

Windows Server 2025

Messaging and positioning framework for small or medium-sized businesses

Overview

This document is designed for Microsoft teams and partners working with small or medium-sized business (SMB) customers. It is intended to provide comprehensive messaging and positioning for Windows Server 2025 and to provide context for sales teams looking to help their customers modernize to the latest version of Windows Server. Please note that any product feature claims described in this document should not be changed.

Market context

Today's increasingly volatile and complex market presents multi-faceted challenges for SMB owners—from inflation and economic uncertainty (54 percent of SMB owners report inflation as their top concern¹) to rising interest rates, supply chain disruption, labor shortages, increased customer expectations, and intensifying market competition. To navigate these challenges and ensure their future sustainability and growth, SMB owners are looking to technology to improve resiliency and agility while driving a culture of innovation. They need technology investments to map directly to business benefits—like higher sales, lower costs, greater profitability, and better analysis. For many SMBs, this means determining how to modernize their IT infrastructures and gaining greater security over their business applications and data. Today's growth-minded SMBs need to embrace innovation and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) in order to remain competitive, while strengthening their security posture to combat growing threats and accommodate data regulations.

Digital transformation that achieves a balance between a modern operating system and next-generation hardware helps SMBs ensure compliance, enhance security, and take advantage of modern innovation. Windows Server 2025 helps SMBs digitally transform to take advantage of the latest advancements in security and performance, all while leveraging hybrid capabilities to tap into the cloud benefits of Microsoft Azure for strengthened resiliency, agility, and AI-driven innovation.

Partner opportunity

Many SMB workloads rely on outdated operating systems and aging infrastructures, running Windows Server 2012 or 2016. This creates a substantial opportunity for Microsoft and its partners to bring modernization and innovation to these SMB customers, working together to build a plan that prepares the business for the future and ensures continuity.

Upgraded capabilities

By upgrading to Windows Server 2025, SMBs will get the latest hardware and software capabilities while enabling hybrid cloud services to transform legacy IT environments with modern, innovative, and cloud-ready technologies. Purchasing new server hardware and running the latest version of Windows Server opens the door for SMBs to modernize their on-premises infrastructures while gaining many of the performance, security, and innovation benefits of the cloud.

Enhanced security

Running workloads on aging Windows Server editions leaves businesses vulnerable to increasingly sophisticated security attacks and lacks the modern capabilities to proactively protect and monitor the environment and data. Additionally, most SMBs have a minimal security team (or rely on IT generalists with limited security expertise), tasked with protecting the

business from evolving cyberthreats and compliance regulations while also monitoring a growing digital infrastructure and distributed endpoints. Many of the threats SMBs face are too sophisticated or quick-moving for these teams to combat on their own. These businesses need to strengthen their posture with advanced, automated, and proactive security that protects the business at every layer without the need to staff a robust security team.

Windows Server 2025 includes advanced security features like Secured-core, which uses hardware, firmware, and operating system capabilities to their full extent to help protect against current and future threats. This gives Microsoft partners the opportunity to sell innovative server hardware to run Windows Server 2025 with the benefit of Secured-core, multilayer security solutions.

AI-driven innovation

Many SMBs are exploring use cases for AI to help them maintain a competitive advantage, save time on repetitive tasks, reduce manual mistakes, and accelerate market growth. Over 60 percent of SMBs report they are planning to use or are currently piloting AI to help with customer service, merchandising, inventory management, content creation, competition analysis, and supply chains.² In addition, 90 percent of SMBs already using AI indicate that it has made their business more successful.³

Windows Server 2025 provides enhanced data storage and hybrid capabilities that empower SMBs to tap into Microsoft Azure's industry-leading AI and machine learning (ML) tools, enabling cloud-based innovation and unlocking new business value through better use of data, analytics, and AI.

1 US Chamber of Commerce, [The Biggest Challenges Facing Small Businesses Right Now](#), July 2023.

2 Yahoo Finance, [SMBs Turn to AI, Supply Chain Diversification, and New Trade Corridors to Grow Across Borders Despite Headwinds](#), June 2024.

3 Forbes, [How Artificial Intelligence Is Helping Today's Small Businesses](#), August 2023.

Target audiences

Business decision makers (Primary)

Business decision makers (BDMs) in SMBs include owners, the leadership team, and the heads of various departments or functions. BDMs are looking to balance smart technology investments with capabilities to help reach business goals. They are motivated by their business's need to stay ahead by innovating, improving time to market, and keeping costs down. They are excited about the possibilities of AI, and less aware of their current IT estate (servers used, specific tech skills on team, etc.). Discussions with BDMs should focus on the business benefits and expected performance improvements of upgrading to hardware running Windows Server 2025 without using technical jargon.

In particular, **business owners** recognize that technology can be a core differentiator for success, but they need guidance and expertise to make that happen (often by outsourcing to a partner). Discussions with business owners should be similar to those for other BDMs, as business owners want to focus on the business benefits of a new technology solution without getting bogged down by technical details.

Technical decision makers (Primary)

Technical decision makers (TDMs) include IT leaders, which—depending on the size of the business—could be a Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Technical Officer (CTO), or a vice president or director of IT within the company. TDMs are looking for cost-effective solutions that help meet their business goals, with a focus on enhancing security, compliance, and innovation. They are tasked with maintaining security and managing change while keeping costs down. Discussions with TDMs should focus on real costs, end-user benefits associated with technical features, and expected business performance improvements.

IT implementers/pros (Secondary)

Depending on the size of the business, **IT implementers/pros** can include IT generalists, system engineers, database administrators, software developers, information security analysts, systems analysts, network engineers, and/or network architects. They can influence technology investments and can also encourage or resist change based on their experiences with technology or with their organization. They are closest to server technology and know the server types and operating systems, the age of the servers in their environment, which servers are approaching end of support, and technical dependencies.

IT pros are looking for high-quality, easy-to-deploy, and simple-to-manage solutions that help them do more with less budget and fewer resources. Discussions with IT pros should focus on the technical solution and how it will work, including ease of implementation, management, and compatibility.

Messaging and positioning

The following tables include the key positioning statements, messaging pillars, and proof points for Windows Server 2025.

Key messages	
Product description	Windows Server 2025 is the latest version of the Microsoft operating system that has powered the most important on-premises workloads for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) for more than 30 years. With this latest release, Microsoft has continued to build on its proven security, resiliency, and hybrid capabilities, while introducing new levels of performance and security that help SMBs become cloud-ready and improve agility. Taking advantage of modern hardware features, Windows Server 2025 is optimized for on-premises environments while offering flexible hybrid capabilities that enable SMBs to leverage the additional security and innovation benefits of Microsoft Azure.
Pain Points – problem being solved	For Business Decision Makers (BDMs) Security • Reducing risk (regulatory, legal, and reputational) and protecting business data and intellectual property against evolving security threats • Enabling secure remote work and improving IT management Performance and Future Readiness • Ensuring business continuity and preventing costly downtime that can impact revenue or productivity • Enabling new business capabilities through emerging technologies like AI and ML Business Agility and Tackling Complexity • Improving margin through lower costs and improved resource management (especially BDMs in Finance) For Technical Decision Makers (TDMs) Security • Reducing risk and protecting business data and infrastructure against evolving security threats • Maintaining compliance with industry and data usage regulations • Enabling secure remote work and simplifying IT management Performance and Future Readiness • Ensuring business continuity and preventing costly downtime

	• Ensuring readiness for innovation with emerging technologies like AI and ML • Enabling cloud-style innovations in an on-premises environment • Improving scalability and flexibility to better manage capacity spikes Business Agility and Tackling Complexity • Doing more with less and optimizing current IT skill sets and investments • Reducing infrastructure costs and improving resource management • Reducing complex and time-consuming networking issues For IT implementers/pros Security • Staying ahead of evolving security threats and improving monitoring • Streamlining time-consuming security patching, updating, and upgrading • Improving identity and access management for distributed endpoints (needs to be secure, scalable, end-user friendly) Performance and Future Readiness • Reducing system performance issues and downtime • Improving scalability and flexibility to better manage capacity spikes • Streamlining application management and navigating compatibility issues Business Agility and Tackling Complexity • Simplifying network and storage management
Short statement message (25 words)	Your business relies on its data—secure it wherever it resides, become cloud-ready for data-driven innovation, and improve business agility with Windows Server 2025. (24 words)
Medium message statement (50 words)	Modernize and prepare for the future while delivering the security and flexibility your business needs with Windows Server 2025. Drive productivity, resiliency, and AI-readiness with seamless hybrid capabilities that bring cloud innovations and forward-looking threat protection to your server environment, while improving scalability, agility, and performance with modern software and hardware. (51 words)

Long statement message (100 words)	Modernize and prepare for the future while delivering the security and flexibility your business needs with Windows Server 2025. Drive productivity, resiliency, and AI-readiness with seamless hybrid capabilities that bring cloud innovations and forward-looking threat protection to your server environment, while improving scalability, agility, and performance. With the latest hybrid-enabled software and hardware—including the latest generations of Intel® Xeon® processors—Windows Server 2025 helps you leverage cloud innovation at your own pace. Operate more securely with advanced, multi-layer security, leverage GPU partitioning for AI/ML workloads to improve efficiency, scale effectively with compute and storage enhancements, and enable more secure, powerful, and seamless virtualization. (102 words)		
Messaging pillars –	Advanced security and resiliency	Cloud-ready and flexible with hybrid capabilities	High-performance infrastructure
Messaging pillar alternatives (<i>action verbs</i>)	Protect your data, reinforce your resilience	Optimize and drive business agility with hybrid cloud capabilities	Improve performance, efficiency, and innovation
Top-level messaging	Operate more securely and reliably while protecting your business at every layer. Windows Server 2025 offers features like Secured-core server, enhanced identity protection, and rebootless updates* to guard against cyberattacks, provide preventative protection, and increase resilience against future threats. <i>*Add-on service available for Azure Arc-enabled servers</i>	Adapt quickly and become cloud-ready with Windows Server 2025. Improve agility with hybrid capabilities to bring cloud advancements, innovations, and versatility to your server environment.	Help your business take leaps ahead in performance, scalability, ease of networking, and future-readiness. Windows Server 2025 helps you prepare for cloud innovation and artificial intelligence (AI) while driving greater efficiency and power for your business-critical workloads.
Key messages for BDMs	Protect your business from breaches that can be costly, impact your business's reputation, and reduce productivity. Keep your business resilient and secure, while reducing risks with Windows Server 2025, which builds on decades of Microsoft security leadership and offers advanced, multi-layer	Give your business the flexibility and adaptability to meet today's demands while unlocking new business value by extending cloud capabilities on premises. With Windows Server 2025, leverage hybrid capabilities to improve business agility, drive internal productivity, and enable modern	Get the speed and power that your business needs to stay competitive while exploring new business capabilities powered by data, analytics, and AI with Windows Server 2025. Empower your IT team to spend less time on administration and more time on innovation, while efficiently scaling resources and capabilities to meet your business needs.

	protection against ever-evolving threats. Protect your intellectual property with holistic security capabilities for detection and response, vulnerability management, and mobile threat defense Safeguard sensitive data with Secured-core solutions that help protect your hardware, firmware, and operating system against inspection, theft, and tampering Reduce downtime and improve productivity with automated security patching and security baselines to ensure critical vulnerabilities are resolved before there is a problem Enable secure remote work with enhanced Windows Defender capabilities, secure virtualization, and streamlined access and identity management	management and business insights that improve visibility and real-time decision making. Innovate on your own terms, bringing the capabilities of the cloud to your server environment Decrease costs to improve profit with cloud-ready hybrid capabilities that extend the efficiency of cloud to your on-premises infrastructure Maximize your IT team's time and productivity with centralized, unified server administration capabilities and simplified management across on-premises and hybrid environments Automate frequent, time-consuming tasks to free IT staff for more high-value initiatives and innovation Strengthen business continuity and disaster recovery to improve uptime and productivity with cloud-based disaster recovery and backup capabilities Glean business insights with modern monitoring and analytics that provide greater visibility into your infrastructure, network, and applications	Stay competitive by adopting a modern operating system that responds to the evolving need for enhanced security, capacity, and flexibility Take the lead in app innovation with a modern platform that makes it easier to build more secure, reliable, and powerful apps Optimize business intelligence and data analysis with access to cloud-based advanced analytics, machine learning, and AI Achieve greater server efficiency and better resource management with Windows Server software-defined datacenter solutions Get the capabilities and performance you need, with a range of edition and licensing options for SMBs to select from—all the way up to unlimited virtual machines with the Datacenter edition
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Key messages for TDMs	Windows Server 2025 helps you deliver the security and resilience your organization needs for its business-critical applications. Get modernized identity management, new safeguards against brute force and lateral attacks, and improved uptime with rebootless security updates.* <i>*Add-on service available for Azure Arc-enabled servers</i> Help prevent and detect zero-day exploits, network attacks, and data breaches with Advanced Threat Protection (ATP); bring powerful threat protection together to help provide multi-layer security across hardware, firmware, and the operating system with Secured-core solutions Improve IT efficiency with easier upgrades and hotpatching to get crucial updates with less downtime Meet industry compliance standards for data security with AES-256 encryption to help protect sensitive business data Increase protection from vulnerabilities in the operating system with virtualization-based security (VBS), which helps prevent the use of malicious exploits that attempt to defeat defenses Strengthen network security with end-to-end encryption of SMB data	Achieve the next level of modularity, integration, and simplicity with the ability to extend cloud capabilities and monitoring to your server environment. Windows Server 2025 helps you save time and get better connectivity with new software defined network (SDN multisite) capabilities while enhancing virtual machine (VM) reliability, security, and management. Simplify Windows Server management for physical or virtual machines hosted on premises or in the cloud Improve resiliency and productivity with automated, hybrid capabilities to synchronize file servers, extend Active Directory, and back up in the cloud Reduce operational expenses with predictive analytics capabilities built into Windows Server to analyze system data and build high-accuracy predictions that help to reduce costs associated with reactive management Maximize the availability and performance of application workloads by efficiently collecting, analyzing, and acting on telemetry with Azure Monitor Help ensure ongoing business continuity and security by leveraging Azure services, including automatic backup and data recovery	Light up new possibilities using compute and storage enhancements in Windows Server 2025. Reduce time spent on network setup, upgrades, and management tasks, while seamlessly running business-critical application workloads like Microsoft SQL Server on Windows Server 2025 with best-in-class performance, scalability, and availability. Scale effectively and economically with high-performance, software-defined storage and networking that can start small and grow as needed, making it affordable for businesses of virtually every size Scale containerized applications with Kubernetes using improvements in network policy implementation and integration with industry-standard containerization Easily modernize .NET applications with the new containerization tool in Windows Admin Center Reduce Windows container image size to enable faster download times and better app compatibility Get a lightweight, isolated environment with Windows containers to make apps easier to develop, deploy, and manage Take advantage of a simplified way to migrate storage to Windows Server or Azure with the intuitive interface of Storage Migration Service
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	Enable secure remote work with enhanced Windows Defender capabilities, secure virtualization, and streamlined access and identity management Help prevent host intrusion with Windows Defender Exploit Guard <i>*Add-on service available for Azure Arc-enabled servers</i>		Leverage GPU partitioning for workloads like AI/ML and VDI to help you scale efficiently and reduce infrastructure total cost of ownership (TCO)
Messaging Pillars –	Advanced security and resiliency	Cloud-ready and flexible with hybrid capabilities	High-performance infrastructure
Messaging pillar alternatives (<i>action verbs</i>)	Protect your data, reinforce your resilience	Optimize and drive business agility with hybrid cloud capabilities	Improve performance, efficiency, and innovation
SMB proof points	Multi-layered security to help protect your business from rapidly evolving cyber threats while making management easier for your team. Secured-core server technology: Windows Server 2025 continues to raise the bar on hardware security with Secured-core server capabilities that help defend against firmware-level attacks, create a hardware-backed root of trust, and protect the server operating system (OS) from the execution of unverified code. Secured-core server leverages Trusted Platform Module 2.0 and System Guard to boot up Windows Server more securely and minimize risk from firmware vulnerabilities.	Manage Windows Server 2025 with Windows Admin Center, a locally-deployed, browser-based advanced toolset for hybrid and on-premises server management at no additional cost. SMBs can also leverage Windows Admin Center to manage ongoing business continuity and disaster recovery enabled by hybrid capabilities like Azure Backup and Azure Site Recovery. For hybrid use cases when using Windows Server 2025 both on premises and on Azure: The Azure hybrid services tool in Windows Admin Center consolidates all integrated Azure services into a centralized hub for easy discoverability and	Windows Server 2025 delivers a modern operating system that enables enhanced virtual machine memory, expanded processor and device support, superior congestion control, and improvements in encryption, networking, and more. Modernizing to Windows Server 2025 with the latest generation of Intel® Xeon® E processors provides a cost-effective way for SMBs and entry-level bare metal cloud hosting to take advantage of DDR5 and PCIe 5.0 support for higher memory bandwidth and faster storage and network connectivity. Storage Migration Service provides a graphical tool that inventories data on Windows, Linux, and NetApp CIFS servers and then transfers the data to

	For hybrid use cases when using Windows Server 2025 both on premises and on Azure: Get crucial updates with less downtime. Hotpatching allows many security updates to be applied without a need to reboot.* Windows Defender Credential Guard uses virtualization-based security to isolate secrets so that only privileged system software can access them. Windows Defender Exploit Guard offers a set of host intrusion prevention capabilities for Windows Server 2025, helping manage and reduce the attack surface of apps used by employees. Integrated Windows Defender ATP gives access to deep kernel and memory sensors, improving performance and anti-tampering while enabling response actions on server machines. Security baselines and best practices: Microsoft provides a tailored security baseline for Windows Server 2025 with over 350 security settings. Customers can apply the security baseline and use built-in drift control features to ensure the system remains in a good security state. Virtualization based security (VBS) enclaves enable isolation of sensitive workloads from both the host application and the rest of the system, reducing the threat of malicious attackers.	implementation on premises or in a hybrid environment. For hybrid use cases when using Windows Server 2025 both on premises and on Azure: Azure Monitor can collect data directly from physical or virtual Windows computers into a Log Analytics workspace for detailed analysis and correlation. Seamless management of hybrid server environments, storage migration, system insights, protecting VMs, synchronizing file servers, and providing enhanced Active Director (AD) authentication. System Insights provides predictive analytics capabilities native to Windows Server running on premises or in a hybrid cloud. The feature delivers high-accuracy predictions that can help to reduce expenses associated with reactively managing Windows Server instances.	newer servers or to Azure virtual machines. SMBs still running Windows Server 2012 or Windows Server 2016 will be able to build business applications more quickly with Windows Server 2025 if using containers. With Windows Server 2025, SMBs can see improvements to WSL, which help Linux users bring their scripts to Windows while using industry standards like OpenSSH, Curl and Tar. Windows containers allow for packaging apps with their dependencies and using operating system-level virtualization to provide fast, fully isolated environments on a single system. The Containers extension in Windows Admin Center enables the containerization of apps as well as troubleshooting for containers running on a host, such as opening a console connection to a container, checking logs, monitoring resource consumption, and more. Microsoft drastically decreased the size of the Windows Server core container base image by reducing duplicate payloads and removing unused optional components. Winget is installed by default, which is a command line Windows Package Manager tool that provides comprehensive package manager solutions for installing applications on Windows devices. Enhanced data storage capabilities unlock new possibilities to optimize business intelligence and data analysis with access to cloud-based advanced
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	Virtualization-based security (VBS) key protection to protect cryptographic keys. With this new capability, keys can be protected from admin-level key theft attacks. Windows Server 2025 now supports AES-256-GCM and AES-256-CCM cryptographic suites for SMB encryption. It also still supports AES-128 for down-level compatibility. To provide east-west storage encryption, Windows Server 2025 failover clusters now support granular control of encrypting and signing intranode storage communications for Cluster Shared Volumes (CSV) and the storage bus layer (SBL). Windows Server 2025 supports TLS 1.3. This latest version eliminates obsolete cryptographic algorithms, enhances security over older versions, and aims to encrypt as much of the handshake as possible. Web client support for single sign-on (SSO) delivers a streamlined authentication experience. Easy-to-configure DTLS-based encryption provides a trusted end-to-end Remote Desktop Services deployment. <i>*Add-on service available for Azure Arc-enabled servers</i>		analytics, machine learning, and AI. Software-defined storage enhancements: ReFS (Resilient File System) optimized deduplication and compression (for active workloads like VMs). Save up to 60 percent of storage for file servers, and up to 90 percent of storage for VHD / ISO / Backups. Storage replica compression is now available in all editions of Windows Server. Windows Server software-defined (WSSD) datacenter capabilities abstract and multiply physical hardware to form elastic resource pools with software-defined compute, storage, and networking. Microsoft offers a range of edition and licensing options for SMBs, helping SMBs get exactly the capabilities they need. Windows Server 2025 Essentials* is frequently the first choice for small businesses, while Windows Server 2025 Standard adds capabilities for small and medium-sized businesses. Both provide easy migration to, and interoperability with, Windows Server 2025 Datacenter and Windows Server Azure editions. <i>*Available only on select manufacturers' systems</i>
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