BCN

The C-Suite's Guide to Microsoft 365 Copilot

Get ready to transform
your business with AI –
or get left behind

Microsoft
Solutions Partner

Microsoft Cloud

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Introduction

"4 in 5 executives say generative AI will change employee roles and skills."

IBM

Unless you've been operating in the dark, you'll have had conversations over recent months about AI.

Many see it as the instigator of a fourth industrial revolution. Tech leaders say it will have a bigger impact on the world than mobile phones or the internet. Spending on the technology is rapidly accelerating across the board.

You might be intrigued, excited, nervous or sceptical – but whatever your views, AI is here and it will disrupt your business, whether you're ready for it or not.

The rewards for the pioneering organisations who take an early lead are significant – turbocharged productivity; first-mover competitive advantage; greater appeal in a crowded recruitment market – while for those who wait, there's a very real risk of falling behind.

With the launch of Microsoft 365 Copilot, Microsoft is bringing the power of AI into the business mainstream – putting the technology directly into the hands of its users.

Because it knows how businesses use its M365 apps, it knows how to employ AI to make them more efficient. And by making its apps more efficient, it promises to do the same for your organisation – driving greater value from your employees, your business processes and your decision making.

This guide is designed to help you understand three things:

— how to harness the power of AI for your business through Microsoft 365 Copilot
— the steps your organisation must take to get ready for its deployment
— how to maximise the potential of Copilot and AI to support your future growth.

What is generative AI and why should you have it in your business?

> "10.8% of employees have tried ChatGPT in the workplace at least once and 4.7% of employees have inputted confidential corporate data into the platform."
>
> Cyberhaven, June 2023

To understand the value of MS Copilot, it's important to understand the recent progression path of generative AI.

You may be familiar with tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney, which use Large Language Models (LLMs) to generate original content. At a simple level, LLMs involve training algorithms to understand and mimic patterns of data to create realistic versions of human outputs, such as images, music or copy. In short, they understand what we say and respond in a human manner.

Using generative AI, companies can create a myriad of useful content, from marketing communications, to product prototypes, customer service responses and brand designs. It can even help with detecting fraud.

But while generative AI tools like ChatGPT are already proving their value in the workplace, they're not without their drawbacks.

As a business leader, it's important to note that a large share of your workforce are already likely to be using AI tools to improve the way they work – and many of them could be uploading your confidential company information into them.

Without the correct security measures in place, this activity could leave you open to copyright infringement and even cyber attacks, with financial and reputational damage a very real possibility.

The case for Copilot – Microsoft's version of AI

Microsoft has invested hundreds of $billions bringing the power of AI to businesses.

Its offer starts with a base generic capability open to all of its Microsoft 365 users via Bing Chat – a ChatGPT style service that allows users to provide content prompts and access OpenAI LLM capabilities much in the same way as they would with ChatGPT, but without sharing your data externally.

But it's with Copilot that Microsoft is delivering a hugeleap in business AI.

First of all, it's important to note that 'Copilot' is a general term that Microsoft has coined for all of its AI assistants, that will eventually be made available across all of its applications.

Examples of Copilots outside of Microsoft 365 include Windows Copilot, Power Platform Copilot, Microsoft Dynamics 365 Copilot, and Power BI Copilot.

With Microsoft 365 Copilot specifically, Microsoft has created a centralised AI and workflow engine, which forms a secure productivity hub for your business. It integrates the Microsoft Graph and AI LLMs with the M365 application portfolio, working alongside your employees to generate relevant answers and assistance in your business context.

Imagine a tool that taps into your data – including your calendar, emails, chats, documents and meetings – to free you and your employees from menial tasks and the drudgery of repetitive work. That's the potential power of Copilot.

— **In Teams**: Copilot can summarise your meetings, capture the main points and actions discussed, and even link to other M365 apps like Planner to create project plans on the fly;

— **In Word**: Copilot can create draft content for you based on basic prompts. So articles, contracts, job descriptions and presentation materials can be produced in seconds, that draw on earlier documents and your usual written approach;

— **In Outlook:** Copilot can prioritise the most important messages in your inbox, summarise long email threads and even draft replies, adapting to your writing style;

— **In Powerpoint**: it can create a draft deck, converting text in Word into a presentation, suggesting suitable supporting images and animations, and even generating speaker notes;

— **In Excel**: Copilot can generate formula column suggestions, show insights in charts and pivot tables, identify trends and even highlight interesting points of data.

"It's going to give everyone a superpower they've never had before."

John Friedman, corporate vice president of design and research at Microsoft on Copilot

Secure by design

Because Copilot is integrated into Microsoft 365 it inherits all of your company's security, compliance, and privacy policies – so you can be sure that anything uploaded to, or created by Copilot that taps into your company data, will remain within your business.

Furthermore, Microsoft has committed to working with AI responsibly and reinforcing its AI security principles.

AI security principles

Secure **by design** and secure **by fault**

Your data is **your data**

Your data is **not used to train AI models** without your permission

Rigorous **Responsible AI** practices

[As a signatory to the Microsoft Partner Pledge, BCN will follow Microsoft's responsible AI principles.]

Microsoft 365 Copilot: good for your business, good for your people

"On average, 87% of executives expect job roles to be augmented, rather than replaced, by generative AI."

IBM

For ambitious businesses, we're entering the era of the augmented workforce – where employees and AI work hand-in-hand to unleash creativity, unlock productivity, and uplevel skills.

Microsoft 365 Copilot has the potential to release thousands of hours back to your business, by freeing your people from repetitive tasks to focus on higher value work.

Importantly, because it is embedded into the Microsoft 365 apps they use every day, Copilot provides an intuitive and consistent user experience that your people will recognise. No need for heavy integration, and no extensive training on a brand new platform.

Instead, they're working with more powerful versions of the tools they already know – maximising the investment you've already made.

It can elevate your entire workforce to the level of your higher performing employees as Copilot handles the day-to-day tasks that drain their time, and it could even help with recruitment and retention, releasing capacity in your existing teams, while giving them more interesting work and equipping them with new, in-demand AI skills.

In the medium to longer term, the businesses that invest in their employees with the best tech possible, enabling them to focus on the tasks they want to do, will win out in tighter recruitment markets.

Securing buy-in for M365 Copilot from your business

The benefits of Copilot for your frontline M365 users are clear; vastly improved productivity, the opportunity to develop new AI skills, and a focus on more interesting work.

But you, or your wider team may have concerns that we answer here.

Far from taking jobs, AI will create a new way of working.

According to a global Microsoft survey 68% of people say that with the weight of their work hours spent communicating – via email, meetings and instant messaging – they don't have enough uninterrupted focus time during the day. And a lack of focus time means a lack of innovation, breakthrough ideas, and productivity.

With AI and Microsoft 365 Copilot, these communication burdens – and their detrimental impact on energy and interest can be lifted.

Meetings can be treated as a digital record rather than a point in time. Copilot can provide intelligent meeting recaps and recordings, to reduce FOMO and release time for more valuable activity. Email threads can be summarised and responded to in seconds. Actions can be captured and assigned without the need for human follow up.

And employees are excited about the possibilities.

Though there is some concern amongst employees about AI replacing their jobs, far more are eager to use its potential to lessen their workloads.

According to Microsoft's survey, 76% would be comfortable using AI for administrative tasks, 79% would use it for analytical work, and 73% would employ it for creative work.

"It's fascinating that people are more excited about AI rescuing them from burnout than they are about it eliminating their jobs."

Adam Grant, author and organizational psychology professor

Don't wait for your competitors to make the first move.

The market is already moving, fast. According to the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report, AI is expected to be adopted by nearly 75% of surveyed companies by 2027 (while according to an Accenture survey, as many as 98% of global executives expect AI foundation models to play an important role in their organisation's strategies within the next three to five years.)

The winners, say WEF, will be the businesses that embrace AI and upskill their employees to use the technology.

Future of jobs

Human-machine frontier

Proportion of tasks completed by humans vs machines:

2022

Machines	Humans
34%	66%

2027

Machines	Humans
43%	57%

● Machines   ● Humans
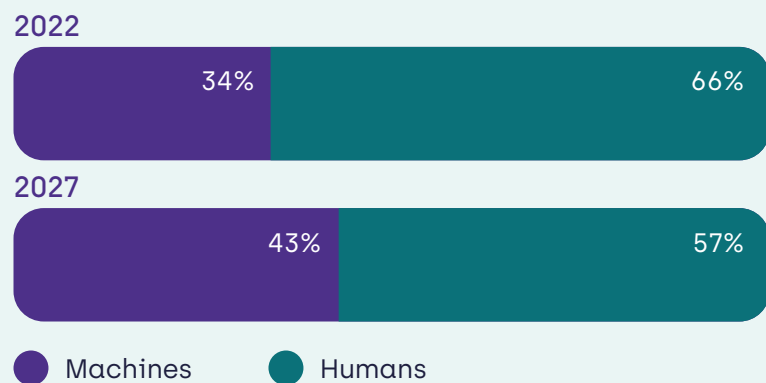
The $30 licence fee will be repaid many times over.

Copilot costs $30 per user licence per month – a cost that will be recouped many times over in terms of the productivity savings it introduces to your business.

Ask yourself, would you pay $30 per month for your employees to produce high quality work in half the time? To spend their time on more commercially valuable activity? Learn new skills twice as fast, and produce presentations and documents in a fraction of the time?

It's also important to note that not every M365 user will need a Copilot licence from day one (and in fact, by trialling the technology with a handful of licences to begin with, it's possible to assess its value and understand where else it could be deployed and customised to work most effectively for you.)

ut aside from the productivity gains, the price of Copilot is the price of peace of mind. Copilot is the secure way to introduce AI to your business – your data remains firmly within your walls and is properly managed at all times. Because it's trained on your data and provides more contextual responses, it's both a better fit, and a safer way to integrate AI into your organisation.

Trust the technology.

AI is nothing new – you've been trusting the technology for many years via tools like Alexa, chatbots, online shopping recommendations and facial recognition on your phone.

Because Copilot draws its responses from your data, there's a higher chance they'll be correct. But as with all new tech, you'll probably prefer to check the results it generates to begin with, then, as you see the accuracy of the results, learn to trust it more.

62%
total time spent for
language tasks

65%
of this time could be
transformed into more
productive activity

"Language tasks
account for 62% of the
total time employees
work. 65% of this time
could be transformed
into more productive
activity through
augmentation and
automation."

A new era of generative AI for
everyone, Accenture

Power up your individual departments.

M365 Copilot has the potential to improve productivity across your business, but here are some potential use cases for your different departments and users:

Marketing: Copilot can be used to generate content ideas, produce draft articles, promotional materials and creative concepts, improve customer communications, and analyse the success of campaigns more quickly.

HR: With Copilot, HR teams can quickly create job adverts and descriptions, produce employee communications, streamline onboarding and employee development, summarise employee performance against KPIs, and analyse recruitment and retention patterns.

Sales: With Copilot, your sales team can quickly gather research on prospect companies, create draft proposals, provide breakdowns of sales by type and channel, and automate outbound sales communications.

Finance and Legal: Copilot can be used to create draft contracts and cost proposals, automate data entry and compliance checks, and explore and analyse your important business data.

YOU: With Copilot you can get a better handle on what's happening across your organisation, while freeing your time to focus on strategic projects.

With the summarising capabilities of Copilot you can avoid unnecessary meetings, clear your inbox in minutes, access business critical data across your departments, and produce board reports on the fly.

Get your foundations in place.

Before installing M365 Copilot it's important to begin with an audit of your existing data governance and security.

Permissions – 'just enough access'. Because Copilot will draw on any data its users have permission to access, it's vital that you lock these permissions down in advance of deployment [BCN can run a Sharepoint Permissions Audit and other security checks to better understand these settings.] Ensure your data is in the right place on your server and is classified correctly to restrict access to any sensitive information.

Data governance – the effectiveness of Copilot will depend on the data sources that are indexed by M365. An abundance of data will mean better results. Incorrect or incomplete data will mean lower accuracy.
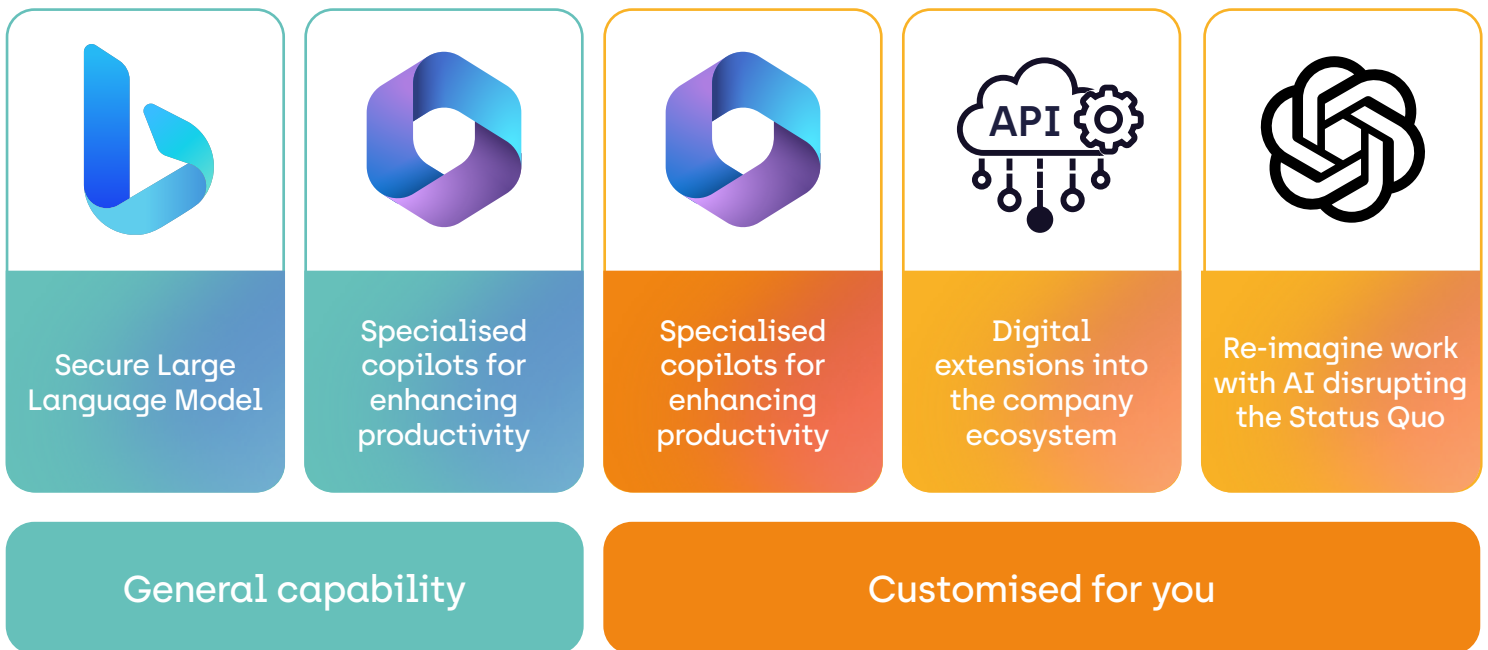
Security – Copilot aligns to the privacy and security policies you have in place. Review your cyber security in advance of deployment to ensure your M365 environment is set up in the correct way.
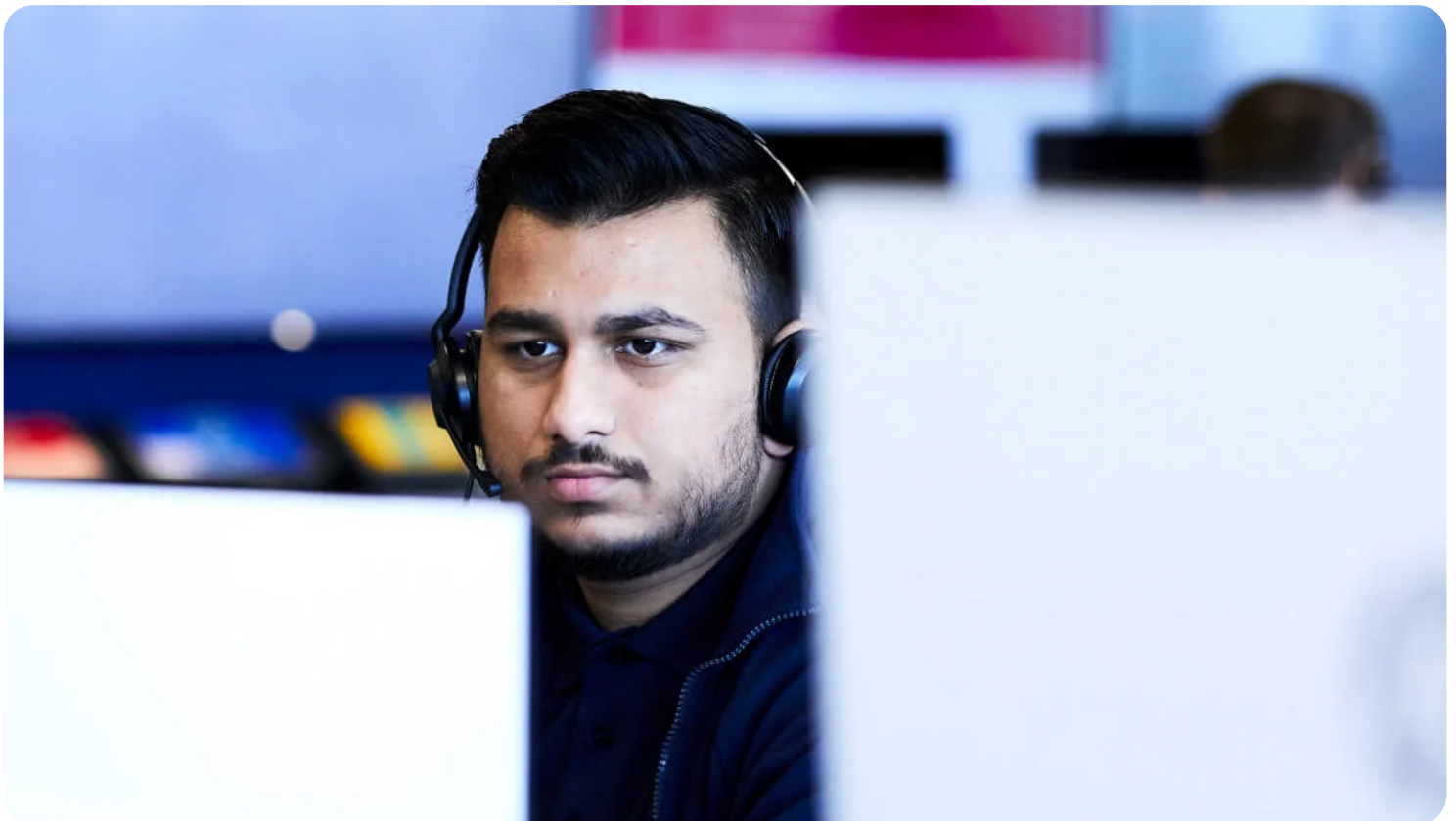
Where AI and Copilot can take your business

68% of large companies, 33% of medium-sized companies, and 15% of small companies have incorporated at least one AI technology AI activity in UK businesses, UK Government

Microsoft's approach to AI is to provide a base, generic capability to everyone, then layer in more complex AIs that can reach further into your business ecosystem.

Secure Large Language Model	Specialised copilots for enhancing productivity	Specialised copilots for enhancing productivity	Digital extensions into the company ecosystem	Re-imagine work with AI disrupting the Status Quo

General capability

Customised for you

Once your business is used to using Bing Chat, and Copilot has been configured into your day-to-day work via Microsoft 365, it's time to think about the art of the possible – and how you can take full advantage of AI to support your business's growth.

One off projects can embed Copilot into your broader Microsoft suite, including Business Central, Power Apps, Power BI and more, while custom built LLM applications could take you beyond Copilot into unique automations and use cases for your specific business processes.

Our Microsoft 365 User's AI Strategy Guide, which includes a roadmap for implementation in your business, is available on request

Map out your journey

You may not yet have a plan for AI in your business until you've tried it out with M365 Copilot – and choosing a user group and trialling the technology with a handful of licences will certainly begin to reveal its value. However, it's important to think about your medium to longer term strategy – where AI can provide the most help across your organisation; where its focus should be; and where you're willing to invest to maximise its potential.

BCN is uniquely placed to help introduce AI across your business.

As a Microsoft Solutions Partner for Microsoft Cloud, our relationship with Microsoft gives us access to its wide range of capabilities and new technology.

With our data scientists and full stack development team, we can help develop your future AI roadmap and customise Copilot for your business, creating brand new, AI infused applications to bring the power of automation to different functions across your organisation.
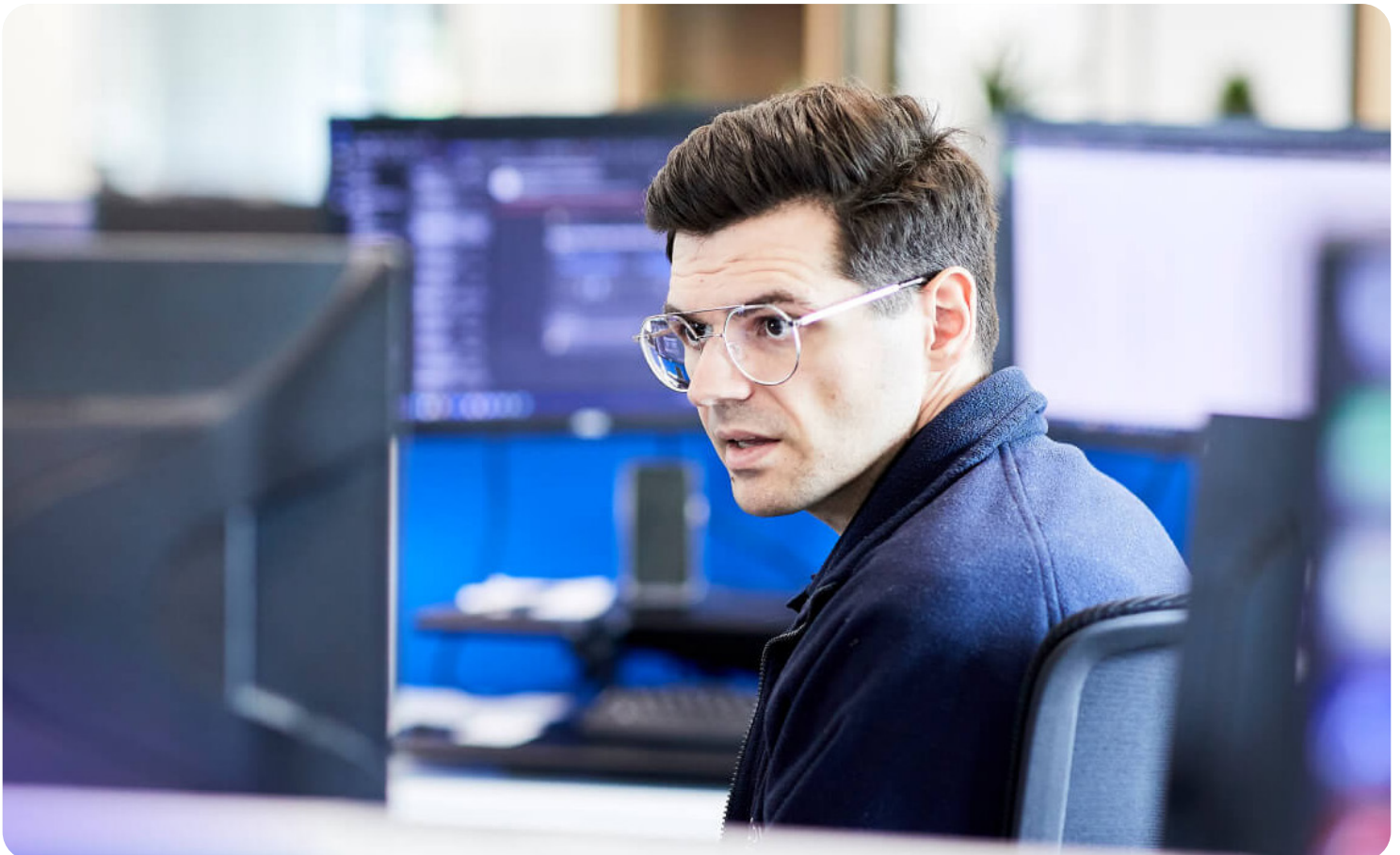
Are you ready to explore the potential of AI and Microsoft Copilot for your business?

Let's talk about how we can help you take your business to the next level with Copilot.

Get in touch

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