nexthink

Nexthink Insights

Predicting Windows 11 Upgrades in Corporate IT

Most organizations are woefully behind their Windows 11 preparation. Here's what the next few years might look like for your IT team...

Introduction

[*Monday morning*]

The IT Director carefully scans her multi-colored Project Board. She stops at the column titled 'Backlog' and fixes her eyes on the last sticky note. It reads: Windows 11 Upgrade 🙂. She takes a long sip from her coffee and then whispers prophetically "*Not yet, my friend. Not yet.*"

We get it.

October 14th, 2025 is a date that seems far enough away not to elicit panic, but close enough to still put Windows 11 in your purview.

For many, upgrading to Windows 11 right now isn't worth the investment. You might have your hardware warranty to consider, or customized applications that aren't compatible yet, or you're waiting to see what happens with the microchip shortage and your software vendors.

But wouldn't it be helpful to get a sense of what the next few years might look like for your organization? Wouldn't it be beneficial to understand the amount of time, cost, and resources you'll likely need to dedicate to your organization's Digital Employee Experience?

Most industry research about Windows 11 adoption is taken from shoddy data and small sample sizes, which makes it difficult to make accurate insights and predictions. Knowing this, we investigated 3.12 million anonymous customer devices from 457 organizations and 8 distinct industries. From our robust sample, we were able to identify how many devices right now are ready, almost ready, or not ready at all to upgrade to Windows 11. And from there we were able to deduce how much time and budget it will take you depending on your IT environment.

We also offer tips on how you can accurately analyze your software and hardware needs so you can save money and headaches without sacrificing your Digital Employee Experience or your organization's competitive edge.

We hope this research empowers you to move Windows 11 from your 'Backlog' list and into your 'Complete' column.

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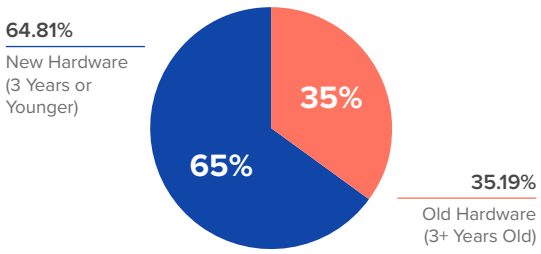
Data Highlights

3.12M

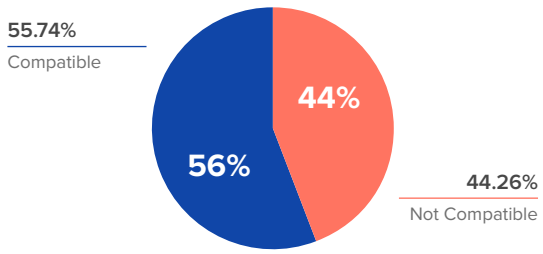
sample size

We investigated 3.12 million anonymous customer devices from 457 organizations and 8 distinct industries.



Hardware Compatibility

Only ~65% of the device fleet has recommended CPU models that are compatible for Windows 11 while ~35% of devices have old CPU Models that do not support Windows 11.



OS Compatibility

In terms of the OS Compatibility, 44.2% do not have compatible OS Versions (OS older than Windows 10 2004 release).

Readiness Compatibility Assessment

What condition are most devices in?

Ready - 38.94%

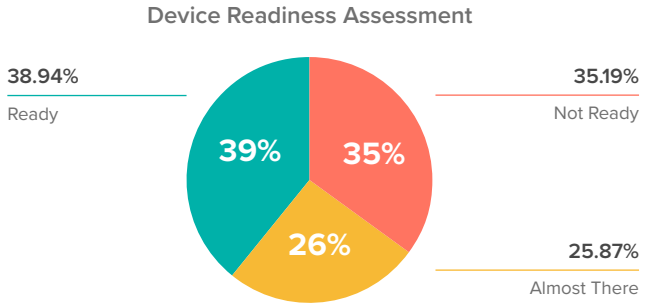
These employees have a compatible CPU and a supported OS version for Windows 11, so upgrading them will require relatively little resources and cost. IT will have to educate and/or inform employees to accept their upgrade and follow up with them afterwards to ensure they are satisfied.

Almost There - 25.87%

These employees need to upgrade their OS to a supported version (+2004) and then migrate to Windows 11. IT would have to educate employees that fall under this category, and push the upgrades through a configuration management solution.

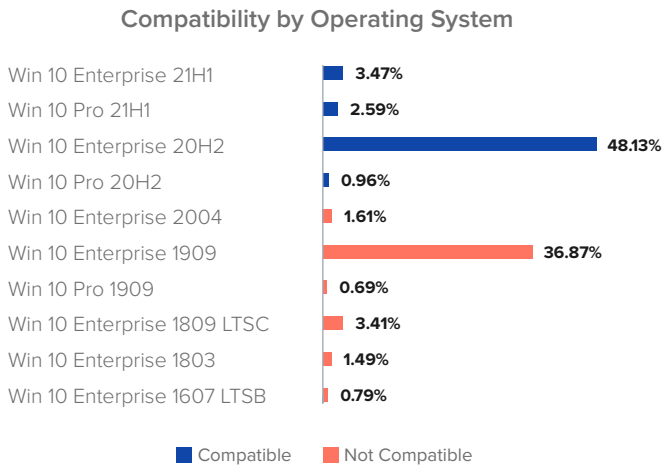
Not Ready - 35.19%

These employees do not have the right CPU nor OS. This is an opportunity where companies should chose to upgrade their hardware along with a new OS to make the best use of their upgrade. IT will need to consider purchasing new devices and planning exactly how and when they'll migrate employees.

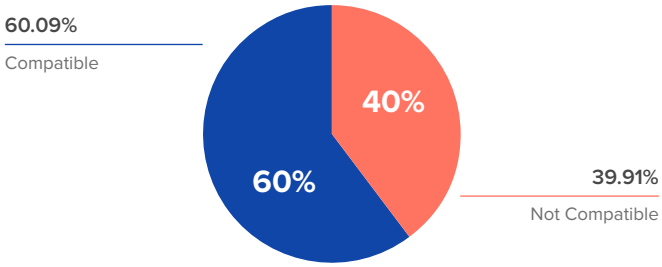


How close to Windows 11 are most devices?

44% of employees are working with an OS that is not compatible (Windows 10 version 2004 or older). We even found that 0.79% (or 24,648 employees) were working with Windows 10 version 1607, which is 11 versions behind Windows 11!



Of all the devices that are currently running on Win 11 supported CPU models:



40% of devices (totalling to about 800K devices) are still on older versions of Win 10 that are not supported for Win 11 upgrade (prior to 2004 or 20H1 release) with Win 10 1909 topping the list with 88% usage. These devices need to be upgraded to a minimum of Win 10 2004 release before they can be migrated to Win 11.

Of the remaining 60% of devices that have compatible OS versions, 83% of the device fleet still runs on Win 10 20H2.

88% Win 10 1909 topping the list with 88% usage

83% 83% of the device fleet still runs on Win 10 20H2

How to get more out of your hardware

Of course, upgrading to Windows 11 isn't only dependent on your OS, employees will also need the right hardware. Devices must have a 1 GHz processor (or faster) with two or more cores on a 64-bit processor or SoC. They'll also need 4GB of RAM and at least 64GB of storage. Automatic upgrades to Windows 11 will have additional system requirements, like secure boot capable and TPM 2.0 enabled, which can make upgrading even more challenging. Devices that fail to meet these requirements simply can't be updated.

But replacing new hardware right now might not be the best option depending on your warranty or budget plans.

So what can an IT team do?

Taking a closer look at the data, we identified that roughly half (47.7%) of the older hardware that wasn't compatible for Windows 11, actually returned a strong Digital Employee Experience (DEX) Score. If you can identify devices that are still performing well, why not extend their shelf-life another year or two and then replace them with the rest of your hardware refresh plans?

READ THE REPORT

In a previous report we found that 20% of 1.38M older devices (+3 years old) work perfectly fine and shouldn't be thrown away.

What's a DEX Score?

A Digital Employee Experience (DEX) Score quantifies the ability of an employee (or group of employees) to get things done in their IT environment in a safe and positive manner. It functions like an index calculation by combining the most relevant performance metrics in the digital workplace. Sub-scores can be aggregated from components like the device, business apps, productivity apps, and employee satisfaction ratings.

What's a *good* DEX Score?

The Nexthink DEX Score is based on a 10-point scale. We ranked the devices in this study under 3 distinct thresholds: 0 – 6 (frustrating), 6 – 8 (average), 8 – 10 (good). Many factors go into a good DEX Score, but typically this means each sub-score is at an optimal level.

- **Device Score:** the ability of the employee to start and use Windows and the device without interruption (device reliability) and with good response times (device performance).
- **Business apps score:** the ability of the employee to start and use the business applications (other than the productivity applications) smoothly and with good response times.
- **Productivity applications score:** the ability of the employees to start and use productivity suite applications smoothly and with good response times.
- **Employee Satisfaction score:** it rates the feelings and perceptions of the employees when interacting with the IT environment (workplace, processes, people).

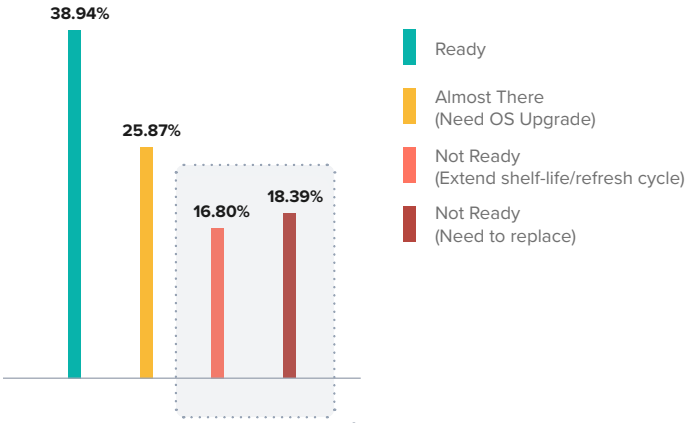
Readiness Assessment - Expanded

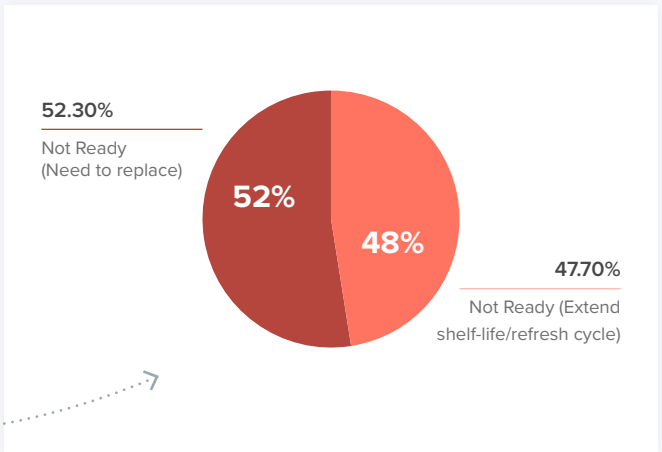
38.9% of total fleet of devices are ready to Migrate to Win 11 (OS & CPU Compatible)

25.8% of devices have the supported CPU but OS need to be migrated

16.8% of devices can be retained for longer with the latest Win 10 OS upgrade

18.3% of devices need to be refreshed as they cannot be upgraded to Win 11 (OS & CPU not supported)

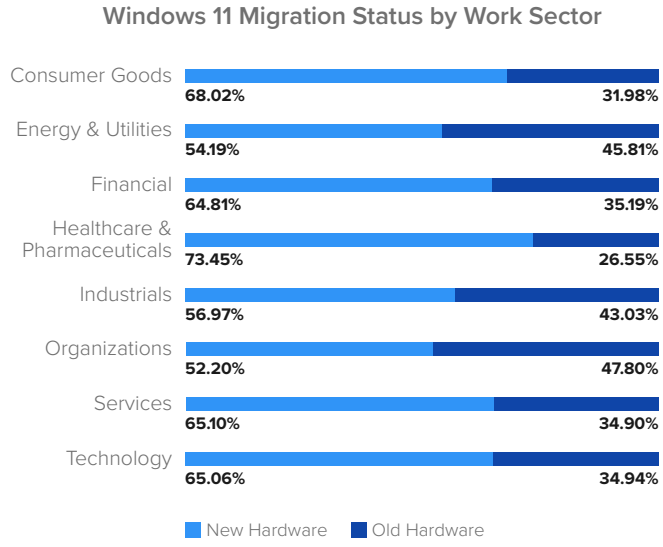




Windows 11 by Work Sector

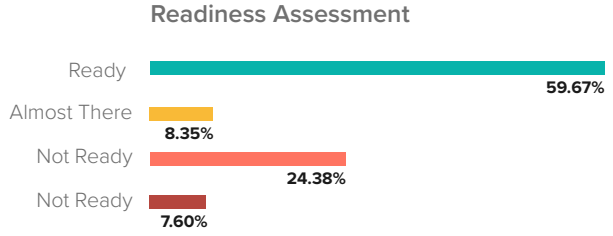
Your company's work sector can also have a big influence on the type of Digital Employee Experience it provides. We looked across eight work industries and discovered that the Consumer Goods sector recorded the highest percentage of devices ready to upgrade to Windows 11, while the Energy & Utilities had the highest percentage of devices that needed to be replaced due to outdated hardware and OS.

We also found that some sectors had the latest hardware but they were several versions behind in Windows. This isn't surprising considering that certain industries, like healthcare and the pharmaceuticals sectors tend to stick with an older OS to ensure critical applications are compatible and tested on newer Windows versions.



Consumer Goods

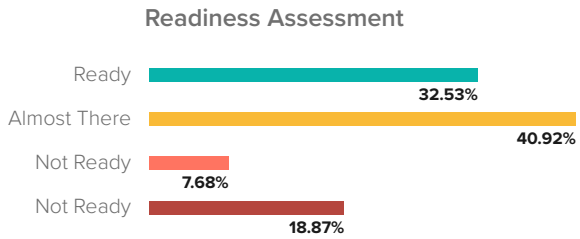
Industry with highest % of devices ready to Migrate to Win 11.



Certain industries, like healthcare and the pharmaceuticals sectors tend to stick with an older OS to ensure critical applications are compatible and tested on newer Windows versions.

Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals

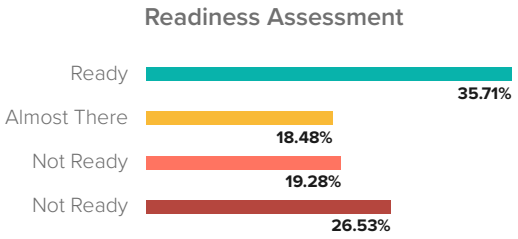
Industry with highest % of devices almost ready to Migrate to Win 11.



We found that the Healthcare & Pharma Sector had the highest % of devices that are running on the latest/ supported CPU Models, however, a vast majority of them are running on incompatible versions of Win 10. This contrast can best be explained because many organizations in the Healthcare sector (including hospitals) are looking to maximize the life of their capital and delay the operational costs and risks that come with digital transformation.

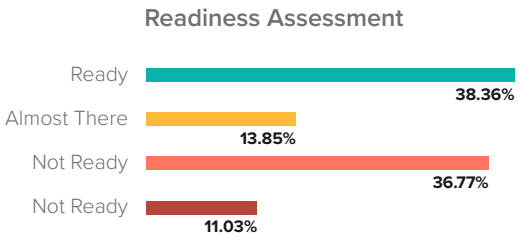
Energy & Utilities

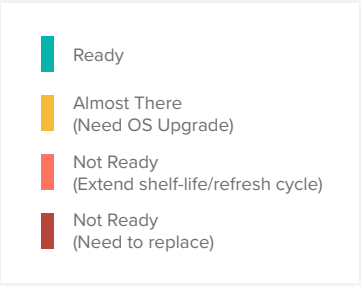
Industry with highest % of devices that need to be replaced.



Organizations (Government & NGO)

Industry with the highest % of devices that are not ready but are still salvageable.





Predicting the Future

When will most organizations upgrade?

For simplicity, let's say your IT department supports an organization of 10,000 employees and each person uses just one work device. If you have an effective end-to-end experience solution, then you should be able to organize your inventory based on the performance categories we used in this report *(ready to upgrade, almost there, not yet)*.

Let's imagine that your inventory breakdown is similar to what we found in our study:

- **40% of devices are Ready**
- **60% of devices are Not Ready**
  (incompatible hardware and/or OS and/or software).

For those 6,000 devices, you'll likely have to address the following project areas:

HARDWARE ASSESSMENT

Your hardware is ready to migrate, but maybe the CPU or TPM are not compatible.

HARDWARE THAT REQUIRES AN UPGRADE

- Hard Drive Upgrade
- Memory Upgrade
- Secure Boot Disabled
- Graphics Card DirectX
- WDDM Drive

OPERATION SYSTEM ASSESSMENT

- OS is ready to migrate; or
- OS requires an upgrade

DISK SPACE & PENDING REBOOT

- Identify & replace devices where storage capacity is below the Windows 11 threshold of 64 GB
- Identify & reboot devices that have not restarted in the last 30+ days.

Taking a conservative estimate, let's imagine you need to work on these individual project tasks:

Compatibility Project Tasks
TPM
CPU
Storage
Memory
DirectX Graphics Card
Secure Boot
WDDM Driver
OS Build
Pending Reboot

If you can't implement these projects in an automated fashion that means you'll have to manually work through each task, which is going to cost you big. In fact, we predict this amount of effort, at a minimum, would take you roughly 13,500 hours!

How long this takes you depends on several factors, but as a rough estimate you can conservatively predict that for one full-time dedicated Windows specialist, that might take this person 6.4 years to migrate 6,000 employees. But for ten full-time dedicated Windows specialists, it might take them more than half a year (0.64) to manually migrate 6,000 employees[1].

And based on the 60% of incompatible devices in our sample size (which represents 457 organizations, from 8 different verticals), we think it would take IT, at a minimum, around 4,212,000 cumulated hours to manually migrate their employees[2]. Thankfully, our customers will not have to waste their time and money doing this because they'll be able to use our Windows 11 library pack and Digital Employee Experience management platform.

But this still leaves us wondering: when will most companies migrate to Windows 11?

Considering that ~37% of devices are still on Windows 10 version 1909, which was released on November 2019 (and is not supported for a Win 11 upgrade), **we can reasonably assume that the early majority of Windows 11 adoption will take place in Q1 or Q2 of 2024.**

[1] See 'About Data' section for more information
[2] See 'About Data' section for more information

5 Tips to Start Your Migration Plan

Depending on your employees' existing hardware and OS status, you might have more work cut out for you than other IT teams. While your particular situation might seem unique, we assure you that others are experiencing the same apprehension and confusion right now.

We recommend a few steps that can help kickstart your Windows 11 migration, regardless of where you are in that journey:

1. **Assess Your Configuration & Patch Management Solutions**
   Are they working as desired on all of your employees' devices?

2. **Make use of Digital Employee Experience (DEX) Tools**
   Use tools like Nexthink to Identify, Alert and Trigger OS updates on outdated devices.

3. **Assess Your DEX Baseline**
   Know how different OS versions are performing and how satisfied employees are with those versions.

4. **Use a Persona Assessment**
   Match the right device for the right computing persona when you consider refreshing your hardware fleet to support Windows 11.

5. **Use Nexthink Virtualization Assessment**
   Identify and equip Virtual Machines to users running on older Hardware to save your team refresh costs.

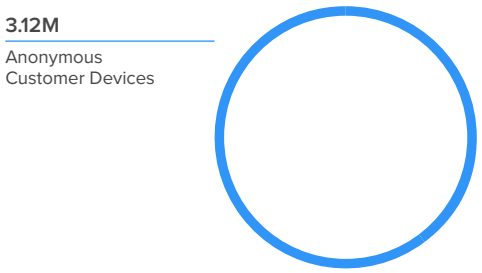
Explore Nexthink's Windows 11 migration pack and learn how you can accomplish the objectives above.

About the Data

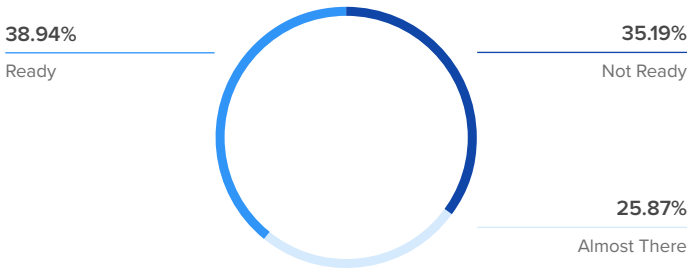
Nexthink's customers are at the forefront of creating a more sustainable future and adopting a digital sobriety mindset. Because of this, they welcomed the opportunity to reduce CO2 emissions and waste across their organization, which Nexthink happily enabled them to do. This report uses anonymous data from customers during their initial trial period with Nexthink.

3.12M Anonymized Devices

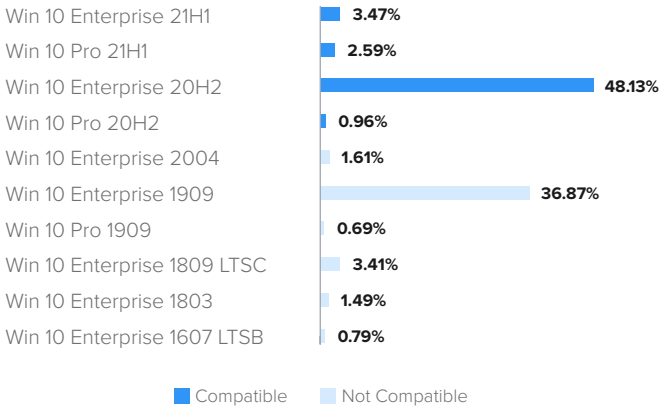
3.12 million anonymous customer devices from 457 organizations and 8 distinct industries



Readiness Assessment



Compatibility by Operating System



ABOUT NEXTHINK

Nexthink is the global leader in Digital Employee Experience management. The company's products allow enterprises to create highly productive digital workplaces for their employees by delivering optimal end-user experiences. Through a unique combination of real-time analytics, automation and employee feedback across all endpoints, Nexthink helps IT teams meet the needs of the modern digital workplace.

Have questions about the Nexthink platform?

CONTACT US

Estimating Manual Hours Saved in Windows 11 Upgrades

Based on our sample size, 60% of 3.12M devices would need manual work done to upgrade to Windows 11. The total cumulated effort needed to upgrade those devices manually would be 4,212,000 hours.

Compatibility Project Tasks	Number of Devices	Manual Effort (mins)	Manual Effort (hours)
TPM	1,872,000	15	468,000
CPU	1,872,000	15	468,000
Storage	1,872,000	15	468,000
Memory	1,872,000	15	468,000
DirectX Graphics Card	1,872,000	15	468,000
Secure Boot	1,872,000	15	468,000
WDDM Driver	1,872,000	15	468,000
OS Build	1,872,000	15	468,000
Pending Reboot	1,872,000	15	468,000
Total			4,212,000

60% of devices from a 10K staff that would need manual work done to upgrade to Windows 11. The total cumulated effort needed to upgrade those 6,000 devices manually would be 13,500 hours.

Compatibility Project Tasks	Number of Devices	Manual Effort (mins)	Manual Effort (hours)
TPM	6,000	15	1,500
CPU	6,000	15	1,500
Storage	6,000	15	1,500
Memory	6,000	15	1,500
DirectX Graphics Card	6,000	15	1,500
Secure Boot	6,000	15	1,500
WDDM Driver	6,000	15	1,500
OS Build	6,000	15	1,500
Pending Reboot	6,000	15	1,500
Total			13,500

For one full-time dedicated Windows specialist, it might take that person 6.4 years to migrate 6,000 employees.

For ten full-time dedicated Windows specialists, it might take them more than half a year to migrate 6,000 employees.

2,087 hours = average work hours per employee each year

20,870 hours = average work hours for 10 staff each year

13,500 = projected number of IT hours needed for 6,000 devices

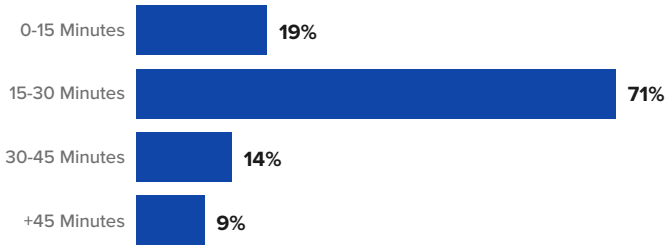
0.64 years = 13,500 / 20,870 *

Manual Effort (mins or hrs)

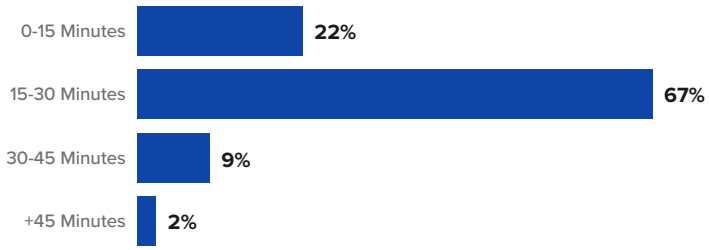
We provided a conservative estimate of 15 minutes for each manual task based on research conducted with Pulse. We asked IT Leaders to provide estimates for each of the nine Windows 11 project tasks, and that information can be found below. As you'll see, we picked the low end of the time range (15 – 30 minutes), but your own IT department might take faster or longer to complete each of those tasks or depending on your SOP (Standard Operating Procedure). Use our template to calculate your own Windows 11 migration!

If you had to upgrade an employee to Windows 11 manually, how long do you estimate it would take your team to complete the following capability check for...

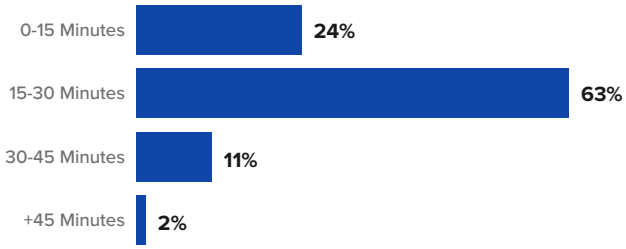
TPM: 15 Minutes of Manual Effort



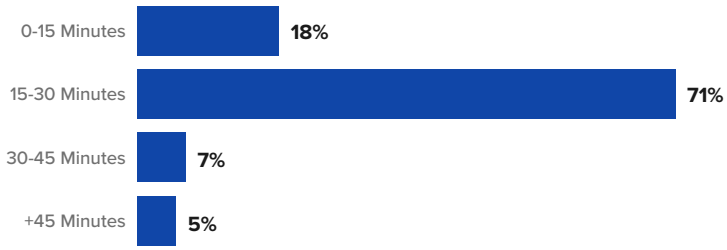
Memory: 15 Minutes of Manual Effort



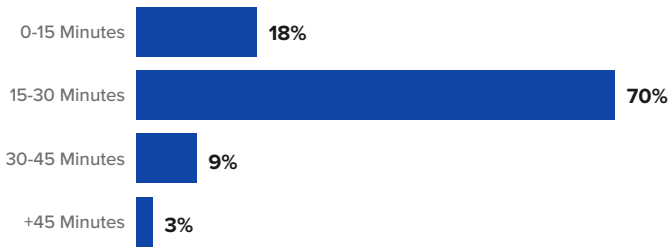
CPU: 15 Minutes of Manual Effort



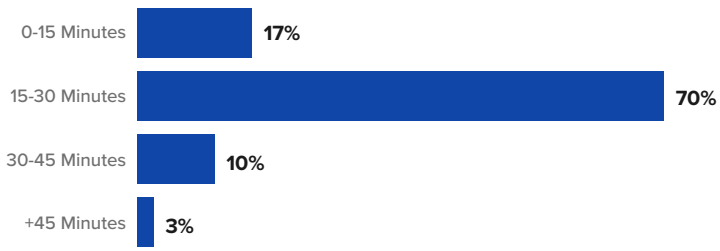
DirectX Graphics Card: 15 Minutes of Manual Effort



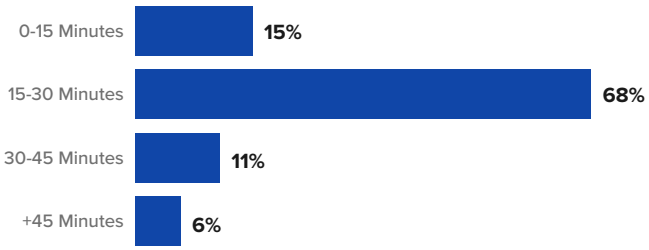
Storage: 15 Minutes of Manual Effort



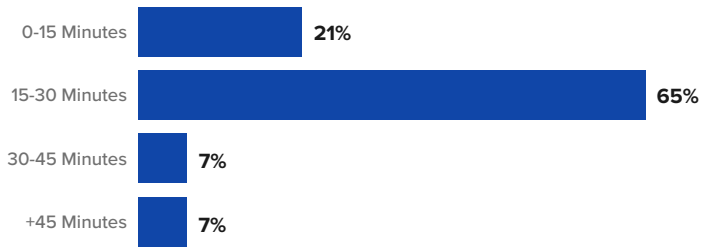
Secure Boot: 15 Minutes of Manual Effort



WDDM Driver: 15 Minutes of Manual Effort



Pending Reboot: 15 Minutes of Manual Effort



OS Build: 15 Minutes of Manual Effort