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# SmartSpend™ Bulletin

## Enterprise PC Hardware Sourcing: Key Trends & Strategic Considerations



The PC hardware market is experiencing a modest recovery after years of decline, creating both opportunities and challenges for enterprise buyers. While vendors are capitalizing on renewed demand, our analysis reveals concerning pricing practices that require heightened scrutiny from sourcing teams.

In recent months, NPI has observed that PC vendors are leveraging component upgrades and market recovery to inflate pricing – and not by a little. In many cases, price uplifts are 30 to 50% representing a significant cost increase for enterprise customers.

Strategic buyers who understand these dynamics can achieve significant savings but only if they understand which levers to work in the purchase negotiation process. This bulletin outlines critical trends and strategies that help customers rein in PC costs in today's IT buying landscape.

### CRITICAL MARKET DYNAMICS

#### VENDOR PRICING INFLATION FOR COMPONENT UPGRADES

The most significant trend we're observing is vendor overvaluation of new components. OEMs and resellers are systematically overcharging for upgrades including:

- New CPUs and next-generation SSDs
- "AI-enabled" devices – there are consistently wider pricing gaps than business standard models
- Expanded memory configurations and newer CPU/GPU combinations

It's important for IT buyers to scrutinize any situation where components are "upgraded" from previous comparable purchases. Vendor justifications for premium pricing should be challenged and benchmarked against market rates.

## SOFTWARE-DRIVEN COST PRESSURE

Microsoft's Copilot+ and similar software integrations are complicating purchasing decisions, sometimes requiring specific laptop model bundles rather than standalone software purchases. This trend limits flexibility and can drive unnecessary hardware costs.

## TOUCH DISPLAY VALUE INFLATION

While touch-enabled devices are becoming business standard, vendors often over-emphasize their value. Significant cost discrepancies exist between touch-enabled and non-touch-enabled devices – another purchase element that should be challenged and benchmarked.

## STRATEGIC SOURCING OPPORTUNITIES

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IT buyers should use the following tactics to increase negotiation leverage and reduce PC refresh expenses:

- **Leverage Bulk Purchase Power:** Position planned bulk purchases as conditional on unit price improvements, while indicating that piecemeal purchasing remains the alternative. This approach creates negotiating leverage with vendor account teams who are incentivized to close larger deals.
- **N-1 and N-2 Model Considerations:** A significant cost optimization opportunity exists in older generation hardware. Vendor inventories of previous-generation models have grown beyond expectations, creating substantial savings potential while maintaining comparable performance specifications.
- **Extended Lifecycle Planning:** PC lifecycles are extending from the traditional 2.5-3.5 years to 4-5 years, driven by improved component longevity and “future-proofing” capabilities. Fleet refreshes should be staggered and spaced out accordingly to maximize budget allocation.

## COST MANAGEMENT AREAS REQUIRING ATTENTION

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### ACCESSORY BUNDLING OVERSIGHT

Excessive bundling reduces pricing transparency and can introduce hidden above-market costs. Key items requiring scrutiny include docking stations, mouse/keyboard combinations, monitors, and carrying bags and peripherals. Unbundle accessories where possible and benchmark individual component pricing against market rates.

### SERVICE COST INFLATION

Per-device preparation costs are skyrocketing. Services affected include imaging, asset tagging, BIOS configuration, and delivery. Insist on full visibility into service costs and push back on excessive pricing.

### LEAD TIME VALIDATION

Domestic U.S. lead times should typically fall within the 2–4 week range. Prolonged delays may point to underlying inventory challenges or potential artificial scarcity measures.

## ADDITIONAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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### WINDOWS 10 END OF SUPPORT IMPACT

With Windows 10 support ending October 14, 2025, many enterprises are timing PC refreshes to coincide with OS upgrade requirements. Microsoft's extended support options will likely be expensive compared to hardware refresh costs, making this a compelling business case for planned upgrades.

### TARIFF UNCERTAINTY

While tariff impacts on PC hardware remain unclear, potential increases could have a material impact on pricing. Historically, PC hardware tariffs have been proposed then waived, but prudent planning may suggest accelerating refresh cycles if feasible.

### ACTION ITEMS FOR IT SOURCING LEADERS

As hardware costs rise (especially for AI-enabled systems) IT buyers should adopt a more strategic approach to procurement. That starts with scrutinizing component upgrades, particularly those carrying a premium for "AI" features, and evaluating whether previous-generation (N-1/N-2) hardware can meet performance needs at a lower cost. Buyers should also separate and benchmark accessory and service costs to avoid hidden markups, and time bulk purchases strategically to gain leverage in negotiations.

Contact NPI for detailed PC vendor negotiation support and price benchmarking tailored to your specific requirements.



## ABOUT NPI

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NPI is the premier provider of data, services and tools to help large enterprises identify and eliminate overspending on IT purchases. NPI delivers transaction-level price benchmark analysis, license and service optimization analysis, and vendor-specific negotiation intel that enables IT buying teams to drive material savings and measurable ROI. NPI analyzes billions of dollars in spend each year for clients spanning all industries that invest heavily in technology. NPI also offers software audit, audit defense, and asset management services.

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