The Symity Road to Microsoft 365 Copilot

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Technology has enabled collaboration and the ability to work from anywhere – but it has also led to an overwhelming influx of data, emails, meetings and notifications. This is affecting our capacity to focus, think creatively and innovate.

Microsoft refers to this challenge as "digital debt." Nearly two-thirds of workers (64%) report struggling to find the time and energy to complete their tasks, and those individuals are 3.5x more likely to face difficulties with innovation and strategic thinking*.
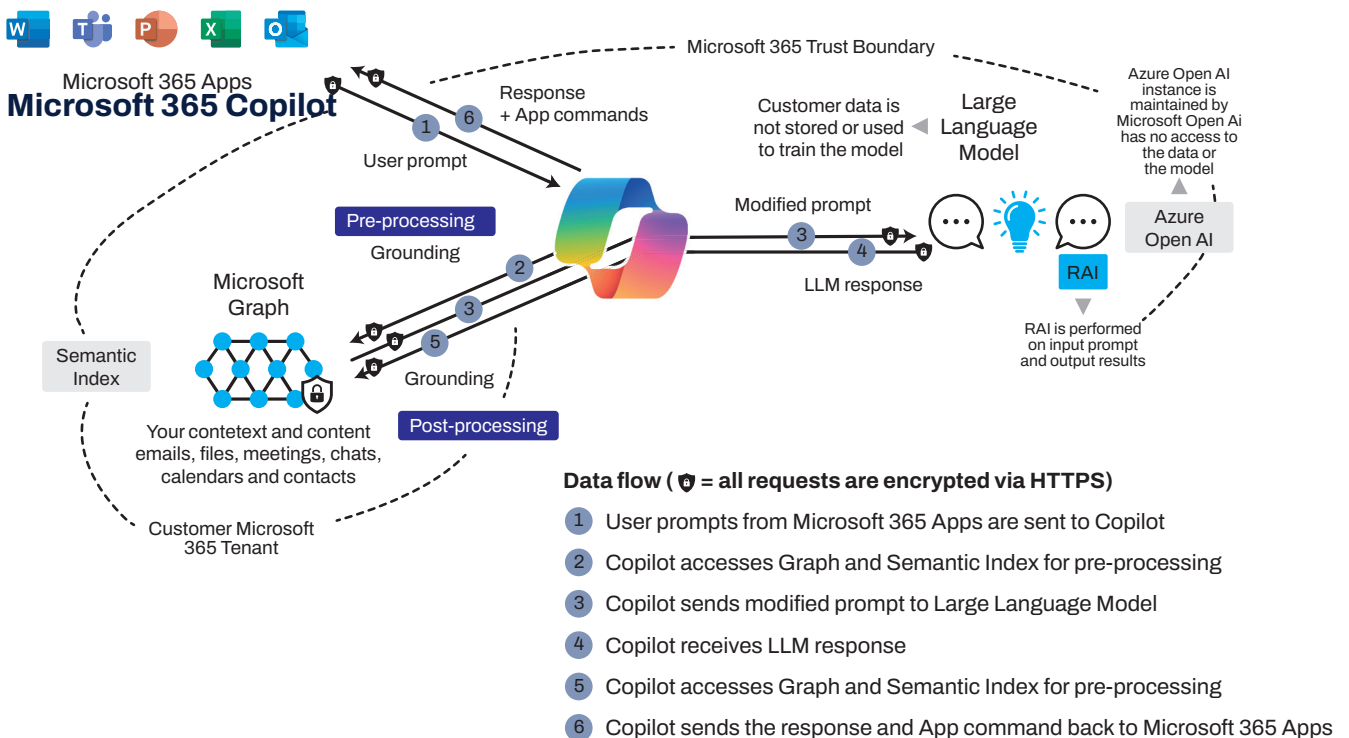
Launched in February 2023, Microsoft 365 Copilot is a disruptive technology that has the power to address digital debt and transform every business. As one of the first enterprise-grade generative AI solutions, it brings together the capabilities of Large Language Models alongside data from the Microsoft Graph and integrates them with Microsoft 365 apps to help users create content more quickly and efficiently.

What difference has Microsoft 365 Copilot made to early adopters?

And how is it solving the issues around digital debt?

This whitepaper not only highlights some of the key findings from external studies, but reveals the results of Symity's own efforts to leverage Microsoft 365 Copilot to boost productivity, streamline workflows, and drive business growth — both internally and for their customers.

* Work Trend Index Annual Report: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/will-ai-fix-work

Data flow (🔒 = all requests are encrypted via HTTPS)

1 User prompts from Microsoft 365 Apps are sent to Copilot
2 Copilot accesses Graph and Semantic Index for pre-processing
3 Copilot sends modified prompt to Large Language Model
4 Copilot receives LLM response
5 Copilot accesses Graph and Semantic Index for pre-processing
6 Copilot sends the response and App command back to Microsoft 365 Apps

4% go-to-market topline revenues increase
After applying a net margin of 7.8%, the increase in net income is worth between a projected $7.5 million to $35.6 million over three years.

2.9% up to 7.6% three-year increase in net income due to increased revenues and decreased costs

0.7% decrease in operational expenditure
Due to increased worker productivity across a wide range of roles and tasks. Supply chain efficiencies contributed to the increased net margin in addition to a reduction in external spend on IT contractors, as well as replacing other generative AI licenses with Microsoft 365 Copilot.

30% reduction in new-hire orientation times
People and organisation transformation reduced new-hire onboarding times by up to 30%. Faster onboarding of new hires means they are creating value for the company sooner.

> The aim of Microsoft 365 Copilot is to be a usable, functional assistant alongside the employee to simplify working life. The employee remains the 'pilot'.

Highlighted quantified benefits

4% GO-TO-MARKET TOPLINE REVENUES INCREASE

0.7% DECREASE IN OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE

30% REDUCTION IN NEW-HIRE ORIENTATION TIMES

Microsoft 365 Copilot improves employee satisfaction by reducing repetitive, low value tasks and making relevant information more accessible. Longer term, this would contribute to increased employee retention for the composite organisation. Faster onboarding also reduces the time managers spend on onboarding their new direct reports.

Combined new hire benefits worth between a projected $946,000 to $2.1 million over three years.

Unquantified benefits

These are benefits identified by the composite organisation as adding value, but are not quantified for the study.

Improved diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)
Employees enjoy a more equitable and inclusive workplace when using Microsoft 365 Copilot as they are able to incorporate more diverse input and examples into their work. It also helps counteract some human biases.

Better work-life balance
Microsoft 365 Copilot can take on mundane and repetitive tasks which employees then spend only a fraction of the time refining. This not only reduces workloads but lowers the proportion of time spent on repetitive and noncreative tasks.

Microsoft 365 Copilot makes people more productive and creative and saves time.
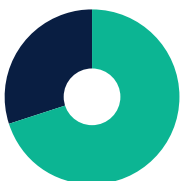
70% of Microsoft 365 Copilot users said they were more productive
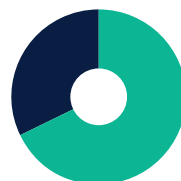
68% said it improved the quality of their work

The case for adopting Microsoft 365 Copilot within Symity was clear for a number of reasons:

- Advanced features across multiple applications lends itself to catering to a broader range of tasks.

- Although Teams Premium can create intelligent recaps from meetings, Microsoft 365 Copilot goes further by generating actionable insights for each individual, for their productivity enhancement – and then help them to execute on those action points directly.

- The combination means a more comprehensive solution for embedding AI across productivity and collaboration tools.

Symity's Microsoft 365 Copilot journey adopted a phased approach, which would explore its impact. The key findings across different business functions and verticals show its contribution specifically to returns on investment (RoI), time savings, and heightened user engagement.

Internal discovery and Symity KPIs

The internal rollout of Microsoft 365 Copilot within Symity demonstrated clear productivity enhancements across several departments:

- **Average RoI of 320%:** This translated into significant cost savings and efficiency improvements across the business.

- **Average daily time savings of ~56 minutes:** This enables employees to redirect focus toward strategic work and creative problem-solving. Microsoft 365 Copilot's ability to complete repetitive tasks that only require a fraction of time for refinement not only reduces workloads but enhances the quality of work.

- **4-month payback period:** The rapid recovery of investment clearly demonstrated the high value that Microsoft 365 Copilot delivered to Symity's operations.

- **87% monthly active usage:** Microsoft 365 Copilot's relevance and usefulness to Symity employees across the various departments is shown in consistently high engagement with this.

The adoption programme also revealed several key department-specific impacts:

- **HR function:** Microsoft 365 Copilot helped streamline document creation, improving both speed and readability of reports and HR documentation.

- **Technical roles:** It assisted technical staff in solving complex problems by offering reasoned, multi-referenced answers that outperformed traditional web searches in both speed and quality.

- **Sales team:** Sales professionals were able to turn client engagements around more quickly using Microsoft 365 Copilot.

Symity Road to Microsoft 365 Copilot: A Microsoft partner process

Symity's implementation journey involved a phased, agile approach, in close collaboration with Microsoft.

Phase 1 - Microsoft 365 Copilot Inbound (September 2023):
Symity recognised that Microsoft's significant investment in generative AI meant it would feature strongly in their future plans. Microsoft 365 Copilot's potential in terms of its capabilities and how it may be able to help customers led to Symity developing our own initial Microsoft Marketplace offering around Copilot Readiness.

Phase 2 - Microsoft 365 Copilot Jumpstart (November 2023):
Symity was invited to join the Microsoft Copilot Jumpstart programme, and it soon became clear that the programme would become a true joint development activity with Microsoft, working together to establish what Microsoft 365 Copilot would mean for organisations.

The lack of existing Microsoft go-to-market content led to Symity designing their own four-stage programme, moving customers from readiness to pilot phase to full-scale adoption.

Phase 3 - Microsoft 365 Copilot Launch (January 2024):
Symity's first customer project kicked off, delivering a comprehensive Microsoft 365 Copilot adoption and training programme to a customer with over 100k employees. Symity continued to refine its processes in real-time to align with evolving client needs.

How the internal program was delivered:
In March 2024, Symity began a 4-week Microsoft 365 Copilot programme with two main aims, to identify how Symity might benefit as an organisation and to refine their consultancy offer to customers. The programme was led by Symity's Digital Innovation and Adoption and Change consultants as it is not solely a technical implementation.

The programme consisted of the following steps

Cohort users were made to agree to time and engagement 'contracts'

A teams-based Microsoft 365 Copilot centre of excellence was established

To contain guidance, example & new user prompts

Bespoke training materials were created in multiple formats

Remote user adoption training sessions were delivered

Weekly cohort surveys were conducted to measure impact

Users to complete 'business value' forms to capture use cases

Final business value analysis using the business case builder

3.0/5

Microsoft 365 Copilot usefulness rating

3.41/5

Microsoft 365 Copilot quality & accuracy satisfaction rating

Key takeaways from Symity's internal adoption:

- **Time:** Allow more than 4 weeks for the adoption activity

- **Adoption and change activities:** Essential to educate on what it can do and how to use it

- **Manage expectations for different levels of benefits**

- **Analysis of effectiveness:** End user surveys were essential

- **Incentivise prompt sharing**

Thanks to their longstanding partnership with Microsoft, Symity was well positioned to introduce Microsoft 365 Copilot to businesses they identified as being ready and receptive to elevate their productivity and collaboration, helping these customers cement their place at the forefront of the AI revolution in the workplace.

Analysis of the results of the Microsoft 365 Copilot roll-out to selected Symity customers shows they experienced even higher returns with even more pronounced productivity benefits than the internal roll out:

- **Average RoI of 930%:** This far exceeded expectations, with pure productivity benefits driving significant returns.

- **Average daily time savings of ~85 minutes:** Across various sectors and roles.

- **85% functional benefits:** With time saving, quality enhancement, and risk reduction being key drivers.

- **12% emotional benefits:** Better wellbeing and reduced stress were additional, albeit secondary, benefits.

Client impact highlights

AI 'power users': After 12 weeks, some customers emerged as "AI Power Users," where their working practices had been significantly altered due to a 'Copilot first' approach. These users developed personal "playbooks" for prompts and scenarios, which helped optimise productivity.

Neurodivergent & accessibility users: Customers with neurodivergent conditions and accessibility challenges found Microsoft 365 Copilot particularly helpful. The tool was described as an assistive technology, enabling users to improve communication, memory and anxiety management. Voice-command software users also benefited from transcription capabilities, allowing them to contribute more efficiently to meetings.

Consultancy & guidance supports adoption: Symity's comprehensive customer support enhances successful adoption. Their support is designed to help customers from pre-planning right through to post-implementation. Customers can access a full range of consultancy services, from organisational readiness assessments, user profiling, security and compliance planning, data lifecycle assessments, training, right through to post-implementation monitoring and optimisation.

Exploring the parallels in benefits achieved by implementing Microsoft 365 Copilot and the lessons learned from dealing with the challenges faced:

Similarities:

1. Productivity gains: The consistent benefit across all analysis is the substantial improvement in productivity. Although the amount of time saved varies, Microsoft 365 Copilot helps all users streamline their workflows. These gains are primarily driven by its ability to automate repetitive tasks and expedite document creation, emails, and meeting summaries.

2. Return on investment (RoI): Another shared outcome is the high RoI. Symity's internal RoI of 320% and its customers' staggering 930% RoI reflect Microsoft 365 Copilot's tangible impact on the bottom line. These figures align closely with the broader market, where Forrester's study projected an average RoI between 112% and 457%. In all cases, the RoI is driven by a combination of time savings, cost reductions, and improved operational efficiencies.

3. User engagement and adoption: High user engagement is a significant trend across all experiences. Symity recorded an 87% monthly active usage rate, demonstrating that once teams integrated Microsoft 365 Copilot into their workflows, they consistently leveraged the tool. Similarly, both Symity's customers and the broader user base in Microsoft's Work Trend Index reported high usage rates.
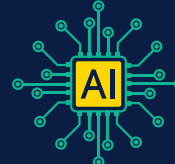
Lessons learned

SCALE OF TIME SAVINGS

Familiarity with AI tools enables users to unlock more advanced functionalities and optimise processes more effectively.

RANGE OF BENEFITS

Functional improvements achieved across the board, but additional emotional benefits may also be realised.

ADOPTION CHALLENGES

Training and change management is essential. Many organisations face a steep learning curve as employees adapt to a new AI-driven workflow.

The transformative impact of Microsoft 365 Copilot is clear.

Once a smooth adoption is achieved, and enterprises start to see what Microsoft Copilot 365 can truly do for them, the transformation is unstoppable.

External sources

Work Trend Index Special Report:
https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/copilots-earliest-users-teach-us-about-generative-ai-at-work

The Projected Total Economic Impact™ Of Microsoft Copilot For Microsoft 365
https://clouddamcdnprodep.azureedge.net/gdc/gdcjXrIkp/original

Get in touch with one of Symity's experts to find out more:
www.symity.com/contact-us