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Case Study

OPTUS

Enabling developers at Optus with generative AI

Do what matters

Leading Australian telecommunications company, Optus, sought an opportunity within the generative AI (gen AI) landscape to help its developers automate routine tasks and free them up to take on potentially more cognitively demanding and fulfilling work.

The DevEx team from Optus partnered with Accenture and Avanade - a joint venture between Accenture and Microsoft - to roll out GitHub Copilot, an AI pair programmer, to a cohort of 400 developers at the company.

The key features of Optus' rollout were:

- Aligning GitHub Copilot's contextualized assistance with Optus' core engineering principles
- A hands-on, customized training course
- A reporting framework to monitor GitHub Copilot's impact
- Establishing a champions network to help train the next set of users, increase utilization and provide feedback

Driving innovation: Optimizing engineering with AI tools

As part of a strategy to enable its workforce with gen AI capabilities, the DevEx team within Optus conducted a trial for Microsoft's GitHub Copilot with a small group of developers. GitHub Copilot can help developers with code completions, generating unit tests and documentation, assistance with code reviews and refactoring, and troubleshooting errors. The trial results were positive, with an approximately 20% time savings, which developers were able to re-invest into other areas such as reducing technical debt while improving their productivity and experience.

Optus then partnered with Accenture and Avanade on a 10-week engagement to plan and assist with the rollout of GitHub Copilot to the initial cohort of 400 developers, with an aim to eventually scale up to 700 users. This initial cohort included a mix of engineering personas, including front-end, mobile, back-end and platform engineers.

Our rollout approach included:

- Aligning GitHub Copilot with Optus' engineering principles and embedding necessary guardrails. For example, one of the Optus engineering principles is "We cover all changes with automated tests, responsibly." In line with this principle, training focused on enabling developers to generate unit tests for new and existing code using GitHub Copilot. Likewise, an example of a guardrail was the enterprise-wide tool configuration to block any code suggestions that matched public code.

Company Name: Optus

Country: Australia

Company Size: ~7,500 employees

Industry: Communications

Solution: Github Copilot

- Providing hands-on training sessions to every onboarded user, which included a code repository with examples to practice with. This training framework ensured Optus could customize and evolve the training as required for future cohorts. It also empowered trainees to easily refer back to materials.
- Building a reporting framework that can be utilized to monitor both engagement and impact.
 - Login data and acceptance rate of suggestions were captured using GitHub Copilot APIs to establish adoption and monthly active usage (MAU) metrics. This helped the team understand engagement with GitHub Copilot.
 - To measure impact, metrics were sourced from existing source code, CI/CD and code quality tooling at Optus, for both historical (6 months) and ongoing.
- Training an internal cohort of GitHub Copilot champions to help with the rollout after the Accenture and Avanade engagement. While we focused on equipping the champions with the ability to train future cohorts, Optus is now leveraging this network to improve utilization by demonstrating use cases and providing the DevEx team with user feedback.

"Optus has remained true to its commitment to tech innovation and engineering excellence. Together, we actioned on that commitment with a human-centred rollout approach, ensuring that the developers at Optus are equipped with the tool and training resources, while the business has a view of the tool's impact in uplifting the developer experience."

– Rucha Sawant
APAC Applications and Infrastructure Lead, Avanade

Achieving what matters: Improving developer experience

After the initial rollout, Optus measured satisfaction for GitHub Copilot in their quarterly survey for developers, resulting in an average CSAT scoring of 66, with 20% of the teams scoring 100.

"GitHub Copilot has helped me stay in the deep zone, boosting my productivity at work. I don't switch out of my IDE to Google/Stack Overflow anymore to ideate or search when I'm stuck."

– Principal Engineer, Optus

Additionally, an engineering leader mentioned that his teams are reporting an improved developer experience by using GitHub Copilot, and he is excited to explore further utilization scenarios for his teams, including helping learn new coding languages and applying frameworks.

This has been just the start. The DevEx team at Optus has been working on improving developer experience by helping teams prioritize multiple DevEx drivers, such as fostering an environment in which developers can focus on cognitively demanding tasks with minimized interruptions, improving internal documentation, and increasing test coverage to give developers more confidence as they change code.

GitHub Copilot can help enable these outcomes and we believe that our rollout approach has laid the foundations for Optus to continue leveraging the tool to further improve developer experience.

About Optus

As one of the largest telecommunications companies in Australia, Optus provides mobile, telephony, internet, satellite, entertainment and business network services to more than 10 million customers each day. The Optus mobile network reaches 98.5% of the Australian population, and it is committed to constantly delivering new technologies that will connect more Australians to their friends, families and businesses. <https://www.optus.com.au/> .

About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud services, business solutions and design-led experiences on the Microsoft ecosystem. With 43,000 professionals in 25 countries, we are the power behind the Accenture Microsoft Business Group, helping companies to engage customers, empower employees, optimize operations and transform products, leveraging the Microsoft platform. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. **Learn more at www.avanade.com.**

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