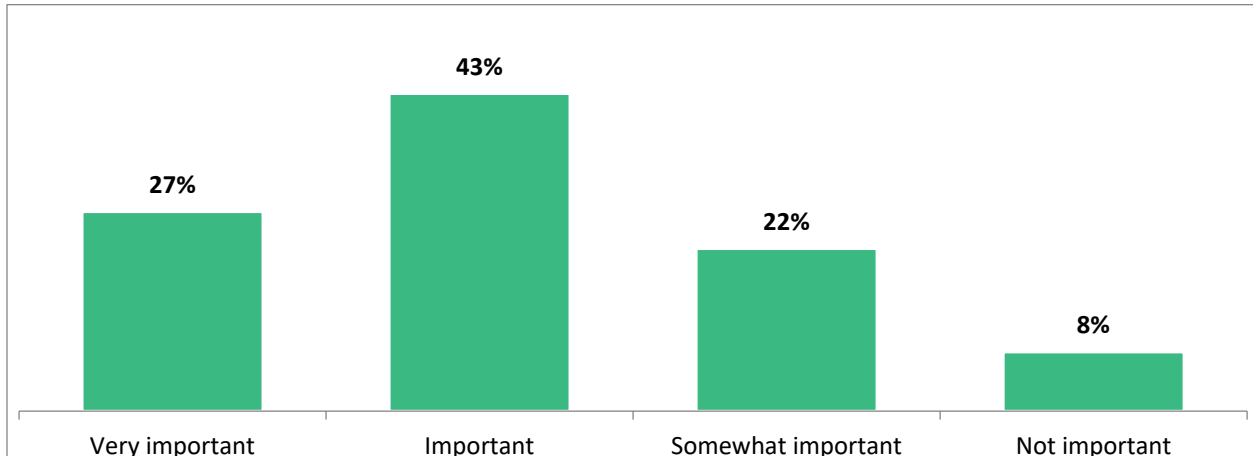
CLOUD ENDPOINT SOLUTIONS LEAD, IT SERVICES

“Our company is trusted by our clients to provide information in the event of a disaster. It is required to operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Windows 365 is a good solution for us.”

GENERAL MANAGER, CORPORATE IT, INFORMATION SERVICES

- **Ability to use less-skilled technicians for device deployment, maintenance, and decommissioning.** Interviewees said that Windows 365 Link required minimal provisioning, did not store any data, was easy to move from one location to another, and simply needed to be plugged in to start working. Because of this, most situations that would call for a service ticket and skilled technician with a desktop or laptop could be addressed by junior technical staff who were already working onsite.
- **Improved sustainability.** Seventy percent of surveyed IT decision-makers and end-user managers stated that sustainability is either “Important” or “Very important” when considering device procurement. Interviewees noted that since Windows 365 Link devices use less material than a traditional PC, contain a minimum of 63% recycled materials, consume less power than a traditional PC, and stay in service longer than a traditional PC, they could help their organizations continue to improve their sustainability posture.

“How important is sustainability for your organization when considering device procurement?”



Base: 74 IT decision-makers and end user managers at firms with experience or interest in using Windows 365 Link who expect it to deliver improved sustainability
 Source: A commissioned survey conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Microsoft, April 2025

FLEXIBILITY

The value of flexibility is unique to each customer. There are multiple scenarios in which a customer might implement Windows 365 Link and later realize additional uses and business opportunities, including:

- Enabling and supporting corporate Windows 365 strategy.** Interviewees explained to Forrester that their own and their customers’ organizations sometimes struggled with the value of using overpowered hardware or thin clients that required additional software and maintenance investments to connect to Windows 365 Cloud PCs. Because Windows 365 Link is purpose built to connect easily and securely to Windows 365, interviewees said it was much easier for decision-makers to see and experience the value of using virtualization. The cloud endpoint solutions lead in an IT services organization revealed: “When I started the preview with the Windows 365 Link device, I gave some to some of our executives along with temporary Windows 365 licenses. When the licenses ran out, they clamored to get them back. They wanted more. The device is the reason why we’re even using Windows 365 now. ... It’s almost like a reverse use case.”

“[Users] think [the Windows 365 Link device] is the computer and that’s important. We want it to be as transparent as possible [for end users]. This actually helps us boost our Windows 365 strategy throughout all of our subsidiaries worldwide.”

HEAD OF WORKPLACE DESIGN, MANUFACTURING

- **Expanding benefits through additional use cases.** Interviewees were full of ideas for the next use case they wanted to trial with Windows 365 Link. The modern workplace product manager in telecommunications wanted to reduce the cost of hardware for developers while still providing the same power and responsiveness: “A developer laptop in our environment costs about 6,000 New Zealand dollars. Instead, we can buy developers a big 34-inch curved screen and a keyboard and they can use a Windows 365 Link device.” As noted earlier, the solutions architect for end-user services at an energy company planned to provide a number of devices in office hotdesking locations and encourage employees to use them in situations where their desktops or laptops are unavailable. Both the head of workplace design in manufacturing and the modern workplace manager in telecommunications said they plan to store spare devices in particularly harsh environments, such as factories and retail stores, to enable quick replacement of broken devices. Finally, the solution architect in end-user services at an energy company plans to deploy some Windows 365 Link devices in field mining sites where a wired network connection may exist, but Wi-Fi is unavailable or unreliable.

Flexibility would also be quantified when evaluated as part of a specific project (described in more detail in [Total Economic Impact Approach](#)).

Analysis Of Costs

Quantified cost data as applied to the composite

Total Costs										
Ref.	Cost	Initial	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total	Present Value
Ftr	Windows 365 license and Windows 365 Link hardware costs	\$309,452	\$403,788	\$403,788	\$403,788	\$436,513	\$403,788	\$403,788	\$2,764,905	\$2,090,406
Gtr	Planning and implementation	\$173,549	\$75,900	\$9,816	\$9,816	\$9,816	\$9,816	\$9,816	\$298,531	\$276,378
	Total costs (risk-adjusted)	\$483,001	\$479,688	\$413,604	\$413,604	\$446,329	\$413,604	\$413,604	\$3,063,436	\$2,366,784

WINDOWS 365 LICENSE AND WINDOWS 365 LINK HARDWARE COSTS

Evidence and data. Interviewees and survey respondents reported that the bulk of the costs they expected related to their Windows 365 Link deployments consisted of the cost of the device itself, as well as the cost of the appropriate Windows 365 licenses required for accessing Cloud PCs.

Prices for Windows 365 Link devices and Windows 365 licenses may vary. Contact your Microsoft representative or reseller for a quote.

Modeling and assumptions. Based on the interviews, Forrester assumes the following about the composite organization:

- The composite organization purchases 645 Windows 365 Link devices. Of these, 595 are deployed immediately in hotdesking, retail, call center, and production environments and 50 are stored for future use. Each device costs the composite organization the list price of \$349. Forrester assumes these devices will have a lifecycle of six years.
- It purchases 300 individual Windows 365 Enterprise licenses for desk-based knowledge workers (both full-time and contractor) at the list price of \$41 per user per month.

ANALYSIS OF COSTS

- It also purchases 250 Windows 365 Frontline licenses for production works and call center employees to use in Dedicated mode at the list price of \$62 per license per month. When in Dedicated mode, these licenses are designed to be shared by three people on a nonconcurrent basis consistent with shift work. Each of the 250 Windows 365 Frontline licenses is associated with a Windows 365 Link device and shared by three employees.
- For retail workers and seasonal contract production workers, the composite organization purchases 45 Windows 365 Frontline licenses to be used in Shared mode. This allows the group sharing of a license where the user experience is not personalized. The license is designed for task workers, customer-facing staff, and external contractors. In this case, 10 retail employees share a Windows 365 Frontline license at each store and 10 seasonal contractors share each Windows 365 Frontline license at production facilities. Each of these Windows 365 Frontline licenses also cost \$62 per license per month.
- Twenty percent of the employees and contractors who receive the Windows 365 Link device also require some combination of new peripherals (e.g., keyboard, mouse, headset, monitor). Forrester estimates that, on average, these will cost \$200 for each employee who requires peripherals and will last three years, requiring replacement in Year 4.
- Shipping costs for the Windows 365 Link device and any required peripherals are estimated at \$50.

Risks. The hardware and licensing costs any given organization experiences will vary based on the following factors:

- The number, type, and mix of employees and use cases, which affects the number and type of licenses and devices purchased.
- Any variation from list price negotiated by the organization.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this cost upward by 10%, yielding a six-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of \$2.1 million.

ANALYSIS OF COSTS

Windows 365 License And Windows 365 Link Hardware Costs									
Ref	Metric	Source	Initial	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
F1	Windows 365 Enterprise license costs	Microsoft		\$147,600	\$147,600	\$147,600	\$147,600	\$147,600	\$147,600
F2	Windows 365 Frontline license used in Dedicated mode costs	Microsoft		\$186,000	\$186,000	\$186,000	\$186,000	\$186,000	\$186,000
F3	Windows 365 Frontline license used in Shared mode costs	Microsoft		\$33,480	\$33,480	\$33,480	\$33,480	\$33,480	\$33,480
F4	Windows 365 Link device costs	Composite	\$225,105	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
F5	Additional peripheral costs	Composite	\$23,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$23,800	\$0	\$0
F6	Shipping costs	Interviews	\$32,250	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,950	\$0	\$0
Ft	Windows 365 license and Windows 365 Link hardware costs	F1+F2+F3+F4+F5+F6	\$281,320	\$367,080	\$367,080	\$367,080	\$396,830	\$367,080	\$367,080
	Risk adjustment	↑10%							
Ftr	Windows 365 license and Windows 365 Link hardware costs (risk-adjusted)		\$309,452	\$403,788	\$403,788	\$403,788	\$436,513	\$403,788	\$403,788
Six-year total: \$2,764,905					Six-year present value: \$2,090,406				

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Evidence and data. Interviewees expected minimal planning and implementation costs for their deployments. Since all the interviewees had participated in Microsoft’s private and/or public previews of Windows 365 Link, they felt they had undertaken most of the planning required. In some cases, the interviewees had already made the decision to move forward and had ordered devices with the intention of deploying them to at least some use cases immediately. In other cases, the decision of whether to deploy the devices was in the hands of business unit leaders and the interviewees were prepared to make the business case for them.

Once deployed, interviewees expected there would be a short period of change management in which end users would receive information and support to get them accustomed to working with Windows 365 and a Windows 365 Link device. Since the Windows 365 Cloud PCs and Windows 365 Link devices required little or no setup and were managed using Microsoft tools already in use by the interviewees’ organizations, interviewees did not expect that their IT teams would require much, if any, training related to the device.

Modeling and assumptions. Based on the interviews, Forrester assumes the following about the composite organization:

- Six mid- to senior-level IT professionals spend 40% of their time over the course of four months planning, testing, and preparing for the Windows 365 Link deployment. The fully burdened hourly rate for an IT professional is \$92.
- Each of the 595 devices takes 10 minutes to install. This is accomplished during the initial installation by a junior technician, although going forward, replacement devices will be installed by nontechnical employees.
- The composite organization provides 1 hour of training on the Windows 365 Link device to each of the 1,500 employees and contractors who will be using it, then provides 1 hour of training for each new employee resulting from turnover. Forrester assumes 10% turnover for full-time employees and 25% turnover for contractors. The fully burdened hourly rate for these users is \$44.

Risks. The planning and implementation cost any given organization experiences will vary based on the following factors:

- The number of employees involved in planning and implementation and their salaries.
- The number of Windows 365 Link users, these users' wages, and the amount of training they require to effectively use the device.

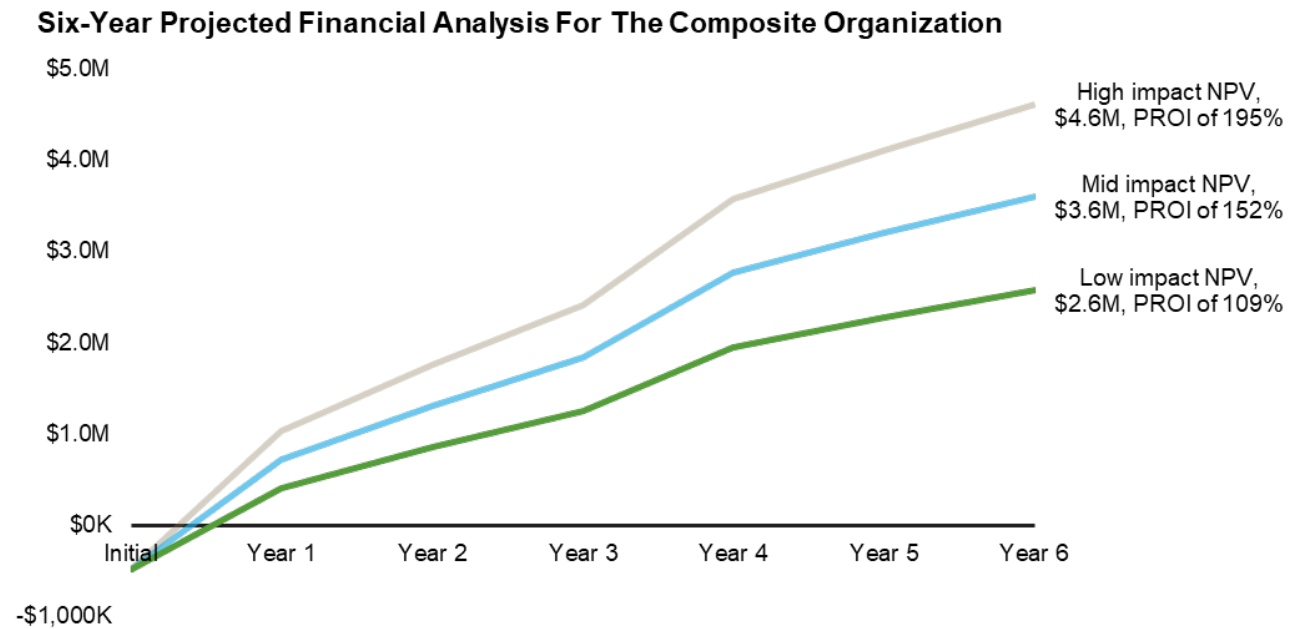
Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this cost upward by 15%, yielding a six-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of \$276,000.

ANALYSIS OF COSTS

Planning And Implementation									
Ref	Metric	Source	Initial	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
G1	Deployment team time for upfront planning, proof of concept, and installation	Interviews	\$150,912						
G2	Users requiring training for Windows 365 Link	Composite		1,500	194	194	194	194	194
G3	Hours of training per user	Interviews		1	1	1	1	1	1
G4	Fully burdened hourly rate for a Windows 365 Link user			\$44	\$44	\$44	\$44	\$44	\$44
Gt	Planning and implementation	$G1+(G2*G3*G4)$	\$150,912	\$66,000	\$8,536	\$8,536	\$8,536	\$8,536	\$8,536
	Risk adjustment	↑ 15%							
Gtr	Planning and implementation (risk-adjusted)		\$173,549	\$75,900	\$9,816	\$9,816	\$9,816	\$9,816	\$9,816
			Six-year total: \$298,531			Six-year present value: \$276,378			

Financial Summary

Consolidated Six-Year, Risk-Adjusted Metrics



The financial results calculated in the Benefits and Costs sections can be used to determine the ROI, NPV, and payback period for the composite organization's investment. Forrester assumes a yearly discount rate of 10% for this analysis.

These risk-adjusted ROI, NPV, and payback period values are determined by applying risk-adjustment factors to the unadjusted results in each Benefit and Cost section.

Cash Flow Analysis (Risk-Adjusted)									
	Initial	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total	Present Value
Total costs	(\$483,001)	(\$479,688)	(\$413,604)	(\$413,604)	(\$446,329)	(\$413,604)	(\$413,604)	(\$3,063,436)	(\$2,366,784)
Total benefits (low)	\$0	\$1,464,439	\$944,359	\$944,359	\$1,464,439	\$944,359	\$944,359	\$6,706,314	\$4,940,952
Total benefits (mid)	\$0	\$1,809,667	\$1,118,797	\$1,118,797	\$1,809,667	\$1,118,797	\$1,118,797	\$8,094,522	\$5,972,589
Total benefits (high)	\$0	\$2,141,729	\$1,288,885	\$1,288,885	\$2,141,729	\$1,288,885	\$1,288,885	\$9,438,998	\$6,971,247
Net benefits (low)	(\$483,001)	\$984,751	\$530,755	\$530,755	\$1,018,110	\$530,755	\$530,755	\$3,642,878	\$2,574,168
Net benefits (mid)	(\$483,001)	\$1,329,979	\$705,193	\$705,193	\$1,363,338	\$705,193	\$705,193	\$5,031,086	\$3,605,805
Net benefits (high)	(\$483,001)	\$1,662,041	\$875,281	\$875,281	\$1,695,400	\$875,281	\$875,281	\$6,375,562	\$4,604,463
PROI (low)									109%
PROI (mid)									152%
PROI (high)									195%

APPENDIX A: NEW TECHNOLOGY

Projected Total Economic Impact

New Technology: Projected Total Economic Impact (New Tech TEI) is a methodology developed by Forrester Research that enhances a company's technology decision-making processes and assists solution providers in communicating their value proposition to clients. The New Tech TEI methodology helps companies demonstrate, justify, and realize the tangible value of business and technology initiatives to both senior management and other key stakeholders.

Total Economic Impact Approach

Projected benefits represent the projected value the solution delivers to the business. The New Tech TEI methodology places equal weight on the measure of projected benefits and projected costs, allowing for a full examination of the solution's effect on the entire organization.

Projected costs comprise all expenses necessary to deliver the proposed value, or benefits, of the solution. The methodology captures implementation and ongoing costs associated with the solution.

Flexibility represents the strategic value that can be obtained for some future additional investment building on top of the initial investment already made. Having the ability to capture that benefit has a PV that can be estimated.

Risks measure the uncertainty of benefit and cost estimates given: 1) the likelihood that estimates will meet original projections and 2) the likelihood that estimates will be tracked over time. TEI risk factors are based on “triangular distribution.”

Present value (PV)

The present or current value of (discounted) cost and benefit estimates given at an interest rate (the discount rate). The PV of costs and benefits feed into the total NPV of cash flows.

Projected net present value (PNPV)

The projected present or current value of (discounted) future net cash flows given an interest rate (the discount rate). A positive project NPV normally indicates that the investment should be made unless other projects have higher NPVs.

Projected return on investment (PROI)

A project’s expected return in percentage terms. ROI is calculated by dividing net benefits (benefits less costs) by costs.

Discount rate

The interest rate used in cash flow analysis to take into account the time value of money. Organizations typically use discount rates between 8% and 16%.

Payback period

The breakeven point for an investment. This is the point in time at which net benefits (benefits minus costs) equal initial investment or cost.

The initial investment column contains costs incurred at “time 0” or at the beginning of Year 1 that are not discounted. All other cash flows are discounted using the discount rate at the end of the year. PV calculations are calculated for each total cost and benefit estimate. NPV calculations in the summary tables are the sum of the initial investment and the discounted cash flows in each year. Sums and present value calculations of the Total Benefits, Total Costs, and Cash Flow tables may not exactly add up, as some rounding may occur.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

ROLE	
C-level executive	10%
Vice president	22%
Director	31%
Manager	31%

INDUSTRY	
Manufacturing and materials	11%
Retail	10%
Financial services and/or insurance	8%
Healthcare	8%
Energy, utilities, and/or waste management	7%
Telecommunications services	6%
Business or professional services	5%
Technology and/or technology services	5%
Electronics	5%
Transportation and logistics	5%
Media and/or leisure	4%
Travel and hospitality	4%
Construction	4%
Other	18%

ANNUAL REVENUE

\$300M to \$399M	20%
\$400M to \$499M	16%
\$500M to \$999M	19%
\$1B to \$5B	30%
>\$5B	16%

APPENDIX C: SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Related Forrester Research

[“New Technology: The Projected Total Economic Impact of Windows 365 and Azure Virtual Desktop,”](#) a commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Microsoft, March 2025.

APPENDIX D: ENDNOTES

¹ Total Economic Impact is a methodology developed by Forrester Research that enhances a company's technology decision-making processes and assists vendors in communicating the value proposition of their products and services to clients. The TEI methodology helps companies demonstrate, justify, and realize the tangible value of IT initiatives to both senior management and other key business stakeholders.

² Source: [US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), June 2025.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Regression analysis of the reported total cumulative costs of all breaches experienced by security decision-makers' organizations in the past 12 months. The composite organization's revenue is used as the input to the regression formula. Source: Forrester's Security Survey, 2024, "Using your best estimate, what was the total cumulative cost of all breaches experienced by your organization in the past 12 months?" Base: 1,660 global security decision-makers who have experienced a breach in the past 12 months

⁷ Regression analysis of the likelihood of experiencing one or more breaches, using the frequency that organizations experienced breaches in the past 12 months as reported by security decision-makers. The composite organization's revenue is used as the input to the regression formula. Source: Forrester's Security Survey, 2024, "How many times do you estimate that your organization's sensitive data was potentially compromised or breached in the past 12 months?" Base: 2,769 global security decision-makers

⁸ Percentage of breaches by primary attack vector for breaches, as reported by security decision-makers whose organizations experienced at least one breach in the last 12 months. Source: Forrester's Security Survey, 2024, "Of the times that your organization's sensitive data was potentially compromised or breached in the past 12 months, please indicate how many of each fall into the categories below." Base: 1,542 global security decision-makers who have experienced a breach in the past 12 months

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