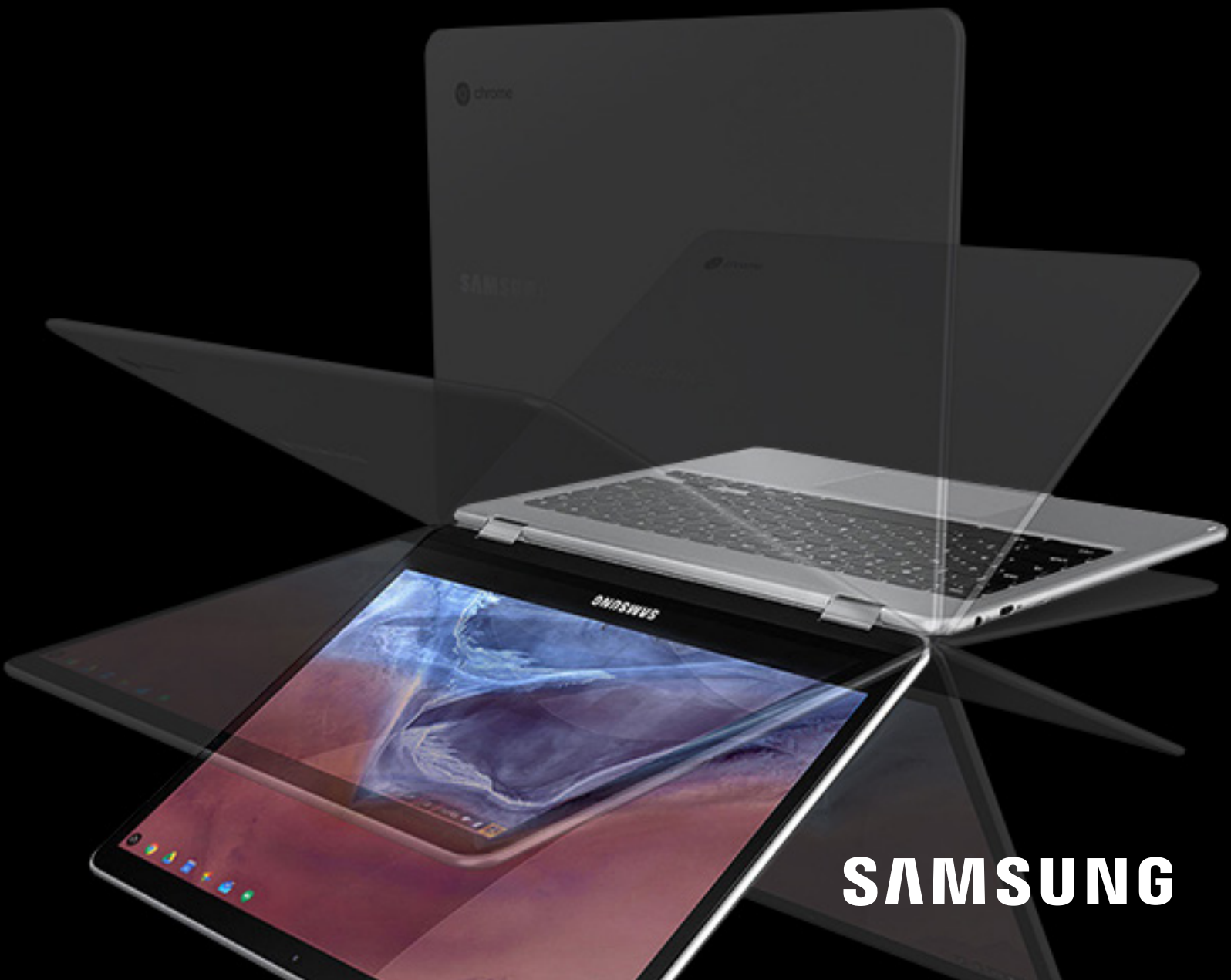# Streamlining Business with Chrome

How hybrid devices help businesses
merge the mobile and desktop experience

SAMSUNG

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Introduction

Chromebooks have been a hit with consumers and schools. Are they set to convert business users too?

Businesses have adopted mobile workflows and cloud-based apps at a fierce pace—and they're increasingly leveraging these resources to help expand services, meet customer needs, and keep a sharp competitive edge. As they come to rely on these tools for functions like billing and payroll, they're setting the desktop versions aside—and wanting to ensure cloud-based apps are supported on the devices their employees use.

Chromebook, a streamlined device for people who spend most of their time online, offers a good solution. A huge hit with consumers and educators, Chromebooks outsold Macs in 2016, making Chrome the second most popular PC operating system in the US—and Google says US schools now buy more Chromebooks than all other devices combined.[1] But as popular as they are for home and school use, they're sometimes perceived as too stripped-down for business purposes.

However, new enterprise-grade devices built to support Chrome, Google Apps (now G Suite), and Android are now hitting the market, and they're prompting IT decision-makers both to take a fresh look and ask some new questions. What's the real business potential of these devices? How do you determine whether they're a good fit for your workforce? Do they have the performance firepower that business users need? What about the tools that IT professionals need to secure, deploy, and manage them?

To get some answers, Spiceworks asked more than 250 IT decision-makers in the US and Canada to tell us which applications and devices they're using now and what they're considering for future purchases. This ebook shares their impressions, takes a closer look at the technology, and offers some practical next steps for companies that decide to make the move to Chrome.

Current Device and OS Use

First things first: which devices, operating systems, and apps are businesses using now? We found that most organizations use a wide range of devices, including hybrids that can transform from laptops to tablets. A third of respondents are currently using convertibles, while 42% use detachables. Those using Google and Android apps were more likely to use hybrid devices or consider them for future use, which suggests that hybrids may be especially suited to meet the needs of these groups.
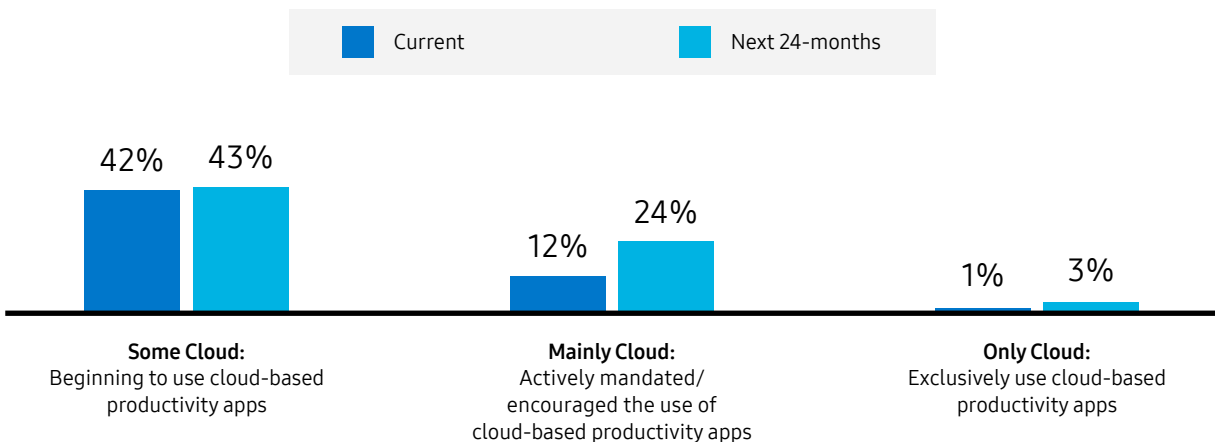
Almost all (99%) surveyed IT pros using hybrid devices run them on Windows OS—not surprising, given that these are almost the only hybrids in the market—while 18% use iOS and 16% use Android.

Looking to the future, most IT pros told us that they're most likely to stick with Windows when considering purchases over the next 24 months. However, more than half said they're open to considering Android or Chrome OS in the future, and that number rose dramatically for Android and G Suite users. Others may be waiting to learn more about newer business-grade devices running Chrome, or to see whether employees can reliably use online and Android apps to tackle the workday.

Survey respondents also told us their use of cloud-based productivity apps is on the rise: 70% said they expect to move to cloud in the next 24 months. More than a quarter said their application strategy will be mainly cloud or only cloud within the next 24 months—more than double what it is today. What are they doing with these apps? More than half are using cloud apps for virtualization, cloud-based storage, and Office 365.

Cloud Usage

Legend: ■ Current ■ Next 24-months

Some Cloud: 42% / 43%
Mainly Cloud: 12% / 24%
Only Cloud: 1% / 3%

Some Cloud:
Beginning to use cloud-based productivity apps

Mainly Cloud:
Actively mandated/ encouraged the use of cloud-based productivity apps

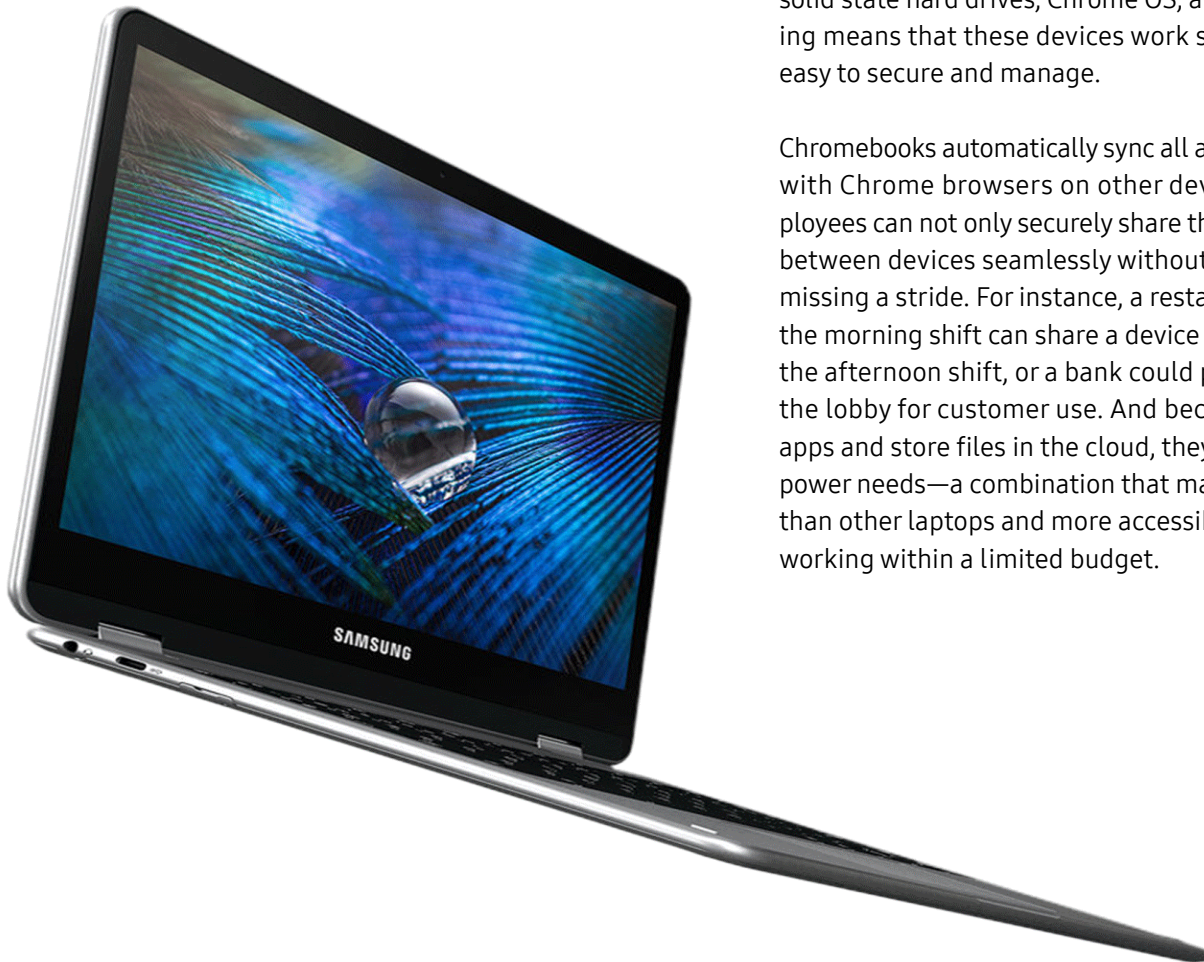**Only Cloud:**
Exclusively use cloud-based productivity apps

Exploring Chromebooks

"**Chromebooks are exactly what the computer world needs now: Simple, secure, usable.**"

- Wired[1]

With cloud usage on the rise, IT decision-makers are evaluating the untapped potential of Chromebooks to help employees securely create, share, and store their work online. Here's a look at how Chromebooks running Chrome OS and Google and Android apps can combine to create a powerful new business computing experience.

Chromebooks

Chromebooks are lightweight laptop or hybrid devices built to run apps and store data in the cloud. The combination of solid state hard drives, Chrome OS, and cloud-based computing means that these devices work simply, run fast, and are easy to secure and manage.

Chromebooks automatically sync all apps, data, and passwords with Chrome browsers on other devices, which means employees can not only securely share the devices, but can move between devices seamlessly without losing their settings or missing a stride. For instance, a restaurant employee leaving the morning shift can share a device with the person working the afternoon shift, or a bank could provide Chromebooks in the lobby for customer use. And because Chromebooks run apps and store files in the cloud, they have lower storage and power needs—a combination that makes them less expensive than other laptops and more accessible to IT decision-makers working within a limited budget.

Chrome OS

Chrome OS is built to run only cloud-based apps such as Office 365 or G Suite, along with its own native apps and extensions. Chrome has seen limited adoption in the business community until now; in fact, just 12% of survey respondents said they will definitely or probably consider Chrome as an operating system. Yet the OS offers distinct advantages, including the ability to store and sync files in the cloud, and therefore between devices. The fact that apps run and store data in the cloud also makes the OS far more lightweight than either Windows or iOS, which means employees won't get bogged down by the heavy processing loads of desktop applications.
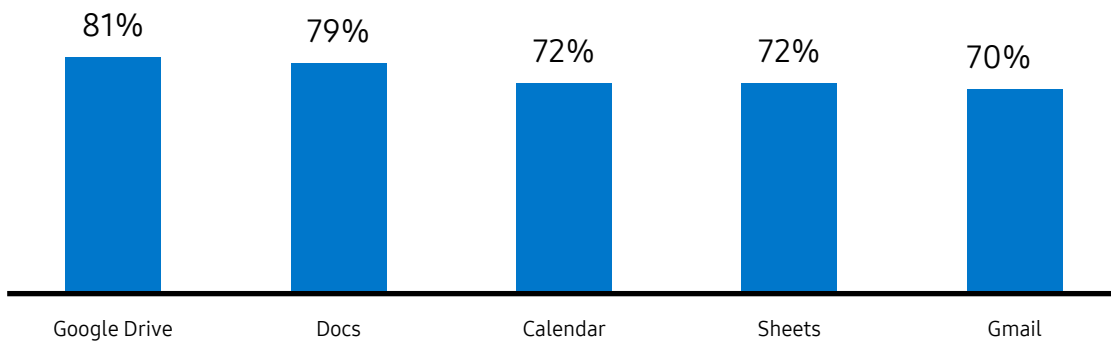
G Suite

Chromebooks are now optimized for Google's cloud-based productivity apps, which offer a basic but powerful tool-set for practically any business need.
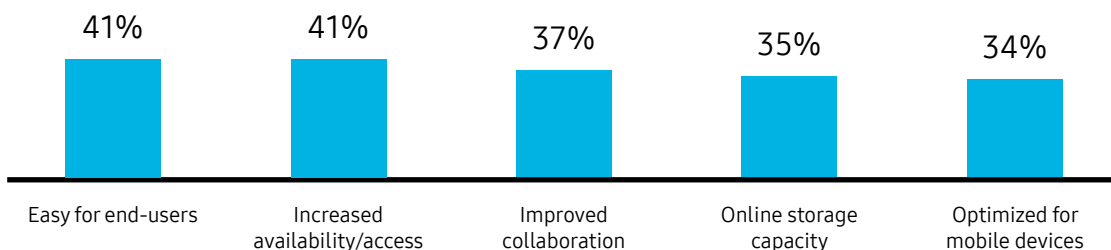
Apps such as Google Docs and Calendar are free and already in wide use in the workplace, but Google also offers G Suite (formerly called Google Apps for Work) to businesses on a subscription basis, which adds at least 30 GB of storage on Google Drive, additional management tools, and custom email addresses.[2]

The IT decision-makers surveyed said their companies most often use Google Drive, Docs, Calendar, and Sheets, and listed benefits including ease of use (41%) for employees, increased availability and access to tools (41%), improved collaboration (37%), the ability to store more data online (35%), and the fact that they're optimized for mobile devices (34%).

Top 5 Google Apps Used:

Google Drive	Docs	Calendar	Sheets	Gmail
81%	79%	72%	72%	70%

Top 5 Google Apps Benefits:

Easy for end-users	Increased availability/access	Improved collaboration	Online storage capacity	Optimized for mobile devices
41%	41%	37%	35%	34%

Android apps

As of late 2016, Chromebooks also support Android applications—more than two million of them—which creates the first real opportunity to truly merge the smartphone and mobile device experiences. More specifically, it means that highly mobile employees like salespeople and field workers, who rely on a smartphone for the bulk of their work while on the move, can now seamlessly access those same mobile apps on a Chromebook back in the office.

The Spiceworks survey suggests that the addition of familiar Android mobile apps to Chromebook will broaden the appeal of Chrome OS, making organizations more open to considering them than before. While just 12% of IT decision-makers said they would consider the Chrome OS, 44% would consider devices running Android. And for IT decision-makers already using Android apps on their phones, that number leaps to 91%.

The availability of Android apps on Chromebooks is also certain to drive development of features on both sides that drive up usability. For Chromebooks, that means more touch-enabled screens, flexible hybrid devices, and features like a built-in Pen. We can probably also soon expect to see Android apps that scale to fit any window dimensions.

"Google is finally smashing Android and Chrome together, and it's awesome."

- *Business Insider*[3]

Barriers and Benefits to Adoption

What about the perceptions and concerns that may be holding IT decision-makers back from adopting hybrid devices and cloud-based apps?

Those working in larger organizations or in highly regulated industries like health or finance face a number of potential constraints. For instance, they're likely to have established processes and workflows (including a long history of using desktop software), and may have restrictive IT policies and regulatory requirements that make it more difficult to roll out new technology. Regarding their reluctance to switch to cloud-based apps, 37% of respondents cited compliance issues and 35% were concerned about compatibility with legacy documents.
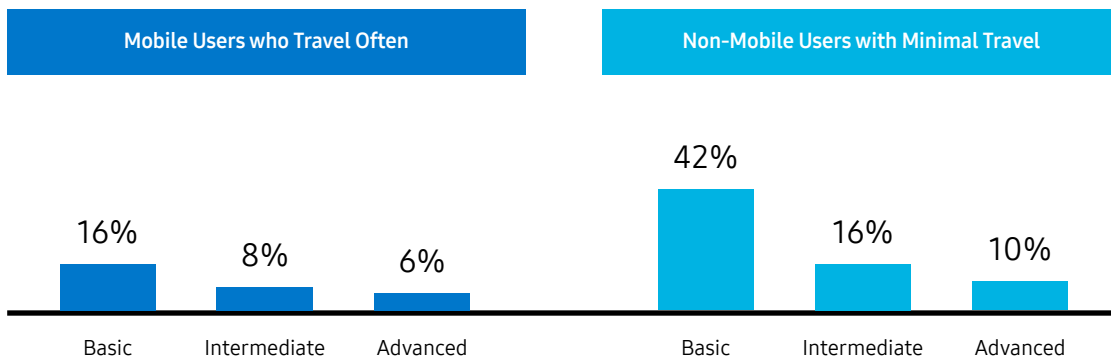
About a third mentioned existing investments in Windows infrastructure as a barrier, as well. Those who have already purchased hybrid devices will want to enjoy as good a return as they can on them before considering new Chromebooks. They also may have significant investments in enterprise-grade software licenses or on-premises storage—factors that overshadow the benefits of a device that runs only online apps and stores data in the cloud. IT departments may also balk at the prospect of asking their entire work-force to move from desktop to Google Apps or to learn the ropes of working on Chrome OS, however easy these tools are to use.

Another concern is that Chromebooks running cloud-based apps may not provide employees with the processing power and storage they need to be productive.

Yet the research indicates most users today simply don't need a high-powered device, and are looking for affordable and flexible alternatives. The survey found that just 6% of mobile users and 10% of non-mobile users have "advanced" computing needs, with a majority doing light multi-tasking with a few apps. What's more, the vast majority of popular productivity applications now offer robust online versions, most of which can be used both on- and offline, that can handily satisfy the needs of most employees. Secure, easy-to-use storage apps such as Google Drive and Box are available online as well, greatly lessening the need for laptops with large amounts of onboard storage.

Computing Needs:

Mobile Users who Travel Often	Non-Mobile Users with Minimal Travel

Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced
16%	8%	6%	42%	16%	10%

While some companies may be constrained by infrastructure and processes they already have in place, start-ups and small to midsize businesses (SMBs) may find themselves in the perfect position to become early adopters of business-class Chromebooks—and nimble enough to take full advantage of their benefits. Chromebooks are inexpensive compared to many other mobile devices, and cloud-based computing reduces the need to invest in infrastructure, storage, security, and management tools—all of which lowers the barriers to entry while offering a robust toolset for more efficient, productive operations. And because Chromebooks automatically handle virus protection and software updates in the cloud, they're far easier to support and manage, making them ideal for companies without a dedicated IT team.

Benefiting mobile employees everywhere

Approximately half of the organizations surveyed—regardless of size or type—said they like the idea of using hybrid devices that run Android apps on Chrome to support atleast some of their mobile workers, and it's not hard tosee why. Hybrid Chromebooks offer multi-user sign-incapabilities and keep data secure and encrypted in thecloud, making it easier for employees to share devices. They're great for workers on the go who can benefit fromthe more flexible form factors of these devices, and forthose who are already using Google and Android apps. They can also make it easier for employees across theorganization to collaborate and communicate.

"As the tech industry moves more and more into cloud computing, a Chromebook is worth a serious look if there is a good match with your infrastructure, employee use cases, and budget."

- Techradar[4]

The Chrome Roadmap

If you think your business could benefit from using Chromebooks as a mobile computing solution, how do you go about getting there? Start by assessing how you're already using mobile apps and cloud computing. For example, the IT decision-makers surveyed indicated that the majority of their organizations (82%) are already using cloud to at least some degree to virtualize servers, and about a third are using public cloud.

Once you've assessed your organization, you can use it as a basis for your route moving forward.

Beginner

If your company has employees who already use some Android apps on their own mobile devices, you can leverage that familiarity by asking them to help choose a core set of mobile apps for the entire company.

Intermediate

The next step may be to move your collaboration, communication, and productivity tasks to the cloud via Google's G Suite. Making this switch also makes it easier for mobile employees to work the same way regardless of where they are and what combination of devices they happen to be using.

Advanced

Go all-in by adopting Chromebooks to unite your employees' mobile and desktop computing experiences. A hybrid Chromebook offers mobile workers the greatest level of flexibility by making it easy to use the device as a tablet for presentations and collaboration or as a full laptop for more compute-intensive tasks. Touch-enabled Chromebooks are a good choice for employees who rely heavily on Android mobile apps that were originally developed for smartphones.

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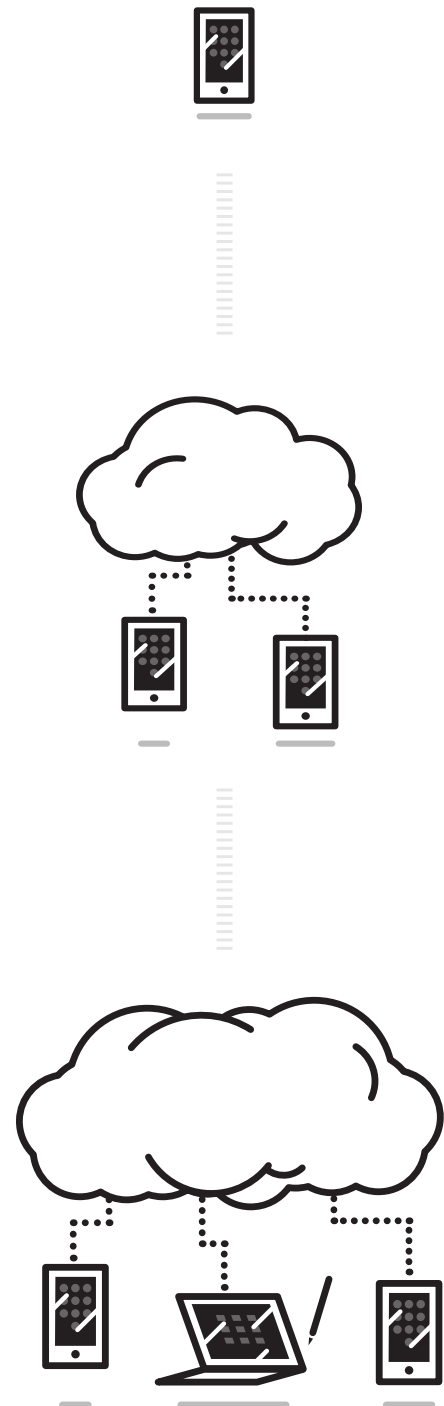
Solutions from Samsung

With a keyboard, a touch screen and a built-in Pen, the Samsung Chromebook Plus and Pro offer a complete toolset for the worker on the go. These features, together with a flexible, convertible form factor and optimization for the Google and Android app ecosystems, create a powerful tool to help your employees achieve true mobile productivity.

The Samsung Chromebook Plus and Pro offer:

- **Flexibility.** A 3-in-1 device that easily converts from tablet to notebook with a 360-degree rotating screen

- **Productivity.** A device optimized for Android apps, including a touchscreen and built-in Pen

- **Mobility.** A 9-hour battery and an ultra-thin, super-light metal body perfect for work on the move

- **Security.** Enhanced business-grade security, automatic updates, and easy management from a web-based admin console
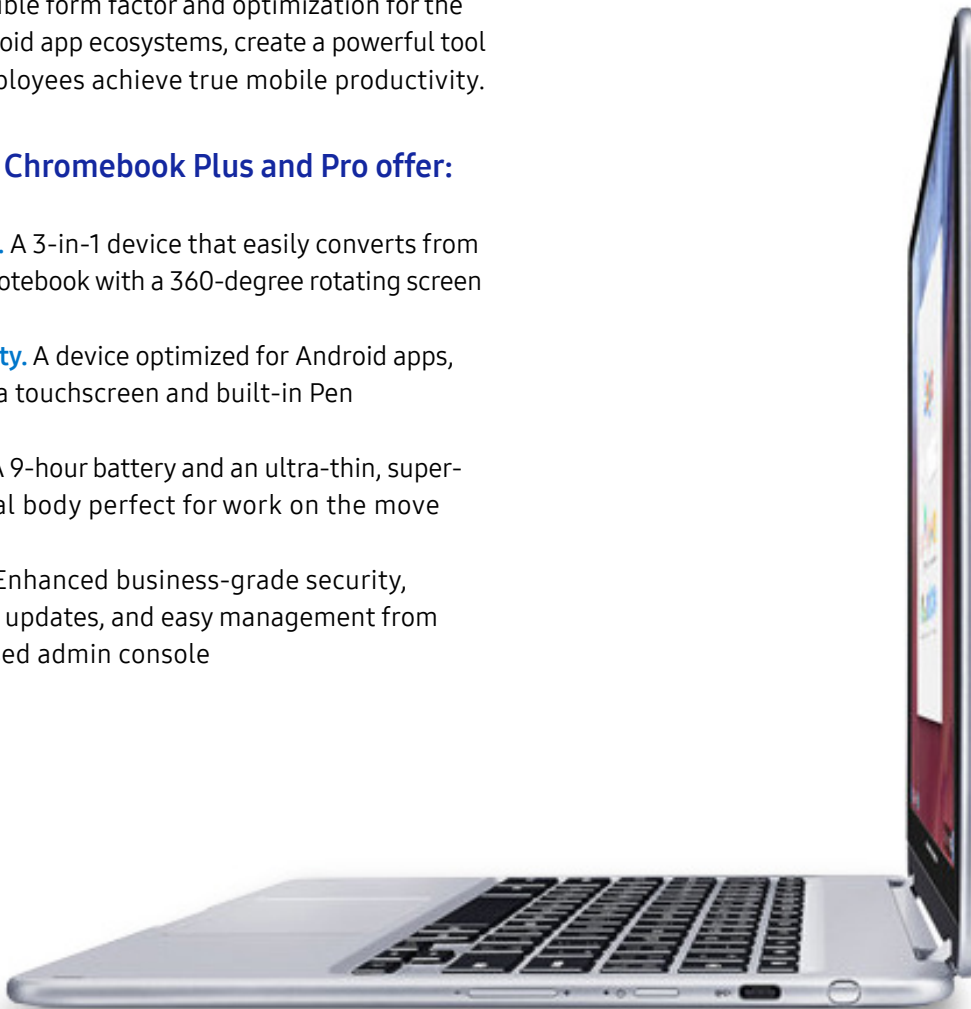
Conclusion

Now that Chrome OS can run Android apps, you can look forward to some big changes—both in the way cloud-based mobile apps are designed, and in how the convergence of hybrid devices and smartphones will keep streamlining the way we work. And there are even bigger changes on the horizon, as students now using Chromebooks in US schools hit the workforce. Given their ease and familiarity with the technology, they'll create a massive market for Android productivity apps designed for Chromebook users. Chromebooks and other hybrid devices built to leverage the power of the cloud will also continue to drive down software licensing and management costs for businesses. If you run a small to midsize business, adopting hybrid devices and cloud-based apps now will put you in a strong position to take advantage of these trends as they emerge—and to attract top talent as you grow.

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About the Survey

Samsung commissioned Spiceworks to conduct an online survey in November 2016 to explore hybrid device and OS usage and consideration. A total of 257 US surveys were collected from IT decision-makers involved with laptop, hybrid and mobile device purchases for their organizations. Respondents came from companies that use or are considering tablets/hybrid devices. Organizations included a mix of sizes and industries, excluding education and IT service providers.

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