



Ascot saves time and gains efficiency with Microsoft 365 Copilot

2–4 hours per week

average time saved per Microsoft 365 Copilot user

Clear return on investment

based on time savings alone

Wide range of use cases

including for research, email composition, summarisation and user documentation

Client

Ascot Group Limited

Industry

Finance

Platform

Azure Cloud

Services

Digital Workplace Services:
Workplace AI: SoftwareOne
Services for Microsoft 365 Copilot

Global insurance and reinsurance specialist Ascot Group Limited wanted to achieve 'a single view of risk' through a technology-centric approach to underwriting. It decided to use cutting-edge digital strategies to deliver a differentiated client experience and looked to AI as a core enabler of operational efficiency for its business.

Ascot Group turned to SoftwareOne, a trusted partner for several years. The company knew that SoftwareOne had successfully adopted Microsoft 365 Copilot for its own business. SoftwareOne's comprehensive playbook for deployment and change management provided the support that Ascot Group needed to get its own AI programme under way.

Country

United States, United Kingdom,
Bermuda



The challenge



Part of bringing a product like Microsoft 365 Copilot into an organisation is that it's 80% change management and 20% technical. I was very impressed with everything that SoftwareOne built as part of its internal implementation, which they then used to help other clients with that journey. It was a very thoughtful methodology.



Christian Toft-Nielsen
Senior Vice President,
Predictive Modelling and
AI Strategy, Ascot Group

Founded in 2001, Ascot Group is a global specialty insurance and reinsurance business on a mission to maintain its position as a technology-driven company. The company's users were already proficient with Microsoft 365 – having adopted it in 2019 – and it had moved its essential business documents into the cloud-based suite of applications. When Microsoft 365 Copilot became available to users, Ascot Group saw an opportunity to advance its digital transformation goals.

Ascot Group had worked with SoftwareOne on various projects for several years and knew that it had successfully adopted Microsoft 365 Copilot internally. The insurer turned to SoftwareOne for support, guidance and advice on how to begin using Microsoft 365 Copilot across its own business.

"SoftwareOne is a trusted partner to Ascot Group, and we had a very good relationship before we started this project," says Christian Toft-Nielsen, Senior Vice President, Predictive Modelling and AI Strategy, at Ascot Group. "I was very impressed with everything that SoftwareOne built as part of its internal implementation, which they then used to help other clients with that journey."

Until this point, Ascot Group hadn't explored any company-wide AI deployments. It saw the Copilot project as a way to build its capabilities, introduce employees to the use of AI, and reduce the time and effort required for tasks like reviewing and summarising lengthy documents.



The solution

The first step was to assess Ascot Group's readiness to implement Microsoft 365 Copilot safely and securely. This meant examining the permissions and security that Ascot Group used for data housed in its Microsoft 365 applications, the information source from which Microsoft 365 Copilot would generate results. SoftwareOne's assessment provided a guide to which technical areas Ascot Group needed to focus on, and which permissions and security issues it had to address before it could begin using Microsoft 365 Copilot.

For example, the assessment found that Ascot Group needed to migrate some additional data to SharePoint that it hadn't yet moved to the cloud. Ascot Group also conducted a series of so-called "smoke tests" using the Microsoft Purview security tool to make sure that Microsoft 365 Copilot users couldn't access sensitive data that they weren't authorised to view.

As this work was going on, Ascot Group and SoftwareOne also identified 'pioneer group' users who would be the first to start using Microsoft 365 Copilot. This included employees across different areas of the business, and in different locations: Bermuda, London and the United States. Pioneer group users were introduced to Microsoft 365 Copilot through an 'unboxing event' that provided a tutorial on how to use the tool. After this event, Ascot Group and SoftwareOne also held a series of 'walk-in' calls in which users could ask questions about different use cases, prompts and other matters.

Deploying Copilot also required approval from Ascot Group's AI governance committee, which had been put in place earlier with support from SoftwareOne. Toft-Nielsen says Microsoft 365 Copilot's built-in regulatory compliance helped with this. The board also made it clear that Ascot Group would make Microsoft 365 Copilot the company's officially sanctioned AI tool, while it would also prohibit use of tools like ChatGPT that can become 'shadow AI'. The board also agreed that human users should always be ultimately responsible for AI outputs.

"We all know that AI can hallucinate," says Toft-Nielsen. "So you have a responsibility to vet the output and determine how it's being used."

All this preparation was guided by SoftwareOne's playbook – developed through its own in-house project to adopt Microsoft 365 Copilot – on how to communicate deployment issues with users, answer questions and encourage adoption. SoftwareOne also has a variety of other capabilities around Microsoft, including Azure migration and modernisation, support for Microsoft workloads, application portfolio management and advisory services.

The outcome

Ascot Group's pioneer group of 100 users spent about two months exploring the use of Microsoft 365 Copilot. A survey showed that those early adopters were saving an average of 2–4 hours per week by using Microsoft 365 Copilot – with each licence costing \$30 per month, that result showed a clear return on investment. So Ascot Group decided to begin expanding access to more users.

"If you save just one hour, it essentially pays for itself," says Toft-Nielsen. Some results are harder to quantify, he adds, but Ascot Group observed that Copilot was also helping people to produce much higher-quality work and pioneer group users were enthusiastic about their experiences.

Users have found Microsoft 365 Copilot to be especially helpful with research. For example, it's making it easier to locate specific company documents or to compare information across multiple documents. One of the most-used applications is to help draft emails in Outlook – for instance, coaching employees to adopt the right professional tone. But plenty of other use cases have emerged, such as developers who are using Microsoft 365 Copilot to create user documentation for their code.

Employees continue to share what they've learned through regular walk-in sessions and can also share helpful prompts using Copilot's Prompt Buddy feature. Ascot Group is now moving forward with plans to deploy Microsoft 365 Copilot to all of its employees over time.

Looking ahead, Ascot Group also plans to work with SoftwareOne to use what it has learned to develop more structured workflows that can help employees save even more time using Microsoft 365 Copilot. And it's working to drive up adoption across existing users – early surveys of the pioneer group found a 67% adoption rate, so Ascot Group will try to identify and eliminate barriers that have kept other employees from using the tool. It's also deployed Microsoft 365 Copilot for executives in the company's C-suite and has implemented GitHub Copilot as well.

Toft-Nielsen says SoftwareOne's support has been vital throughout the project, especially when it comes to change management. "Change is uncomfortable, and new tools are hard to implement," he says. "A key component of this project was the change management and awareness of why we're doing this, the importance of it." SoftwareOne's end-to-end playbook, he says, gave Ascot Group what it needed throughout that journey.

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