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Dell's New Vostro 3000 Laptops: Designed for Small Businesses

Dell's Vostro 3000 family of laptops has been designed from the ground-up to meet the needs of small businesses that need to replace older, overextended laptops. The Vostro 3000 line features both Microsoft Windows 7 and the next generation of Intel Core i5 and i7 processors. Sturdy, stylish, secure and affordable, the Vostro 3000 line provides entrepreneurs and small businesses with fresh, appealing mobile computing solutions.

The realities of a lingering recession and a do-it-yourself (DIY) ethos continue to frame today's economic climate. As entrepreneurs and small businesses went into financial shock beginning in mid-2008, they hunkered down and made do with older laptops (the dominant computing platform for these businesses) and other hardware instead of spending precious cash on new equipment. But with hints of a slow recovery in the offing, these older, over-extended laptops may not be up to the task of helping to support these businesses as they prepare for new business opportunities,

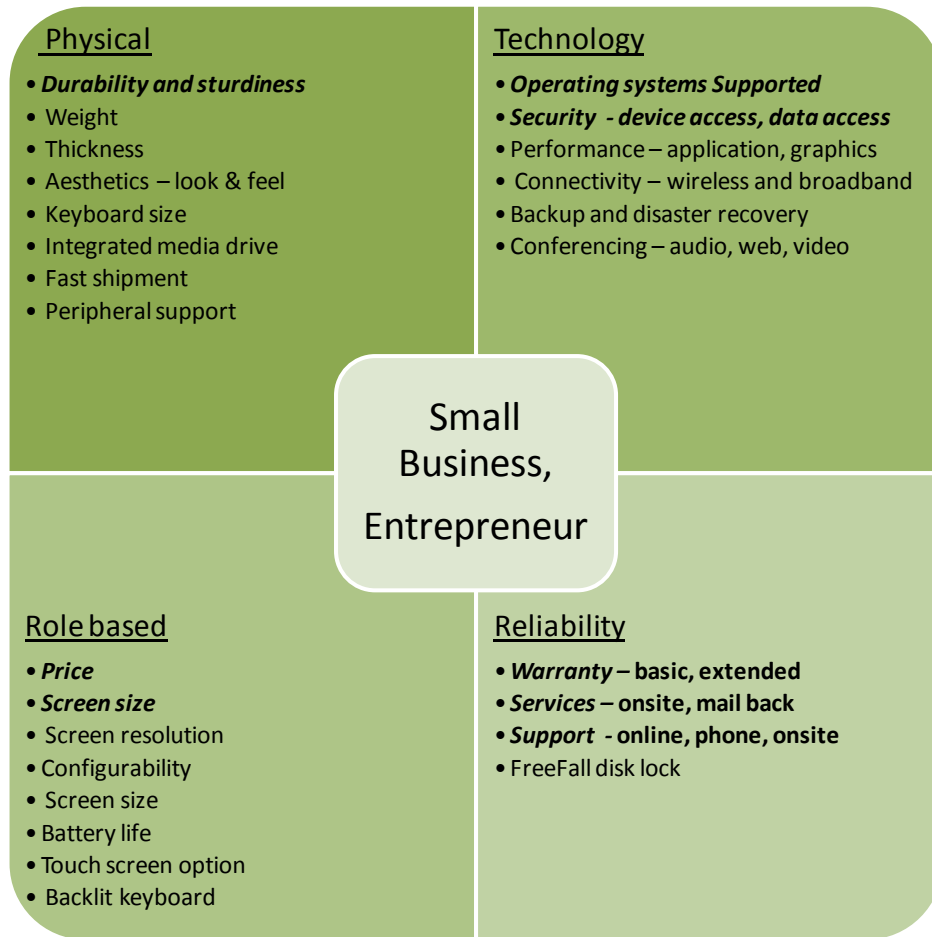
Consequently, Dell's introduction of its new Vostro 3000 family could not be more timely. As credit markets begin to thaw, and business prospects look more encouraging, small business interest in taking advantage of the power of Microsoft Windows 7 and Intel's next generation i5 and i7 processors is growing. With the 3000 series, Dell has put a lot of energy into meeting the needs of small businesses.

Small Business Laptop Selection Criteria

For small businesses, choosing the right laptop can be difficult. The industry offers customers an almost dizzying array of brands, options and features to help address their needs and requirements.

Figure 1 shows several key laptop selection criteria for small businesses. The bold italic bullets highlight the requirements that are typically most important for small businesses. Dell took care to address these important considerations in the Vostro 3000 line.

Figure 1: Small Business Laptop Selection Criteria



For example, Dell's Vostro 3000 line offers:

- **Affordable pricing.** Prices for smaller-sized systems begin under \$649, while the larger 17" systems start at \$798, making them affordable for small businesses on tight budgets.
- **Flexible service and support options.** Small businesses lack the IT resources to service and support these systems. If even one key executive's laptop is down, the business suffers. Dell provides a range of service solutions, from phone support to ProSupport, which includes a dedicated, single point of contact, and next day onsite support in most instances. Based on my own personal experience with Dell ProSupport service, I would rate it as an industry best and would not hesitate to recommend it to small businesses for mission critical executive and power user laptops.

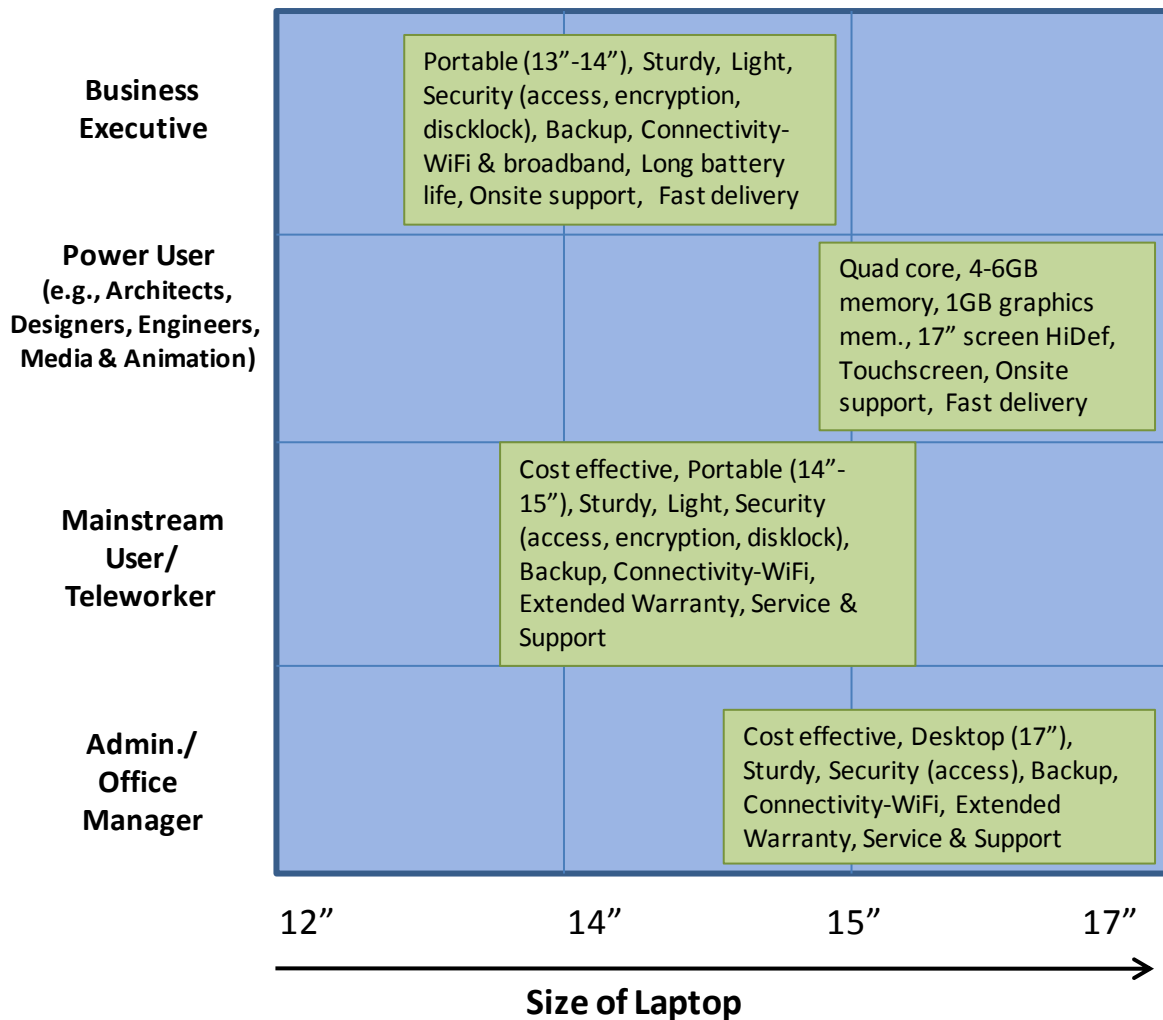
- **Data and access security.** Freefall sensors are standard on all Vostro laptops. These sensors detect if the laptop is in a state of free fall, and park the head of the disk drive to prevent a head crash and resulting data loss upon impact on the ground. Businesses can also select optional features such as fingerprint readers and hard drive encryption for added protection. These security features help protect loss of business critical data in the event of accidents, loss, theft or unauthorized system access.
- **Data backup.** When was the last time you backed-up your laptop? Though many of us are loathe to admit it, most small businesses fail to back up their laptops consistently and regularly. Viruses, accidental file deletion, disk crashes, etc. can irreparably compromise data. Dell's DataSafe online backup is an easy way to ensure mission critical laptops will get backed up.
- **Connectivity.** Many very small businesses only use a wireless network in the office and home office. The Vostro 3000 family laptops support a full range of connectivity options, including 802.11g/n wireless LAN, Bluetooth, and mobile broadband.
- **Fresh design and features.** The Vostro 3000 series offers entrepreneurs sleek yet rugged styling, with aluminum shells in an updated choice of colors. The line-up also features webcams and microphones for videoconferencing in all models, and strong graphics capabilities.

Role Based Laptop Selection and Configuration

With an extensive family of products, the small businesses need product selection and configuration guidance.

Based on years of experience evaluating and using desktop and laptop systems in small business environments, I recommend that businesses select laptops based on the role and business functions of individual users, as shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: Role Based Laptop Selection and Configuration



Summary

Overall, Dell’s Vostro 3000 family provides a stylish, sturdy and affordable choice of laptops that address key small business requirements, affordability, service and support, security, data backup and connectivity. The Vostro’s fresh design will also appeal to their creative side, so entrepreneurs won’t have to make a trade-off between practicality and great design in order to save money.

However, Vostro 3000 products are currently available only from the Dell.com website. While Dell regularly emails and snail mails Dell Small Business newsletters and product brochures, and Internet

research can provide a lot of good information, this doesn't meet the needs of small business owners that like to physically see and touch products before they buy them. These customers—and there are many of them—are more comfortable shopping at retail stores like BestBuy and Staples, where Dell's consumer laptops are available—but no Vostros.

To reach a broader small business market, Dell needs to supplement its direct model with a strong presence for its small business solutions at the retail outlets that small business owners and office managers frequent.



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