Sumitomo Corporation Microsoft 365 Copilot

IMPLEMENTED 2024 ONWARDS · PROFESSIONAL SERVICES · JAPAN · BAND D · CLAIMED ONLY

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The Japanese trading company gave Microsoft 365 Copilot to about 9,000 employees at once in April 2024. It reports 90% monthly active use and savings it values at about 1.2 billion yen a year, calculated from a staff survey.

ABOUT THIS SYNOPSIS

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Facts and figures are as reported by the sources listed below, which may be incomplete, self-reported or out of date. Check the original source before relying on any figure.

The impact band, proof marker and SEAM view are MarLuc's opinion. The organisation is not a MarLuc client and has not reviewed or endorsed this synopsis. Names and trademarks belong to their owners.

NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI used: Generative AI assistant embedded in office software: Microsoft 365 Copilot.

Implemented: 2024 onwards. Grade: band D, Task support, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: About 1.2 billion yen a year in estimated savings and 90% monthly active users, by Sumitomo Corporation's account

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 2 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

Sumitomo Corporation. Japanese general trading and investment company (sogo shosha). The rollout covered about 9,000 employees, including overseas group companies. Canvas block: 5. People and skills. Also 4. Operations and process, 6. Data and technology.

Business challenge

The challenge. The IT Planning & Promotion Department wanted generative AI to become as routine as a PC or smartphone, so that routine work could be left to it and staff could focus on more creative work.

How it was addressed. Sumitomo Corporation chose Microsoft 365 Copilot because it works

Who implemented it

Microsoft (Software vendor): Supplied Microsoft 365 Copilot.
In-house (In-house): IT Planning & Promotion Department: led the rollout, training and champion network.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T2 Embedded AI in existing software. Deployment: Vendor SaaS. Vendors and products: Microsoft, Microsoft 365 Copilot.

Where it was built in: Inside Microsoft 365 applications such as Teams and Outlook, drawing on data stored in applications and the cloud.

What changed

Before: tasks such as summarising email, drafting replies, comparing contracts and analysing financial statements were done by hand. After: staff use Copilot for them; one employee says tasks that used to take hours now take about 30 seconds. Work processes and roles are unchanged in the sources. [1] [2]

What it cost

Not reported

What it saved

December 2024: 10,560 hours a month saved, valued at about 1.2 billion yen a year, by the company's survey-based estimate. The Japanese version of the same page gives about 10,000 hours. [1] [2]

Governance and control

The IT Planning & Promotion Department leads the rollout in stages, with Copilot Champions as ambassadors, by the company's account. Usage policy, data protection controls and checks on output quality: Not reported.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
The IT Planning & Promotion Department leads the rollout in stages, by the company's account. [1]

A1 · Safe use · Claimed
Training sessions and seminars teach staff how to use Copilot; a usage policy is not reported. [1]

A2 · Human in the loop · Not reported
Not reported.

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Claimed
Time saved and active users are tracked, by the company's account; output quality checks are not reported. [1] [2]

A4 · Vendor AI · Not reported
Not reported.

A5 · Agent controls · Not reported
No agents described.

A6 · Standards and regulation · Not reported
Not reported.

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– Adoption: about 90% monthly active users and nearly 2,000 daily users, by the company's account.

– Peer champions and unit-level training, by the company's account.

DID NOT

– Not reported

UNPROVEN

– Whether the estimated time saving shows up in costs or output; it is calculated from a staff survey.

– Quality of Copilot output in contract and financial analysis.

– Progress of the Forest Resources unit's DX Working Group ideas, which the unit says are not yet in full operation.

Timeline

Apr 2024 Microsoft 365 Copilot rolled out to about 9,000 employees at once, including overseas group companies [1]

Dec 2024 Estimated time saved reaches 10,560 hours a month; Forest Resources unit runs mandatory basic training [1]

Mar 2025 Forest Resources unit retreat presents group ideas for Copilot use [1]

Oct 2025 Monthly active users reach about 90% [1]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: Not applicable. Grade: D, Task support. Proof: Claimed only. Level of change: Task support.

Task support (Level 1, band D). Employees do the same work with an AI assistant; savings are estimated from a survey.

Employees do the same work with an AI assistant; the saving is an estimate of time valued at labour cost; budgets and headcount are unchanged in the sources.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

The rollout focused on people: champions, training and letting staff find their own uses. Reported adoption is high. The value figure is a survey-based estimate of time, priced at labour cost, so it shows potential capacity; cash savings are not reported. A larger organisation copying this should decide in advance how freed time will be used and measured.

1. Recruit peer champions to spread use across departments.
2. State how time savings are calculated whenever you publish them.
3. Decide how freed time will be used before counting it as savings.

Evidence

Score 0 of 4. Self-reported: the company's own interview with its staff, in English and Japanese.

Evaluation method. Self-reported company figures: survey-based estimate of time saved per action, multiplied by actions and labour cost.

Sources disagree. The English page gives 10,560 hours saved a month in December 2024; the Japanese version of the same interview gives about 10,000 hours.

Status. Ongoing: in use across the company, with 90% monthly active users in October 2025, by the company's account.

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/sumitomo-corporation-microsoft-365-copilot

[1] Sumitomo Corporation (Enriching+): Cost Reduction Effect Estimated at Around 1.2 Billion Yen Annually: Sumitomo Corporation's Frontline Use of Generative AI (4 November 2025)
https://www.sumitomocorp.com/en/jp/enrich/contents/0095

[2] □□□□ (Enriching+): □□□□□□□□□□□□12□□□□□□□□□AI□□□□□□ (4 November 2025, Japanese)
https://www.sumitomocorp.com/ja/jp/enrich/contents/0095

Sumitomo Corporation website: https://www.sumitomocorp.com

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