



Microsoft 365
Copilot

Putting AI to Work

From vision to productivity and beyond



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Believe the data,
not the headlines



77%

of people who have tried
Microsoft 365 Copilot don't
want to give it up.¹

This changes everything. Fill-in-the-blank 2.0. The next big thing.

You've heard it before. So have we. The latest technology breakthrough is going to transform the world of business. And it does, for a while, until the next breakthrough arrives. So, if you find yourself looking at claims about AI with some scepticism and a bit of side-eye, that's understandable.

This eBook isn't about claims. It's about data.

Eye-popping data, in fact, that was even more significant than we expected. Yes, there are productivity benefits from working with AI, but the data also shows the potential for even more impact in other areas that are vital to your business, especially your people. The risk is that, given how fast AI is developing, the longer you wait to understand and invest in that potential, the harder it will be to realise it. However, this content is also about how to move fast with the due diligence you need to understand the needs of your business and identify the use cases that will drive ROI for AI.

02/

How AI improves productivity

At the heart of almost every technology solution is a simple idea: To help individuals complete tasks faster. Word processing apps help you create documents. Spreadsheet apps make it easier to work with data. Messaging helps you communicate.

By now you've probably heard that AI is going to make it easier to complete all kinds of work-related tasks, and the research Microsoft has conducted with Microsoft 365 Copilot so far shows that the time savings can be significant.

Connect productivity with well-being.

Another factor to remember about productivity is that by helping people complete tasks like these faster, they can reduce the cognitive load of high-volume, short-duration tasks as well. This reduction helps increase the ability to focus and improve well-being by reducing stress. Keep in mind, while these are the core benefits you can expect from AI, you should easily be able to envision applying them to countless other tasks. Plus, we're addressing them only at the individual level.

There are aggregate benefits across your organisation to factor in as well. And in any event, productivity is only part of the story we are seeing in terms of whether investing in AI is worth it.

People work faster with Copilot¹:

**Search 27%
faster:**

17m 54s vs. 24m 18s

**Summarise
meetings 4× faster:**

11m 13s vs. 42m 34s

**Write a first draft
43% faster:**

8min 12s vs. 12m 48s

**Handle multiple
tasks 29% faster:**

29m 42s vs. 42m 6s

03/

How AI makes work more engaging



Another critical aspect to consider about any technology solution is what your employees will think of it. Because a solution can't boost anyone's productivity if they don't like using it.

So while we can measure whether a solution helps people work faster, it's just as important to have an idea how they experience it themselves. Do they actually like working with it? In what ways is it most helpful? Is it just marginally useful or is it a tool they don't want to live without?

Microsoft surveyed users participating in the Early Access programme and here's what they said about working with Microsoft 365 Copilot.

- Boosted creativity and quality
- Improved focus and well-being
- Increased employee satisfaction

Boost creativity and quality

AI technology is fundamentally about augmenting our capabilities. Wherever our skill level might be at the moment, AI is meant to improve it. Business leaders have already recognised an increased need for generating creative solutions and innovations. We expect AI to intensify that need, and what users working with Copilot are reporting so far indicates investment in AI could have an enormous impact in this area.

Improve focus and well-being

Two other areas where investing in AI has the potential for a significant impact are related to transforming the nature of work people have to perform and reducing the cognitive load that workers have to deal with. Of course, both also relate in important ways to improving focus time and the ability of companies to innovate.

People working with Copilot²:

57%

said it helped them jump-start the creative process.

68%

said it made them more creative.

72%

said it helped them generate ideas while writing.

68%

said it improved the quality of their work.



Employees working with Copilot²:

67%

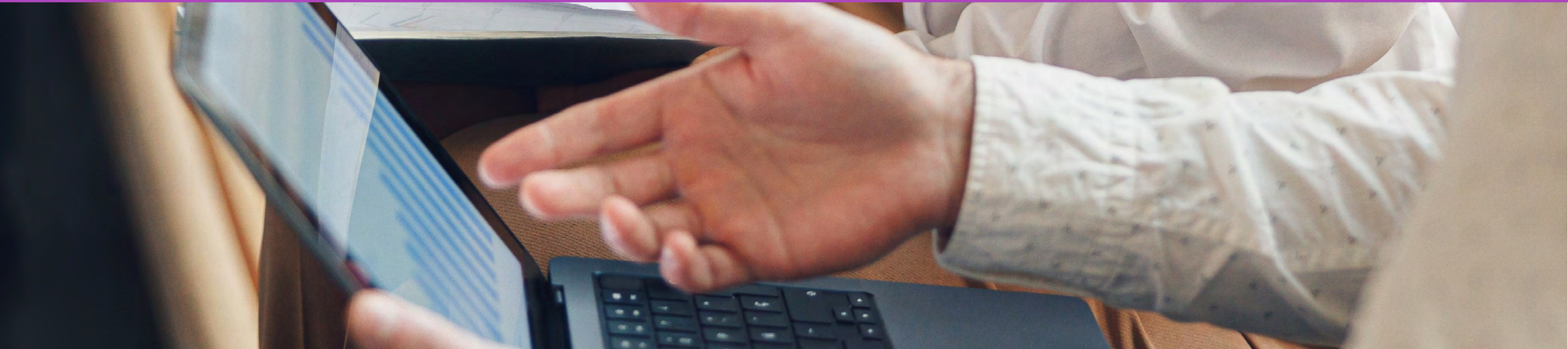
said it saved time so they could focus on more important work.

64%

said it allows them to spend less time processing email.

71%

said they saved time on mundane tasks.



Brain space is a valuable commodity

How much cognitive load are we talking about? How about 250 emails and 150 chats per day, and 3× more meetings than 2020.³ So it's no surprise that most people say they spend more time communicating and searching for information than creating. Or that 68% of people say they don't have enough uninterrupted focus time during the workday.

Previous Microsoft research has shown that nearly two out of three (64%) people surveyed said they struggle with having the time and energy to do their job, and they are 3.5× more likely to struggle with innovation and strategic thinking.² Their leaders are noticing, as 60% of them are concerned there is a lack of innovation or breakthrough ideas from their teams.²

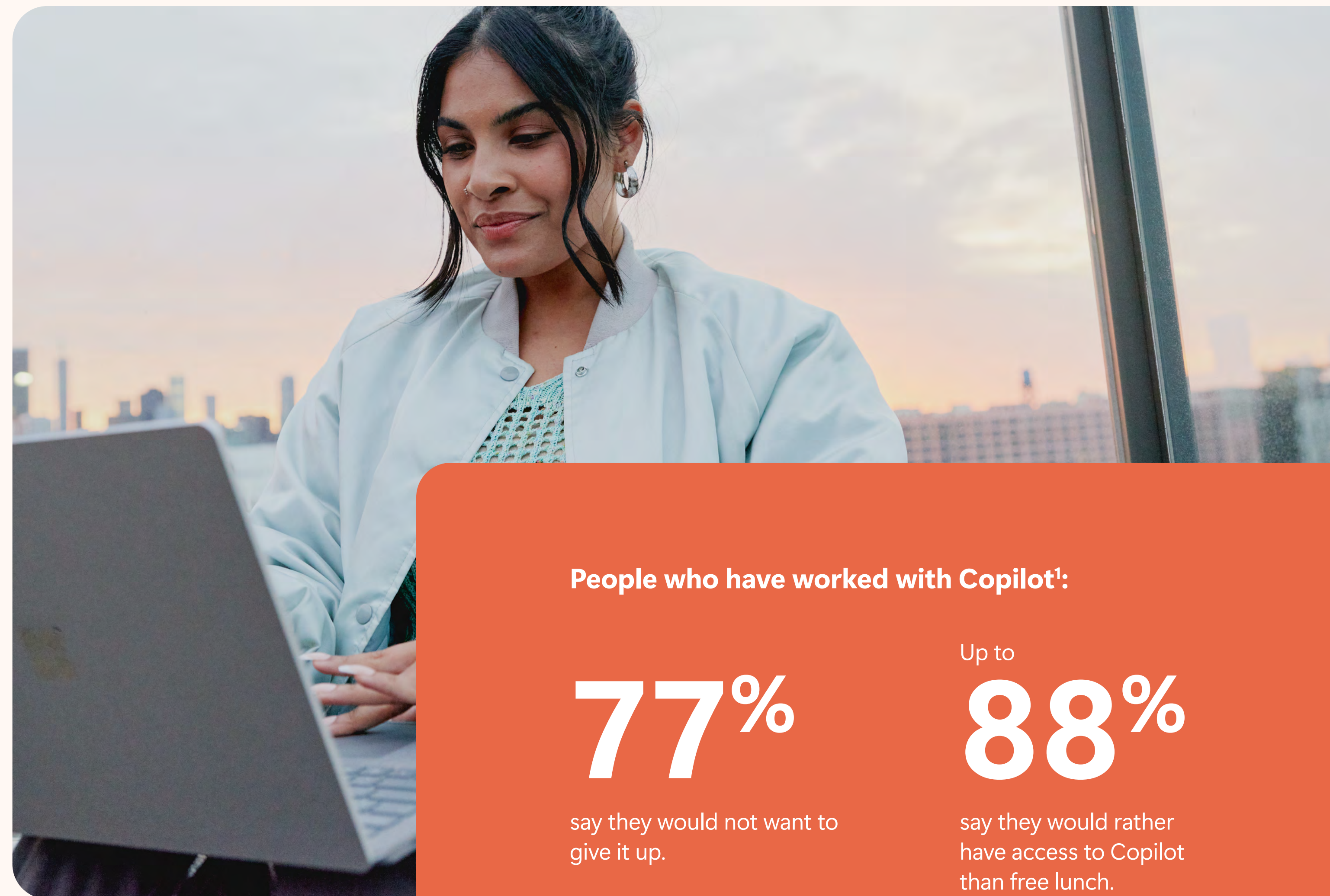
Benefits like saving time are generally positive, but the true benefits come from what people do with that time. In our research, for users saving more than 30 minutes a day, 53% spent the extra time on focus work, and only 7% said they spent it on administrative tasks.¹ Research with Copilot users is showing us that AI can have a direct impact on reducing cognitive load and its effects.

From novelty to essential tool

Knowing how your people feel about a technology solution and what they like about it is certainly important. But if you're wondering whether your investment in AI will be worth it, there's another way to look at this part of the bottom line.

Some of the most extraordinary data points from our research came not from asking people about what it was like to work with Copilot, but how they felt about working without it.

As compelling as the data is about productivity, creativity and well-being, these numbers show that it didn't take long for most users to feel like Copilot is an absolutely essential tool to their success.



04/

Take your time to
move fast

It’s critical for companies to be decisive and deliberate with their approach to AI. However, they also need to be disciplined about their due diligence. That means being clear about the business problems they want AI to help solve.

While not a comprehensive playbook, the following questions can help make sure your investment in AI is an informed decision that won’t slow you down.



Think big, start small

One common strategy in these situations is for companies to run a pilot programme for a new solution with a limited number of users. This test group can be based on function, or a cross-functional team, or just a representative group across the whole company.

The research Microsoft has done so far indicates that pilot programmes are a valid and valuable way to assess Copilot. We assume you will conduct your own analysis on your test group's productivity, but we think it is critical to get as much feedback as you can directly from your employees.

A major part of the benefits we are seeing with AI relates to how people feel about their work after using it. So, if you're not gathering that data, you will only be seeing part of the impact of your investment.

How to pilot Copilot:

- Identify champions and super users
- Use existing skillsets
- Identify your use cases



05/

Beyond the bottom line

What your leadership needs to know

The explosion of interest in AI has already had a huge influence on the world of work. The challenge now is for you to understand how big of an investment to make, when and how to help your own leadership make the right decisions for your company.

Four points to cover when presenting your business case for AI.

1. Benefit versus cost
2. Transforming process
3. Employee recruitment and retention
4. Driving innovation and agility



Weighing benefits versus costs

Microsoft research indicates that 22% of Copilot users said they saved more than 30 minutes a day, so the potential time savings company-wide are significant.¹ While the available data is not definitive, it is compelling and clearly trends toward AI having major potential benefits in terms of productivity gains.

As for costs, those will vary, so companies should use their own estimates and weigh those against estimates of time savings based on available data.

Transforming processes

We've touched on some of the broadly applicable ways we're seeing AI change the way people work. Making it easier to find information, summarising meetings and managing communications can all play a big role in reducing digital debt across many different functions and roles.

However, you should also consider that certain functions will benefit from AI in unique ways. For instance, our research found that roughly three out of four people who work in sales expect AI to help them the most by identifying opportunities and unifying marketing and sales data. In customer services, about two-thirds expect AI to help intelligently route issues to appropriate agents and detect trends across agent-customer interactions. Finance workers see AI helping the most by simplifying reporting and validating data quality.



Employee recruitment and retention

Using AI to reduce the cognitive load of digital debt and empower employees with more focus time can be key drivers of employee satisfaction and engagement. The number of Copilot users who don't want to live without it helps confirm this, but there is another factor you should consider.

Almost one-third (30%) of users said access to Copilot would influence their choice of employer.¹ This shows that it while it's important to decide how much and when to invest in AI, deciding which AI solution to invest in can have long-term strategic implications for your business.





Driving innovation and agility

This is a valuable opportunity to take an honest look at the role of creativity and innovation at your company, especially how important it was in the past versus how important you think it will be in the future. The more the future of your business depends on new ideas, the more your investment in AI can capitalise on additional benefits of AI beyond productivity.

AI evolves with your business

We have never seen a technology evolve and improve as quickly as AI (to cite one example, ChatGPT reached 100 million users in just three months).⁴ This is both exciting and daunting as the urge for companies to be a first-mover or the fear of losing a competitive advantage meet the concern that AI may be too immature to warrant major levels of capital.

The takeaway is that AI is unique in its ability to evolve and be trained by the people who use it. For many companies, we think this indicates that making AI commitments sooner rather than later means solutions like Copilot can actually help their businesses evolve and improve as well.

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It starts with vision

One of the most essential pillars of positioning your company to reap the benefits of AI is to create and clearly articulate your AI vision. Then use that vision to help your colleagues understand the importance of this opportunity. Your stakeholders have to be able to see what AI can do for your organisation.

Your future with AI requires good research, strategy and decision-making. But right now what it requires most is vision. In addition to these practical considerations, focus on the following three areas to drive inspiration for your stakeholders:

- Share successful case studies
- Find effective demos
- Identify the most valuable use cases

The more you can help your colleagues imagine what might be possible with AI, the stronger your foundation will be for realising its true potential.



**Learn how to start
your Copilot journey**

Sources

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