



## HYBRID WORK READY: DEVICES & TOOLS EVERY SMB NEEDS

HOW SMBs CAN BUILD PRODUCTIVE, SECURE,  
AND FLEXIBLE HYBRID WORK ENVIRONMENTS IN 2026

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Hybrid work is no longer a temporary adjustment. It has become a permanent operating model for many small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs), reshaping how teams collaborate, communicate, and access technology. Businesses are now expected to support employees working seamlessly across offices, homes, and remote locations while maintaining productivity, security, and operational efficiency.

For SMBs, this transition presents both opportunities and challenges. Hybrid work enables greater flexibility, employee satisfaction, and talent accessibility, but it also increases complexity around device management, collaboration tools, cybersecurity, and IT support. Many SMBs struggle to balance these needs while operating with limited budgets and lean IT resources.<sup>1</sup>

This whitepaper explores the key technologies SMBs need to enable successful hybrid work environments in 2026. It examines the devices, collaboration platforms, security solutions, and support frameworks that allow teams to work efficiently from anywhere. It also highlights how Acer supports SMBs through scalable, business-ready technology solutions

## THE EVOLUTION OF HYBRID WORK



The workplace has undergone a major transformation over the past several years. What began as a temporary remote work response has evolved into a long-term hybrid model that combines in-office and remote work arrangements.

Research shows employees increasingly expect flexibility as part of their work experience, while businesses recognise the productivity and operational benefits of hybrid work models.<sup>2</sup>

SMBs, in particular, benefit from:

- Reduced overhead costs
- Greater workforce flexibility
- Improved employee satisfaction and retention
- Access to broader talent pools outside traditional office locations

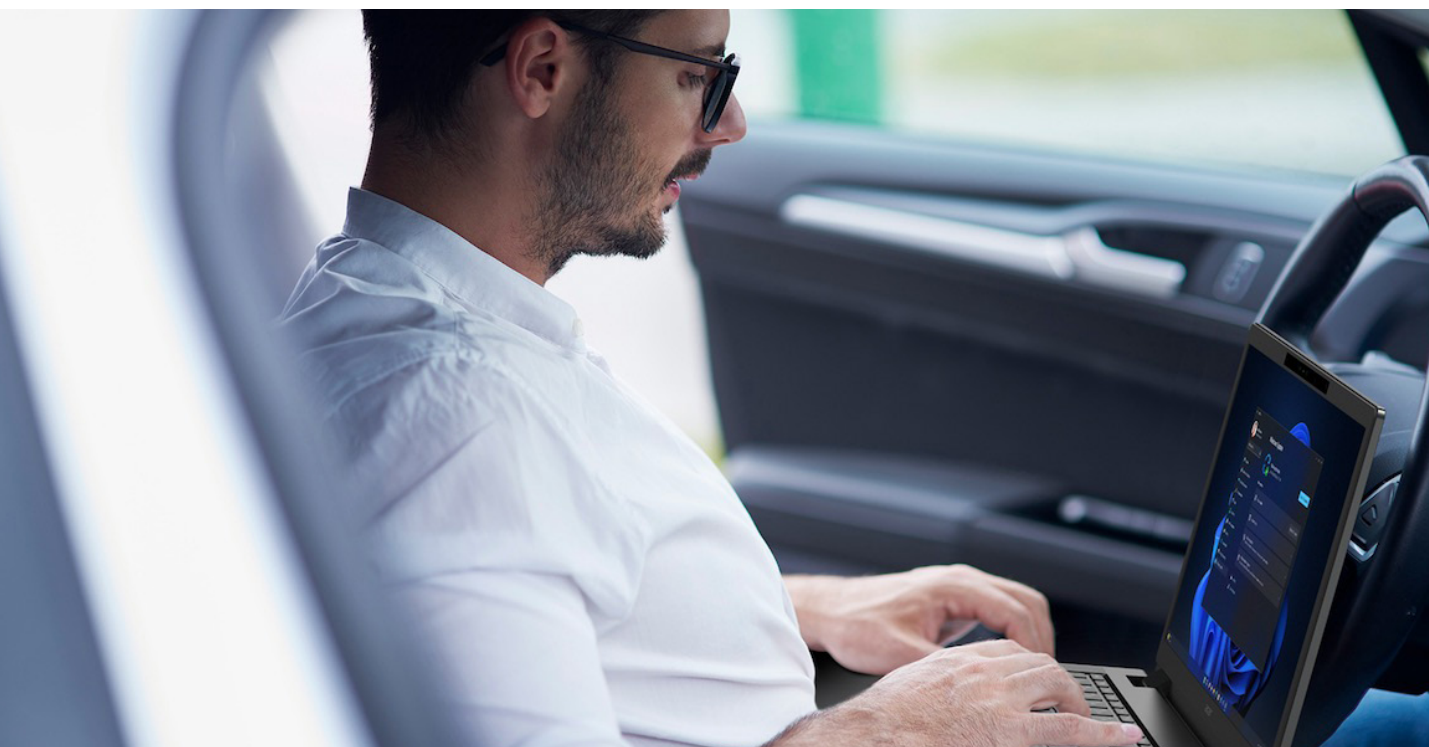
However, hybrid work also introduces new operational challenges. Employees now rely heavily on technology to remain connected and productive, placing greater pressure on SMBs to provide reliable devices, secure access, and seamless collaboration tools.

Without the right infrastructure, businesses risk:

- Reduced productivity
- Communication gaps
- Increased cybersecurity exposure
- Poor employee experiences
- IT support inefficiencies

This shift means hybrid work readiness is no longer optional. It is a core business capability.

## WHAT SMBs NEED FOR HYBRID WORK SUCCESS



To support modern work environments effectively, SMBs need a technology ecosystem that enables flexibility, security, and collaboration.

**Key benefits include:**

- Reliable business-grade devices
- Secure remote access and endpoint protection
- Cloud-based collaboration tools
- Simplified device management
- Consistent user experiences across locations
- Scalable support and maintenance frameworks

Businesses that fail to modernise their technology environments often experience fragmented workflows, slower communication, and reduced employee engagement.<sup>3</sup>

# ESSENTIAL DEVICES FOR HYBRID WORK

## 1. Business laptops

Laptops remain the foundation of hybrid work. Employees require portable, reliable devices capable of supporting video conferencing, cloud applications, and multitasking throughout the workday.

**Key considerations include:**

- Battery life and portability
- Performance for collaboration tools and productivity applications
- Built-in security features
- Durability for mobile work environments

Modern Acer business laptops are designed to balance performance, mobility, and affordability, making them well suited for SMB workforces.

## 2. Monitors and workspace accessories

Hybrid work setups are most effective when employees can maintain productivity both at home and in the office.

**Essential accessories include:**

- External monitors for multitasking
- Docking stations for simplified connectivity
- Wireless keyboards and mice
- Noise-cancelling headsets for meetings
- HD webcams for virtual collaboration

Providing employees with consistent workspace tools improves comfort, communication quality, and productivity.



## 3. Collaboration-ready devices

Video conferencing and virtual collaboration are central to hybrid work operations.

**Devices should support:**

- High-quality video and audio
- Fast connectivity
- Reliable wireless performance
- Seamless compatibility with collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom

Reliable collaboration tools reduce meeting fatigue and improve communication across distributed teams.

## COLLABORATION TOOLS EVERY SMB NEEDS

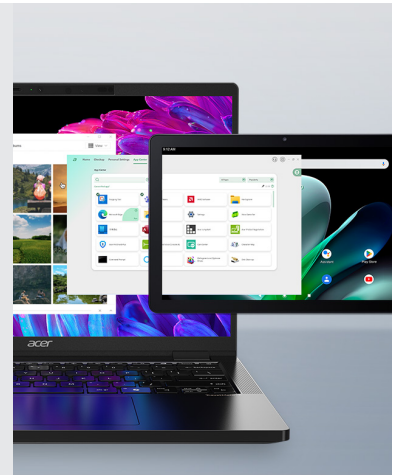
### Cloud-based productivity platforms

Cloud ecosystems such as Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace enable teams to collaborate in real time from any location.

**Benefits include:**

- Shared document access
- Real-time editing and communication
- Simplified file management
- Reduced dependency on physical infrastructure

Cloud-based systems also improve business continuity and flexibility during disruptions.



### Project management and Workflow tools

Hybrid teams require visibility across tasks and projects.

Tools such as

- Microsoft Planner
- Asana
- Trello
- Monday.com

help SMBs maintain accountability and workflow efficiency regardless of employee location.



### Communication platforms

Strong communication frameworks are critical in hybrid environments.

Businesses should standardise communication through

- Microsoft Teams
- Zoom
- Slack

to reduce fragmentation and improve collaboration consistency.



## SECURITY CHALLENGES IN HYBRID WORK



Hybrid work significantly increases cybersecurity complexity for SMBs. Employees are now accessing company systems across multiple locations, networks, and devices, expanding the attack surface for cyber threats.<sup>1</sup>

**Common hybrid work risks include:**

- Phishing attacks targeting remote workers
- Unsecured home networks
- Lost or stolen devices
- Weak password management
- Unpatched software vulnerabilities

Without proper controls, SMBs face increased exposure to data breaches, ransomware, and operational disruption

**Key security measures include:**

- Multi-factor authentication (MFA)
- Endpoint protection and encryption
- Secure VPN access
- Device monitoring and management
- Employee cybersecurity awareness training

Security must now be embedded into every aspect of the hybrid work environment.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVICE MANAGEMENT



Managing devices across multiple locations creates significant complexity for SMBs without dedicated IT teams.

**Centralised device management enables:**

- Remote software updates
- Security patching
- Device tracking and monitoring
- Consistent user configurations
- Faster troubleshooting and support

Managed IT environments reduce downtime and allow SMBs to maintain operational consistency without excessive internal IT overhead.<sup>3</sup>

# THE ACER ADVANTAGE FOR HYBRID SMB WORKFORCES



Acer supports SMB hybrid work environments through integrated business technology solutions designed to balance performance, flexibility, and affordability.

## 1. Reliable Business Devices

Acer business laptops and accessories are designed for mobile productivity, durability, and long-term value.

## 2. Built-In Security

Features such as TPM security, secure boot, and endpoint protection help safeguard business data across remote environments.

## 3. Hybrid Work Flexibility

Acer devices support seamless transitions between office and remote work environments.

## 4. Simplified IT Management

Acer Managed Services help SMBs monitor, maintain, and support distributed device fleets without requiring large internal IT teams.

## 5. Scalable Solutions

As SMBs grow, Acer solutions scale alongside evolving workforce and operational requirements.

# ILLUSTRATIVE CASE STUDY: ENABLING A FLEXIBLE SMB WORKFORCE

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

A 60-person consulting business transitioned to a hybrid work model across two office locations and remote employees.

## CHALLENGES

- Employees using inconsistent personal devices
- Poor video conferencing experiences
- Increased IT support requests
- Security concerns around remote access

## THE SOLUTION

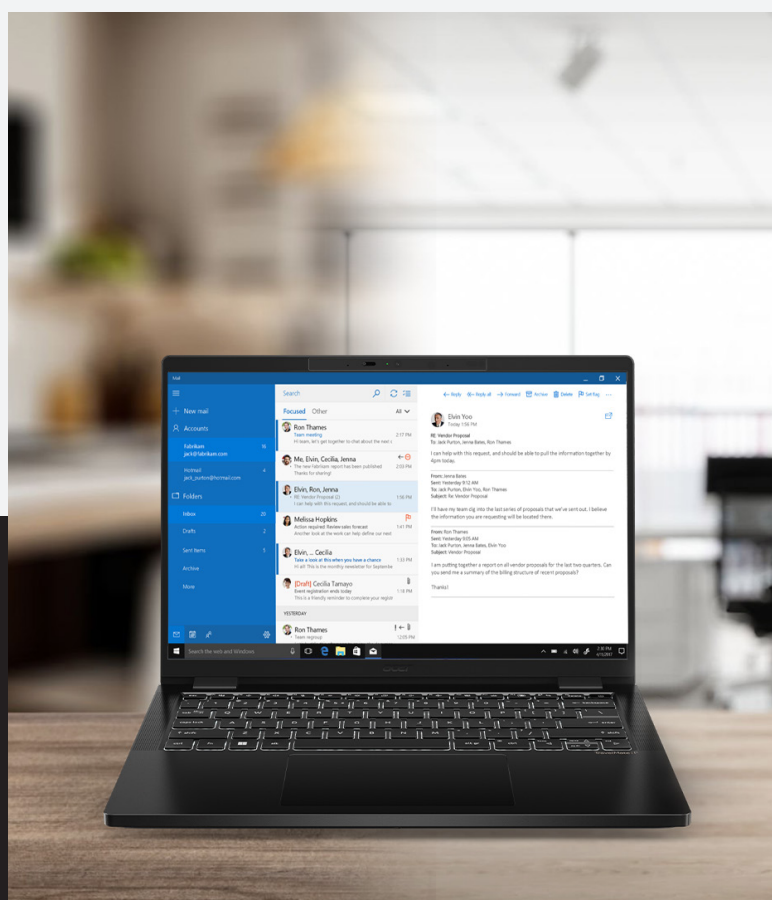
The company implemented:

- Standardised Acer business laptops
- Collaboration tools integrated across all teams
- Centralised device management
- Security-enabled remote access policies

## THE RESULTS

- Improved collaboration and meeting quality
- Reduced IT troubleshooting time
- Faster onboarding for remote employees
- Increased employee satisfaction and flexibility

The business was able to scale hybrid operations while maintaining productivity and security standards.



# BEST PRACTICES FOR SMB HYBRID WORK READINESS



## 1. Prioritise Scalability

Select systems that grow with the business to avoid costly replacements later.

## 2. Adopt Lifecycle Management

Plan for device refresh cycles, upgrades, and maintenance as part of long-term IT strategy<sup>2</sup>.

## 3. Consolidate Vendors

Reducing fragmented systems improves efficiency and lowers management complexity<sup>3</sup>.

## 4. Invest in Employee Enablement

Technology adoption is most effective when employees are trained and supported.

## 5. Align IT with Business Strategy

Technology should directly support business outcomes such as growth, efficiency, and customer experience<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Gartner (2026) Hybrid Work and SMB Security Trends Report. Gartner Research.

<sup>2</sup> Deloitte (2025) Future of Work and Workforce Flexibility Insights. Deloitte Insights.

<sup>3</sup> IDC (2026) SMB Workplace Technology and Device Management Forecast. International Data Corporation.



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Visit the site to explore scalable device portfolios, lifecycle services,  
and partner support programs designed for SMB growth.