CASE STUDY

JCI MINING – WORKING FASTER, SMARTER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY WITH MICROSOFT 365 COPILOT

2025

CUSTOMER SUMMARY

JCI Mining is a leading opencast mining contractor based in Middelburg, Mpumalanga, South Africa. The company operates primarily in the coal mining sector, supplying Eskom power stations, and producing export-quality coal for international markets. Known for its extensive use of yellow metal equipment, JCI Mining is committed to operational excellence, efficiency, and cost control across its multiple sites. With a growing footprint and a forward-thinking approach, the company has long recognised the importance of robust operational and financial management systems to support its continued growth.

CHALLENGES

In pursuit of enhanced productivity, JCI Mining explored the potential of Microsoft 365 Copilot through 4Sight's structured 5-day workshop. Having previously engaged with 4Sight regarding Sage solutions, the company was intrigued by the possibilities Copilot could offer. Following strategic discussions and recommendations from 4Sight, two people, their Maintenance and Reliability Manager and a Mining Engineer initiated a trial of Microsoft 365 Copilot. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, particularly from the Mining Engineer who identified future applications for the tool. Upon completion of the trial, JCI Mining concluded that Copilot was a viable solution. A year later, they affirm that its capabilities have significantly evolved.

SOLUTION

Initially, JCI Mining utilised Microsoft 365 Copilot primarily within Outlook to summarise emails, identify missed communications, and enhance email responses using the coaching feature. They also experimented with Excel for data analysis, cleansing, and visualisation, noting that while integration was still developing, the functionality was promising. In Word, Copilot was used to draft policies, providing a solid foundation for documentation. Additionally, they successfully created PowerPoint presentations from Word documents, demonstrating effective content and visual generation. Copilot was also tested for online prompting, with satisfactory accuracy in information retrieval.

The Mining Engineer, involved in tendering processes, found Copilot beneficial for improving productivity. Following the trial's success, JCI Mining implemented three Microsoft 365 Copilot licenses, including one for their Engineering Manager. From the outset, the engagement with 4Sight was marked by professionalism and expertise. Each session was insightful, with the 4Sight team clearly articulating potential use cases and demonstrating forward-thinking capabilities.

OUTCOMES

Microsoft 365 Copilot has empowered the team to craft more professional and structured emails. The coaching feature in Outlook has been instrumental in transforming basic drafts into comprehensive communications. Copilot's integration with Office Apps ensures contextual feedback aligned with ongoing tasks. Although Excel usage is limited within operations, Copilot aids in generating simplified reports complementing existing Sage and Maintenance systems.

In Word, drafting policies and standard operating procedures has become more efficient, including the creation of a departmental training proposal from minimal input. PowerPoint presentations, complete with content and visuals, were easily generated from Word documents, proving invaluable under tight deadlines.

On the automation front, JCI Mining has begun leveraging Copilot with Power Automate to streamline processes. One notable use case involves automating the monthly task of attaching and sending equipment hour files via email. Previously a weekly manual task, it is now performed daily with minimal effort, saving approximately one hour per day. This includes exporting data from maintenance systems, updating Excel sheets, and automating email distribution.

From a business perspective, Microsoft 365 Copilot delivers substantial value. Its ability to automate routine tasks and enhance productivity justifies the license cost through significant time savings per employee.

FUTURE

Looking ahead, JCI Mining plans to explore video conferencing enhancements via Teams, leveraging Copilot to record sessions, maintain accurate minutes, and track action items. They also envision integrating Power BI with Copilot to consolidate data from various sources, supported by Power Automate for data refreshes. This will facilitate comprehensive data analysis and visualisation across the business, such as monthly expense tracking.
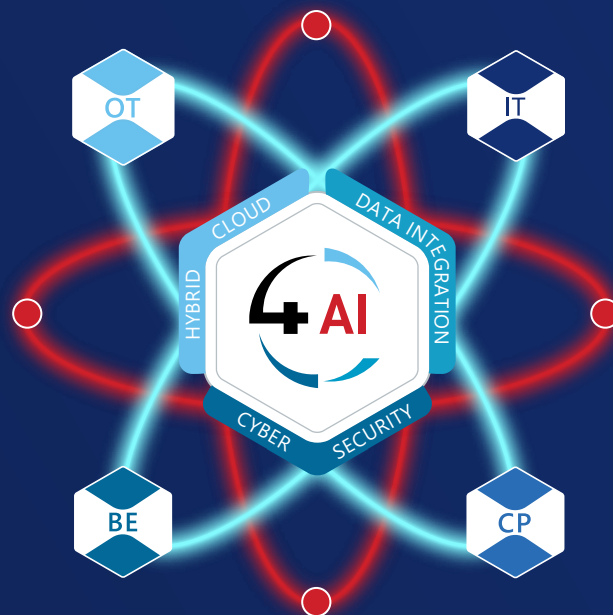
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