groWrk

The State of Global IT Hardware Procurement 2026

Regional prices, Industry guidance, and playbooks to de-risk procurement

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How procurement works for distributed teams

The hidden costs and risks behind traditional global procurement

When IT teams support employees across countries, every laptop becomes a small logistics operation. A straightforward purchase can become a six-step process spanning multiple vendors, jurisdictions, and systems, each with its own costs and points of failure.

Here's what that typically looks like:

Retail purchase: Procurement secures a device from a domestic reseller or OEM site.

Export and freight: The device is shipped abroad using a courier or freight forwarder.

Customs clearance: Import duties, documentation, and brokerage fees are handled, often manually.

Setup and imaging: Once received, the local IT team configures the device, installs software, and enrolls it in MDM. In other cases everything can be configured remotely through an MDM.

Delivery to employee: The final step involves coordinating local couriers and confirming handover.

Each step introduces delays and incremental expense: freight premiums, customs errors, damaged shipments, and onboarding lag. For a globally distributed company, the cumulative effect can translate to **weeks of lost productivity and hundreds of dollars in hidden overhead per device.**

Why “Buy in Country A, Ship to Country B” Often Fails

For global companies with IT teams located in the United States, it’s tempting to purchase devices from the United States, where prices are competitive and stock is reliable, and ship them abroad. Other scenarios include moving stock from the UK to the EU or from one country in LATAM to another. But what looks like a simple time-saving move on paper usually turns into a costly exercise in international logistics.

When you buy in one country and ship to another, you’re not just paying for freight; you’re navigating layers of tax law, compliance standards, and warranty restrictions that can quickly erase any savings.

Here’s why the approach often fails:

Taxes & duties

• Cross-border shipments face double-tax exposure, first at export, then again at import.

• Many countries levy steep electronics tariffs: Brazil’s 60% import duty on laptops (HS code 8471.30) can double total landed cost; India’s rate averages 20–25%, and Mexico’s can exceed 30% depending on origin and declaration.

• VAT or GST recovery often fails if the importer isn’t a registered local entity.

Warranty & service

• The Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) warranties are frequently region-locked; a laptop bought in the U.S. may not qualify for repair under regional programs in Europe or Asia.

• AppleCare and major OEMs like HP and Dell routinely deny cross-region claims, meaning a “covered” device might require international return shipping for service.

Compliance & certifications

• Markets such as **India, China, and Saudi Arabia** require country-specific safety marks and documentation.

• Even simple details, such as localized power adapters or labeling standards, can trigger customs holds.

Customs delays

• According to the World Bank's LPI data on customs-clearance efficiency, many emerging-market economies score significantly lower than their OECD peers, indicating slower, less predictable clearance times and a higher risk of delays in global hardware procurement.

• Delays are often tied to invoice mismatches, serial number discrepancies, or missing documentation.

U.S. direct shipping vs. Local sourcing

Factor	Buy in the U.S. & ship abroad	Local sourcing (via IT lifecycle services)
Average Lead Time	10–21 days (plus customs delays)	3–5 days (regional stock, no import hold)
Import Duties & Taxes	High, double-tax risk if the importer is not local	Included and pre-modeled in the quote
Warranty Coverage	Often invalid across regions	Fully honored through local OEM channels
Total Cost of Ownership	+30–70% over retail price	Transparent, predictable landed cost

Landed costs

The result: what starts as a “cheaper” procurement path from the U.S. frequently ends up costing **30–70% more** once taxes, delays, and support gaps are accounted for, not to mention the time IT loses managing the fallout.

This is what’s known as the **landed cost**, the total expense of getting a device into an employee’s hands, fully operational and compliant in their country. It includes hardware, freight, import taxes, setup, and in some cases, post-arrival warranty localization.

Quick formula: Understanding landed cost

Landed cost = Hardware + Freight + Import Taxes + Setup + Compliance Fees

Use this formula as your true benchmark for procurement planning. Retail pricing alone reflects only the hardware, not the logistics, configuration, or regional overhead that determine the real total cost.

Example: U.S. retail vs. Landed cost in Brazil

Item	U.S. Retail	Shipped to Brazil (Landed Cost)	Notes
MacBook Air (M-series, 8GB/256GB)	$999	~$1,850 – $2,000	Includes 60–100% import duty, shipping, brokerage, and local MDM setup
Windows Ultrabook (i5, 16GB/512GB)	$1,200	~$2,000 – $2,300	Similar uplift driven by import taxes and compliance handling
Entry-level business laptop	$750	~$1,250 – $1,400	Duties, freight, and localization raise the total cost by ~65%

When it can work

There are limited cases where cross-border shipping is viable:

Within the **same customs union** (e.g., EU Schengen Area) with harmonized VAT treatment.

When using a **VAT-registered entity** and a compliant Importer/Exporter of Record (IOR/EOR) setup.

For **short-term asset loans** or pilot programs with localized support contracts.

Other common procurement models and their cost structuress

To understand why total cost varies so widely, it helps to look at the main procurement models enterprises use today.

Model	Description	Typical users	Advantages	Limitations
Direct retail / e-Tail	Purchasing from OEM stores or online retailers (e.g., Dell.com, Apple.com, Amazon Business).	Small teams or ad-hoc purchases.	Fast, transparent pricing, minimal negotiation needed.	No tax optimization, limited enterprise warranty, inconsistent SKUs, and manual setup required.
Distributor or VAR model	Sourcing through authorized resellers or distributors that offer volume pricing and local warranty support.	Mid-market and regional operations.	Access to business SKUs, invoice handling, and local compliance.	Requires manual coordination for logistics, imaging, and cross-border shipments.
Global Framework Agreement (GFA)	Enterprise-level contracts are negotiated directly with OEMs for standardized pricing and support tiers.	Large multinationals with stable forecasts.	Predictable pricing, contractual SLAs, and bulk discounts.	Minimum volume commitments, long lead times, and complex governance across subsidiaries.
Third-party IT lifecycle services	Fully managed service combining sourcing, configuration, logistics, customs, warranty, and lifecycle tracking under one platform.	Distributed enterprises, fast-scaling companies, and remote-first teams.	Transparent landed cost, end-to-end compliance, single dashboard visibility, flexible per-device billing.	Service fee included, but offset by operational savings and reduced delays.

The more globally distributed a workforce becomes, the less efficient retail or VAR models are, and the greater the value of managed procurement.

Regional Pricing Snapshots

(Q4’25 baselines → H1’26 planning)

These prices are based on all the devices that we have sourced for regions in 2025 and individual market research.

North America

Country	MBAIR	MBPRO	Lenovo	Dell	Vat	Notes
USA	$1,062.37-$1,150	$2,075.75-$2,225	$1,530.74-$1600	$1,540.49-$1,700	8.8%	Strong promo cycles; easy warranty support
Canada	$1,134.62-$1,250	$2,275.11-$2,450	$1,528-$1600	$2,098.09-$2,200	13%	FX sensitive; provincial taxes vary
Mexico	$1,325.09-$1,500	$2,799.78-$2,900	$1,844.39-$1,900	$1,592.01-$1,888.02	16%	Warranty localization important

Top Channels: CDW, Insight, SHI, Connection, B&H, Best Buy Business, Amazon Business. Office Depot MX, Cyberpuerta (MX)

Quirks: Serial-level asset tagging often extra; Apple EDU/Enterprise programs vary by reseller.

Legend:

- **MBAIR** = MacBook Air - 13in, (M4), 10-core CPU, 16 GB, (256GB), (8) core GPU, Midnight
- **MBPRO** = MacBook Pro - 16in, (M4 Pro) , 14-core CPU, 24GB, (512GB), (20) Core GPU, Silver
- **Lenovo** = (Lenovo ThinkPad T14 G5 - 14in, Ultra 5 135U, 16GB, 512GB)
- **Dell** = (Dell Latitude 5450 - 14 In - Ultra 7-165U - 32 GB - 512 GB)
- **Ranges are listed without local VAT.** Add local tax to estimate out-the-door.

South America

Country	MBAIR	MBPRO	Lenovo	Dell	Vat	Notes
Brazil	$2,415.38-$2,741	$5,699.90-$6,500.36	$2,262.05-$2,400	$2,473.15-$2,575	0%	High import taxes; local stock fluctuates
Argentina	$1,629-$1,750	$2,999.30-$3,100	$1845.89-$2,000	$1,646.69-$1,800	21%	Warranty localization important
Chile	$1,550–$1,650	$3,176.44-$3.800	$1,543.10-$1,850	$1,504.51-$1,700	19%	VAT reclaim possible via local entity

Top Channels: Mercado Libre (pro sellers), Magalu/Kabum (BR), Americanas (BR), Falabella (CL), local VARs.

Quirks: Stock intermittency; long DOA/RMA windows; duties vary by Free Trade Zone usage.

Europe (incl. UK)

Country	MBAIR	MBPRO	Lenovo	Dell	Vat	Notes
UK	$1,197.41-$1,362.76	$3,040.58-$3,400	$1,728.40-$1,900	$1,573.68-$1,700	20%	Prices often ex-VAT; next-day VAR delivery
Germany	$1,583.99-$1,617.99	$3,463.45-$3,550	$1,750-$1889	$2,000-$2,415.42	0%	Strong B2B VAR ecosystem
Netherlands	$1,583.99-$1,617.99	$3,463.45-$3,550	$1,750-$1889	$2,000-$2,415.42	0%	Robust lease options

Top Channels: Bechtle, SCC, Computacenter, Insight, Atea (Nordics), LDLC/TopAchat (FR), Amazon Business, local Apple/PC VARs.

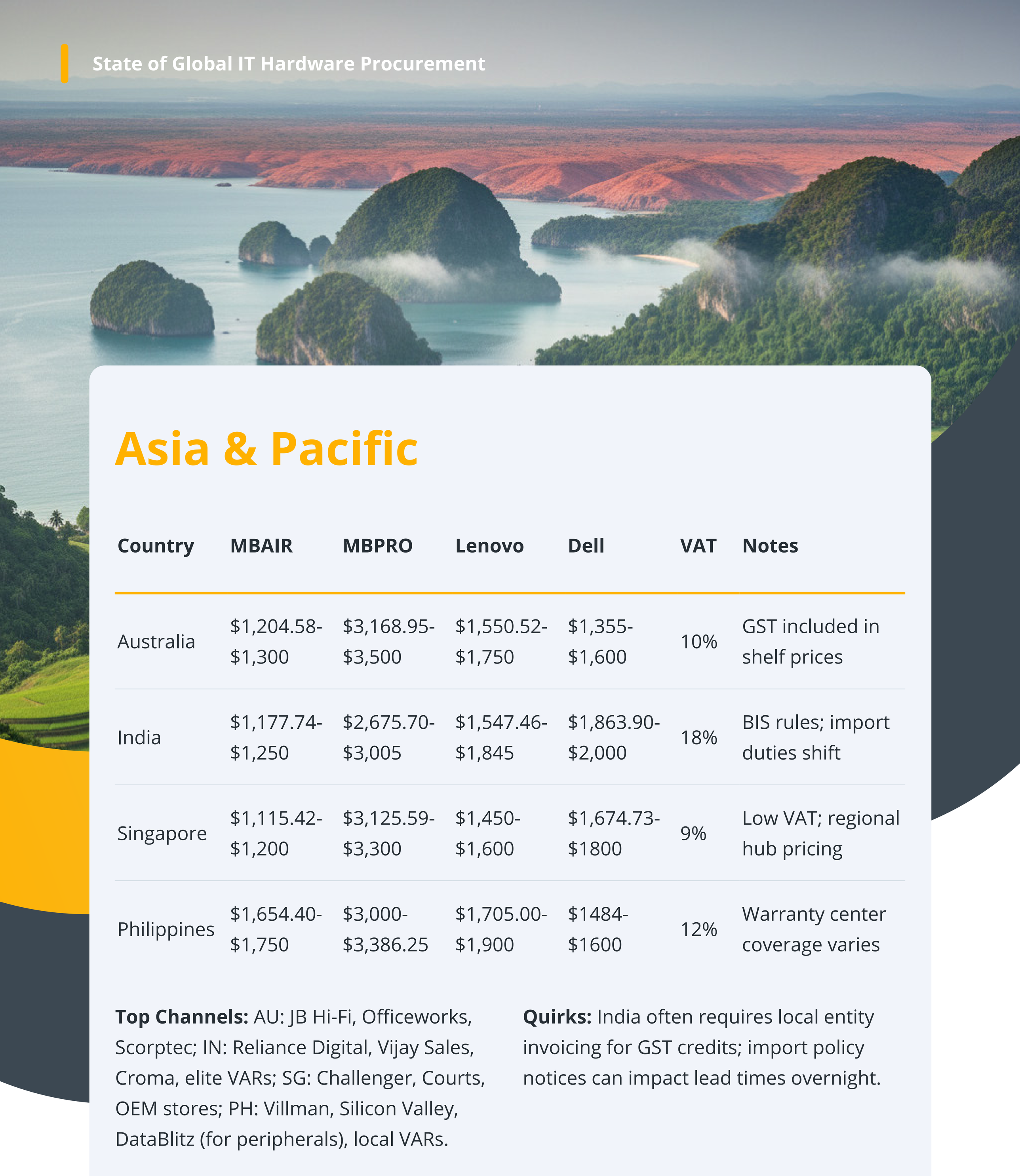
Quirks: Ex-VAT pricing by default; **green/reuse** rules affect TCO and RMA options; country-specific WEEE fees.

Africa & Middle East

Country	MBAIR	MBPRO	Lenovo	Dell	VAT	Notes
UAE	$1,050-$1,250	$3,000.09-$3,400	$1,821.19-$2,000	$2,287.60	5%	0–5% import duty; fast logistics hubs
Saudi Arabia	$1367-$1500	$3,100,95-$3,500	$1,450.32-$1,600	$1,633-$1800	15%	Localized keyboards; longer RMAs
South Africa	$1,316.65-$1,400	$3,577.61-$3,650	$1,552.45-$1899	$1,706.48-$1,900	15%	FX volatility; import delays
Kenya	$1,493.41-$1,600	$2,745.02-$2,900	$1,431.28-$1,600	$1,399.55-$1,600	16.0%	Supply via regional hubs; warranty variance

Top Channels: UAE: Jumbo, Emax, Noon, Amazon.ae; KSA: Jarir, Extra; SA: Incredible Connection, Takealot; KE: Elevetus/VARs, Jumia (pro sellers).

Quirks: Gray-market risk; verify Apple Authorized Reseller or OEM partner status; GCC warranty ≠ Africa warranty.



Asia & Pacific

Country	MBAIR	MBPRO	Lenovo	Dell	VAT	Notes
Australia	$1,204.58-$1,300	$3,168.95-$3,500	$1,550.52-$1,750	$1,355-$1,600	10%	GST included in shelf prices
India	$1,177.74-$1,250	$2,675.70-$3,005	$1,547.46-$1,845	$1,863.90-$2,000	18%	BIS rules; import duties shift
Singapore	$1,115.42-$1,200	$3,125.59-$3,300	$1,450-$1,600	$1,674.73-$1800	9%	Low VAT; regional hub pricing
Philippines	$1,654.40-$1,750	$3,000-$3,386.25	$1,705.00-$1,900	$1484-$1600	12%	Warranty center coverage varies

Top Channels: AU: JB Hi-Fi, Officeworks, Scorptec; IN: Reliance Digital, Vijay Sales, Croma, elite VARs; SG: Challenger, Courts, OEM stores; PH: Villman, Silicon Valley, DataBlitz (for peripherals), local VARs.

Quirks: India often requires local entity invoicing for GST credits; import policy notices can impact lead times overnight.

Note on Variance: Ranges capture typical retail levels for base configs. Adding shipping and handling, logistics and Vat or subtracting promotions, volume rebates, and enterprise programs can move pricing **± 10–15%**.

Why 2025 Prices Moved (and how that flows into 2026)

Several forces shaped global hardware pricing through 2025, and their ripple effects will continue to define procurement planning in 2026. From supply chain recalibrations to software lifecycle shifts, each factor altered cost structures and regional availability in distinct ways.

Freight & logistics

The year began with supply disruptions in the Red Sea and constrained air cargo capacity, which drove up freight costs. By late 2025, ocean rates began trending downward as capacity returned, easing one of the year's major cost pressures.

What it means for 2026:

If freight rates remain soft through mid-2026, logistics could offset 2–4% of component-driven Average Selling Price (ASP) increases. Pick a small, consistent set of equipment configurations (SKUS) per region, and then reserve enough of those specific items each quarter to cover hiring and replacements for your most important roles.

Operating system cycle

The Windows 10 end-of-support date (October 14, 2025) triggered a surge in hardware refreshes as enterprises moved to Windows 11-ready devices. This late-year demand spike tightened supply and temporarily inflated prices for corporate Windows SKUs.

What it means for 2026:

The refresh surge will taper, but many organizations still upgrading in H1'26 may face limited availability of legacy-compatible devices. Procurement teams should finalize fleet upgrades early and leverage vendor rebates tied to Windows 11 migration programs while they last.

Foreign exchange & policy

Fluctuating exchange rates were a major source of price instability in 2025. Hardware and components priced in U.S. dollars became significantly more expensive in markets where local currencies weakened, especially across LATAM, Africa, and parts of APAC.

Meanwhile, evolving regional policies, from the EU's sustainability and right-to-repair rules to data-compliance requirements, added indirect costs to hardware lifecycle management.

What it means for 2026:

Teams operating in volatile currency environments should plan 10–15% cost buffers or prioritize regional vendors who can bill in local currency. In the EU, procurement strategies should now include budgeting for eco-fees, repairability compliance, and documentation costs.

Global tariffs & market uncertainty

Tariff changes and trade tensions further complicated hardware sourcing in 2025. Renewed U.S.–China trade frictions, temporary import hikes in Mexico and Brazil, and shifting duties on semiconductors all contributed to unpredictable landed costs. These fluctuations pushed many enterprises to diversify their vendor networks and establish multi-region sourcing models to avoid sudden price shocks.

What it means for 2026:

Trade negotiations and tariff realignments are expected to remain fluid. Procurement teams should maintain multiple sourcing routes and monitor quarterly tariff updates to keep total landed costs stable and predictable. Standardize SKUs by region, and pre-book quarterly volumes for critical roles can also help reduce uncertainty.

A deep dive into procuring through the IT lifecycle market in 2026

In 2026, IT lifecycle services have become the backbone of how globally distributed companies procure, deploy, manage, and retire their hardware. An IT lifecycle service typically combines **end-to-end procurement, logistics, and asset management** with a **centralized platform** that gives IT and finance teams visibility into every device—from first quote to final disposal.

The market now includes several major players with **different commercial models, regional strengths, and varying levels of platform maturity**: some operate more like traditional procurement partners with light portals, while others offer robust, workflow-driven SaaS platforms tightly integrated with HRIS, MDM, and finance tools. Despite these differences, they all aim to solve the same core problems for distributed organizations: **standardizing equipment, controlling spend, ensuring compliance, and maintaining accurate, real-time inventory across multiple countries and teams.**

What's the difference between buying from a local retailer vs. IT lifecycle services

Cost layer	Typical retail buyer	IT lifecycle services
Device sourcing	Retail or VAR purchase	Global partner network with localized stock
Configuration & setup	Manual or in-house IT imaging	Pre-configured, MDM-enrolled, asset tagged
Logistics & customs	Buyer-arranged shipping	End-to-end managed logistics with IOR/EOR coverage
Taxes & import duties	Calculated ad hoc	Fully modeled and included in the quote
Warranty & returns	Buyer follows OEM RMA process	Centralized warranty and RMA handling
Tracking & visibility	Spreadsheet-based	Integrated ITAM platform with live updates

What drives IT costs upward isn't inefficiency; it's fragmentation. Each added vendor, customs touchpoint, and configuration step multiplies administrative and financial friction. That's the core difference between **buying a product** and **buying a managed service**: the former delivers hardware, the latter delivers readiness. In global operations, that distinction determines whether procurement is a recurring pain point or a predictable, scalable process.

This breakdown illustrates why IT procurement can look expensive: you're not just buying hardware; you're purchasing an operational workflow spanning multiple departments and jurisdictions.

The layers of hardware costs through IT lifecycle management services

In practice, enterprise IT procurement involves multiple cost layers that extend far beyond the sticker price of the hardware.

Even for well-structured IT teams, administrative overhead alone can add 10–15% to total procurement costs, while compliance gaps, customs issues, and delayed onboarding create downstream inefficiencies that multiply across regions. What begins as a $1,200 laptop purchase can quickly become a $1,500–$1,800 total expense once the full workflow is accounted for.

1. Hardware

$1200 (mid-range business laptop)

Base retail or volume pricing from OEM or VAR.

2. Configuration & setup

+$60 – $100 (+5% – 8%)

Imaging, MDM/ABM enrollment, user-specific software installation, license activation.

3. Logistics

+$90 – $140 (+8% – 12%)

International shipping, import duties, brokerage, and insurance premiums.

4. Compliance

+$40 – $70 (+3% – 8%)

Certification, environmental recovery fees (WEEE, e-waste), and customs documentation.

5. Administrative overhead

+$150 – $200 (+10% – 15%)

Vendor coordination, multi-invoice handling, warranty management, and SLA tracking

In aggregate, these layers can increase total spend by 25–40% above the base hardware cost, and that's before factoring in time and opportunity costs. Normally this will appear as a "Company handling fee" and many companies will not send you final price until you agree to the initial quote.

Where GroWrk fits in

GroWrk sits within the **IT lifecycle services** category, bridging the gap between retail simplicity and enterprise-grade governance. Instead of treating sourcing, logistics, and lifecycle management as separate cost centers, GroWrk integrates them into one transparent workflow:

Localized sourcing:
Devices procured within the region to minimize duties and lead times.

Pre-configuration:
MDM enrollment, asset tagging, and setup before shipment.

Global logistics:
Fully managed shipping with IOR/EOR handling for tax compliance.

Unified visibility:
Centralized ITAM dashboard to track assets across countries.

Lifecycle support:
Warranty, retrieval, and secure disposition are built into the same service.

In pricing terms, GroWrk functions on an **IT lifecycle services model** rather than a markup model. Instead of paying separate vendors for hardware, freight, and configuration, companies receive a **single quote per device** that includes every required step, from purchase order to delivery and beyond. This approach converts what is traditionally **CapEx-heavy procurement** into a **predictable, operational expense** tied to active assets and employees.

GroWrk vs. Vendor A Vs. Vendor B

GroWrk		Vendor A		Vendor B	
Europe example		**Europe example**		**Europe Example**	
Base (MSRP):	€1,600	Base (MSRP):	€1,618	Base (MSRP):	€1,600
Local duties and taxes (15%):	€240	Service fee (25% of base):	€404.50	Shipping + taxes:	€200
Logistics and handling fee (5%):	€80	Device configuration (upgrades):	€82.50	Service fee (4% × €1,800):	€72
		Add-ons/Support (3 years):	€360.36		
Total:	**€1,920**	**Total:**	**€2,465.36**	**Total:**	**€1,872**

Vendor A offers a broad, complex platform that spans payroll, HR, and IT, which drives up their service costs to support such a heavy, multifunctional interface. **Vendor B** comes in as the cheapest option, but it lacks full IT lifecycle capabilities and a robust platform for tracking assets end to end.

GroWrk focuses specifically on IT lifecycle management, delivering all the essential features, from granular cost tracking to an integrated AI assistant, backed by a reliable global logistics network, giving teams the depth of IT functionality they need without paying for bloated, non-core modules.

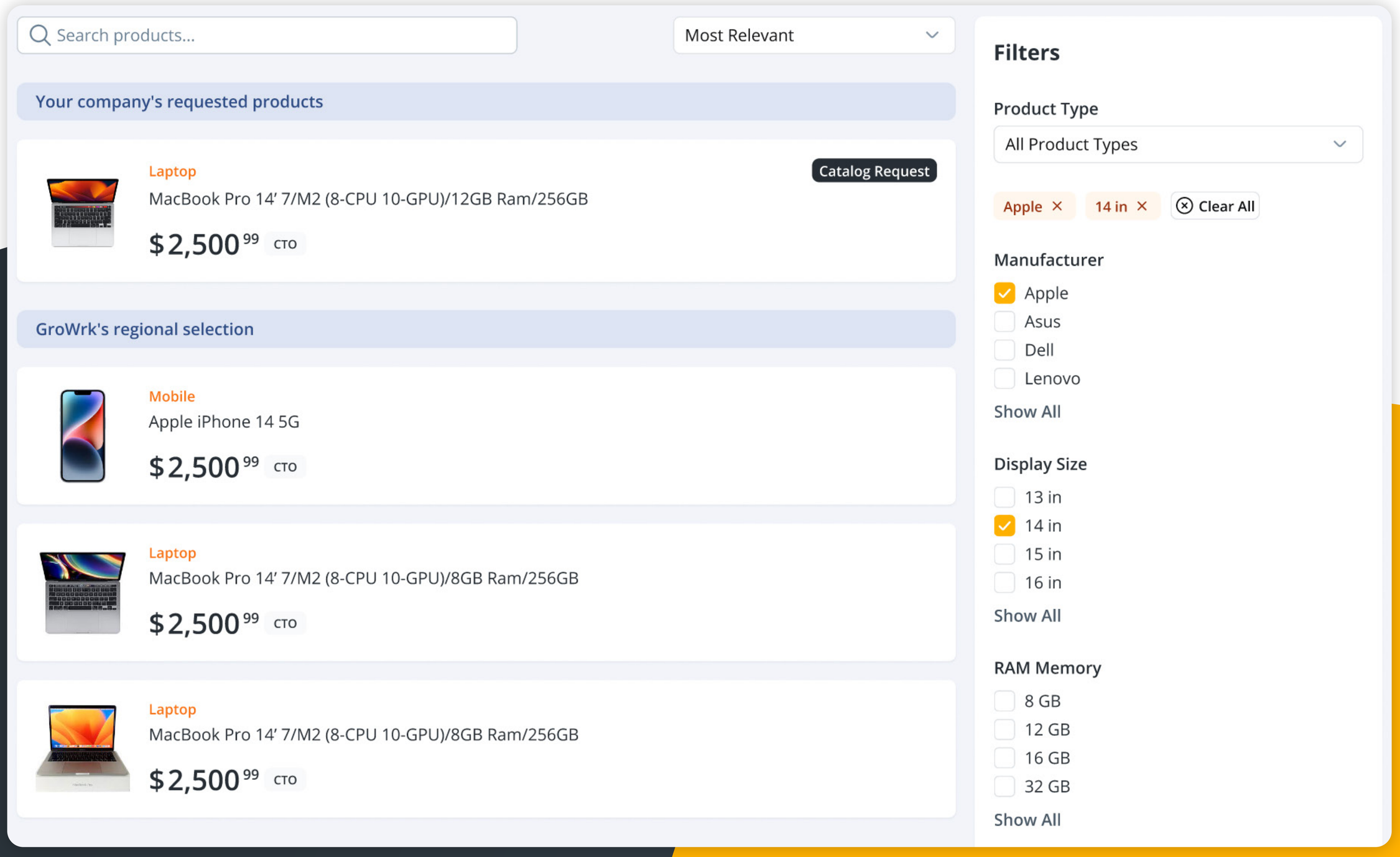
Why this matters for 2026

The growing complexity of global supply chains and workforce distribution means the traditional “buy-and-ship” approach is increasingly unsustainable. Enterprises now require procurement models that deliver cost predictability, confidence in compliance, and lifecycle visibility.

In that landscape, IT lifecycle services aren’t a premium option; it’s the only scalable one. By consolidating service, compliance, and lifecycle management into one platform, GroWrk redefines the economics of global IT operations: lower administrative overhead, faster deployment, and complete transparency from quote to recovery.

Looking ahead, procurement leaders will face even greater cost variability as tariffs, sustainability regulations, and component pricing continue to fluctuate. Teams that standardize through managed lifecycle platforms will gain an edge, not only in stability and visibility, but in the ability to forecast spend with precision across multiple regions. In 2026 GroWrk will have real-time pricing within the platform negating the need for requesting quotes and back-and-forth negotiations.

Learn more about GroWrk’s Marketplace feature



Case study: Upwork's global rollout, simplified

Upwork × groWrk

When Upwork expanded its hybrid workforce across 30+ countries, its nine-person IT team faced the challenge of managing global device logistics without adding headcount. Shipping equipment from the U.S. led to customs delays, inconsistent vendor communication, and inconsistent onboarding experiences.

Before GroWrk, a single international shipment could take weeks to arrive, with manual customs handling, ad-hoc freight forwarding, and separate setup processes for each region. Tracking inventory relied on spreadsheets, and offboarding required hours of coordination to recover devices.

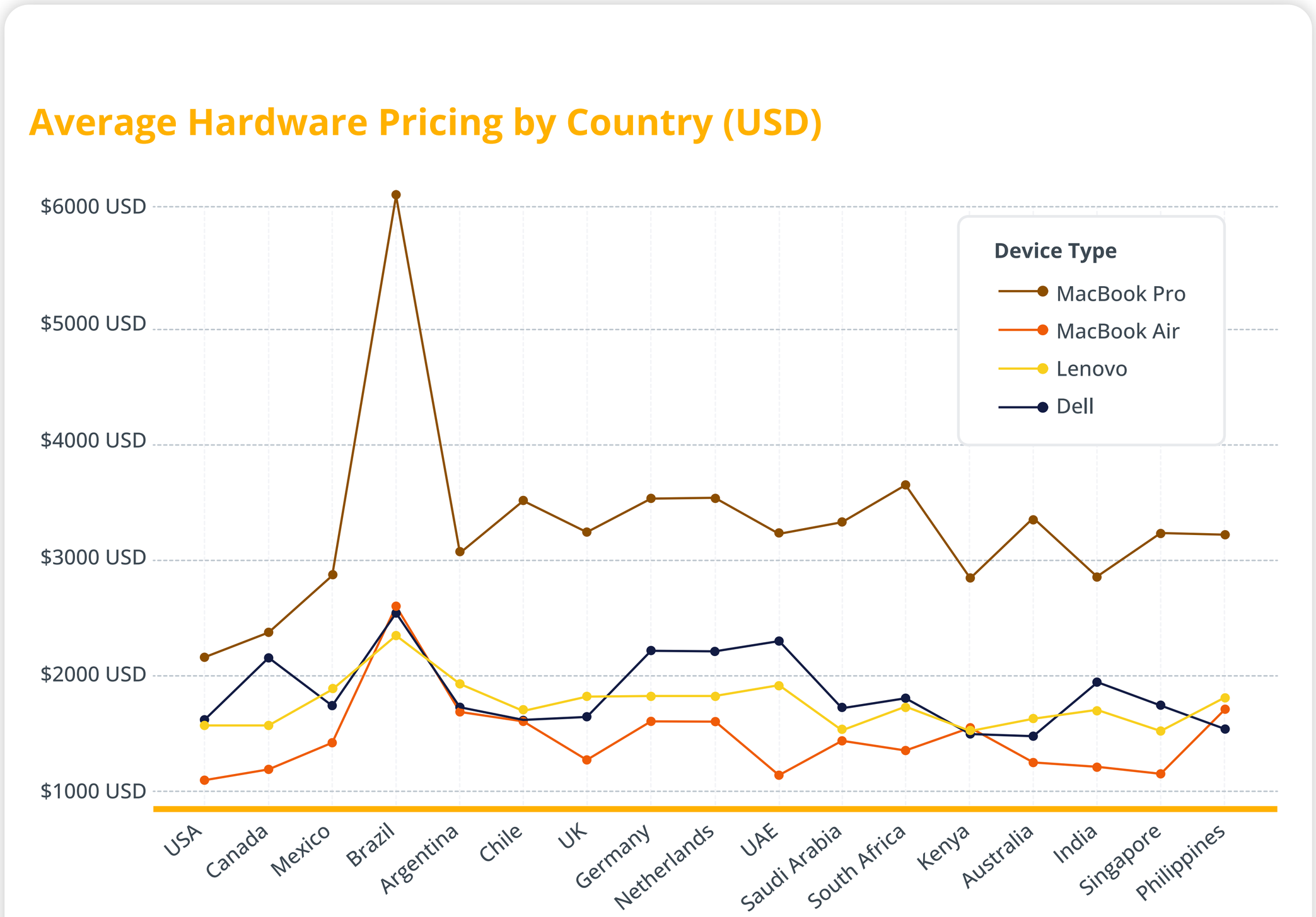
After switching to GroWrk's IT lifecycle services:

- **Deployment time dropped to just a few days**, with devices sourced locally, fully configured, and enrolled in Upwork's MDM.
- **Over 230 employees were onboarded globally** (with 60+ more in progress), supported by GroWrk's localized vendor network across 30+ countries.
- **Each IT shift saved more than two hours**, reclaiming valuable time once lost to manual logistics and follow-ups.
- **Employee onboarding became seamless**, with day-one readiness across all global locations.
- **100% SLA compliance** was achieved for device returns in GroWrk-supported countries.

Read the full case study here

GroWrk transformed Upwork's hardware procurement from a manual, reactive workflow into a predictable, transparent global operation, proving that managed procurement isn't just about cutting costs, but about saving time and scaling efficiently.

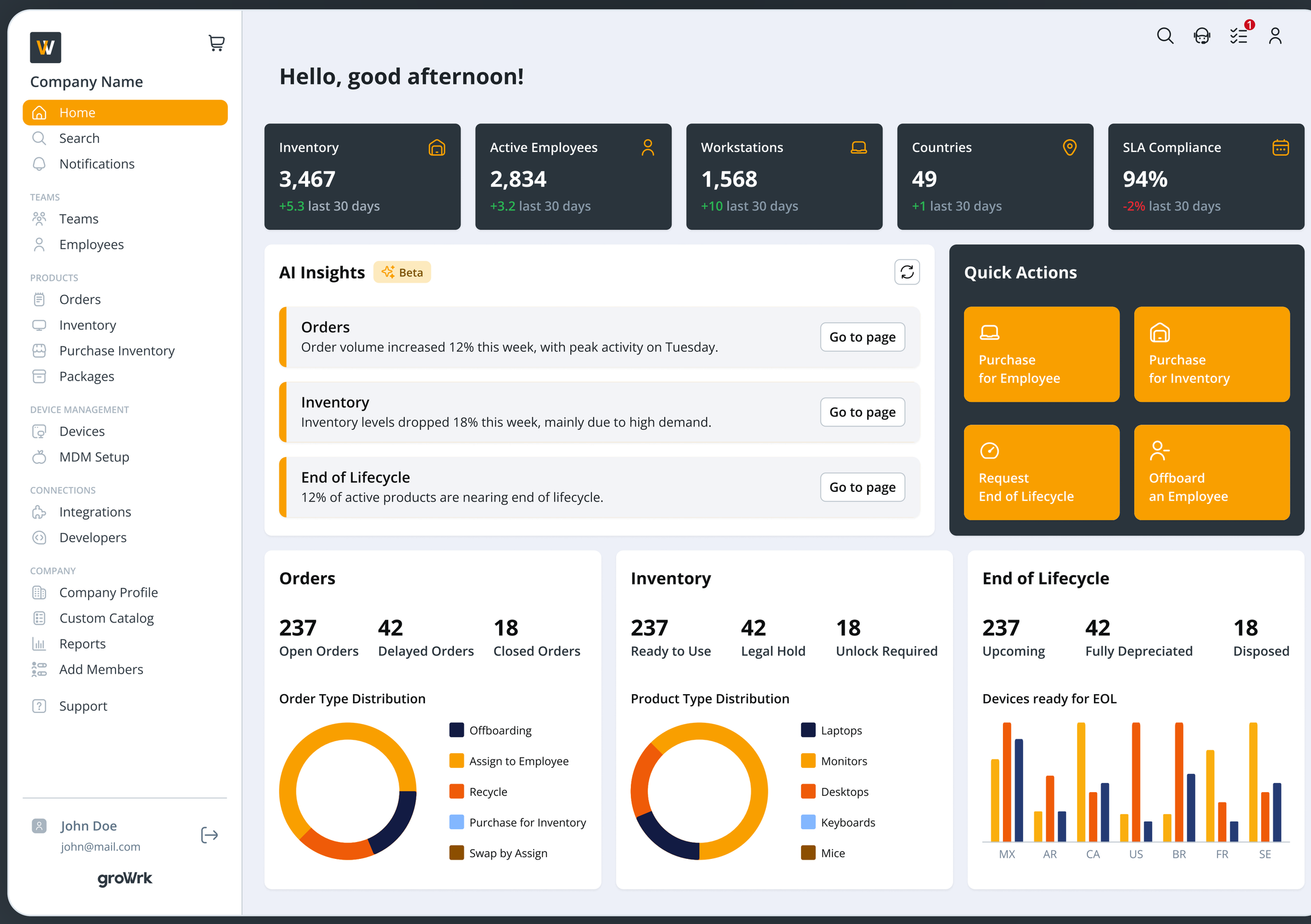
Appendix 1.1 Average Hardware Pricing by Country Line Graph



Appendix 1.2 — Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Asset Management	The process of tracking and managing company-owned equipment through its entire lifecycle, from purchase to disposal.
Asset Recovery	Reclaiming value from retired or unused IT assets through refurbishment, resale, or recycling.
CapEx / OpEx	CapEx (Capital Expenditure) refers to upfront asset purchases; OpEx (Operational Expenditure) refers to recurring expenses like leasing or subscriptions.
Device-as-a-Service (DaaS)	A subscription model bundling hardware, software, and support into a single recurring payment.
Depreciation Tracking	Monitoring how an asset's value decreases over time for financial and accounting purposes.
End-of-Life (EOL)	When a device reaches the end of its usable or supported lifespan and must be replaced or recycled.
IT Lifecycle Management	Managing every stage of IT assets—from procurement and deployment to recovery and disposal—via a unified platform.
Leaseback	Selling owned assets to a vendor and leasing them back to release capital while keeping operational use.
Logistics Network	The system of warehouses, couriers, and customs processes that enable international delivery and returns of equipment.

Term	Definition
Procurement Automation	Using technology to streamline and automate purchasing approvals, vendor coordination, and inventory tracking.
RMA (Return Merchandise Authorization)	A vendor-approved process for returning defective or unwanted equipment for repair or credit.
SKU (Stock Keeping Unit)	A unique product identifier used to track specific configurations (model, specs, region, etc.) in procurement systems.
SLA (Service Level Agreement)	A formal contract defining vendor response times, delivery commitments, and service performance standards.
TCO (Total Cost of Ownership)	The combined cost of purchasing, maintaining, and retiring an asset over its full lifecycle.
VAR (Value-Added Reseller)	A reseller that enhances hardware offerings with services such as installation, customization, or support.
WEEE Directive	EU legislation mandating responsible recycling and documentation of electronic waste.
Warranty Localization	Adjusting warranty terms and service options to fit regional coverage and logistics conditions.



Device Lifecycle Management on autopilot

GroWrk's solutions free up your time, cut costs, and ensure seamless operations. Ready to see the difference for yourself? Discover how GroWrk can simplify global IT device lifecycle management for your team.

Learn more

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