As tablet shipments continue sliding vendors need to "strategise survival tactics for their product portfolios," ABI Research says-- even if room can still be found for mid-term growth.

A number of companies have managed to find different means to survive. For instance, Amazon and Huawei continue making tablet despite dwindling figures, as does Xiaomi in conjunction with a Microsoft tie-up involving Android devices with pre-installed Office and Skype.

“Amazon and Huawei may successfully buck the trend, but each company is taking a drastically different stance on how to best accomplish this,” the analyst says. “Amazon managed to move away from raising revenue through hardware to recurring digital content sales, but Huawei, and even Lenovo for that matter, are instead looking to form a wider product suite that includes tablets in addition to their legacy PC and smartphone products.”

ABI also points out the survival strategy preferred by HP and Dell-- drop tablets in favour of 2-in-1/hybrid PCs, a product category said to combine the best of tablets and notebooks (with full QWERTY keyboards, folding form factors, productivity apps and larger screens) in a package preferred by the enterprise segment.

Crucially for these companies, Apple is still to fully launch an enterprise product, even if it is making some headway with the larger iPad Pro.

“As tablet hardware continues to decline, vendors that can control software, services, and the ecosystem will win out,” the analyst concludes. “There is still room in the mid-term for shipment growth in areas where the confluence of the tablet and laptop can be exploited to stimulate demand in the growing PC replacement market. Driving this movement will be enhancements in operating systems and improvements to enterprise productivity.”

Go [As Global Tablet Market Tumbles, PC Brands Develop Survival Tactics to Cope]