

Only 26% of employees are getting the most from Microsoft 365

Here's how to change that.

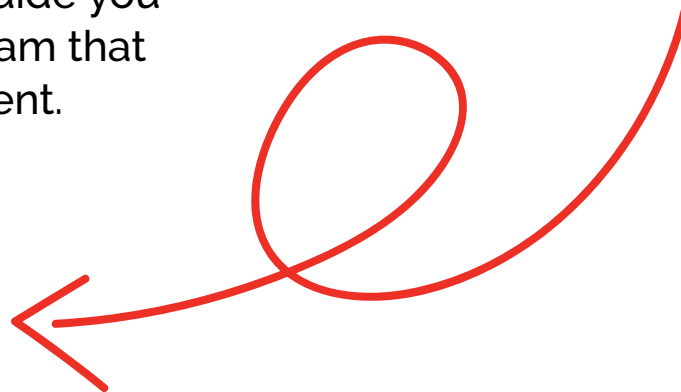
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Microsoft's 365 productivity suite includes an impressive and comprehensive set of products and features aimed at enabling people to improve communication and collaboration. **However, old habits are getting in the way, and 74% of employees are not getting the full benefit of the tools.** We'll show you how 136,000 people use M365 for collaboration and communication in real life. Using this data, and insights, we'll guide you on how to design a digital literacy program that delivers a substantial return on investment.

Most people do not use M365 well



In [SWOOP Analytics' latest M365 & Microsoft Teams Benchmarking Report](#) we analysed digital behaviours across Outlook email, Microsoft Teams meetings and calls, Microsoft Teams chat and channel messages, SharePoint and OneDrive files, and Viva Engage posts, comments and replies. We found **most people use M365 far less than what most would assume**. This sparked our interest in looking more closely at how people are using M365 to collaborate and communicate, and what can be done to improve this.

The table below shows seven core collaboration and communication activities in M365 that a person can perform. They have been selected because they are activities initiated by an individual person. For example, “emails sent” was chosen over “emails received”. We have ranked the activity **on a scale between 0-100, split into five levels**. Each level is a range of percentile rankings. For example, at Activity Level 5, we have the top 20% most active people, while at Activity Level 1 we have the 20% least active people.

The table shows the significant difference between the five activity levels, as well as the number of people at each level. The figures are weekly averages.

Activity Per Week	Weekly Activity Level				
	Level 1 (0-20)	Level 2 (21-40)	Level 3 (41-60)	Level 4 (61-80)	Level 5 (81-100)
Emails sent	7.01	8.56	29.19	55.77	74.36
SharePoint files (opened/edited)	0.74	3.28	9.03	15.66	22.48
Microsoft Teams audio hours (calls/meetings)	0.03	0.44	2.27	5.83	8.92
Microsoft Teams chat messages	1.65	17.06	73.47	155.83	243.36
OneDrive files (opened/edited)	0.46	5.25	12.07	19.18	30.88
Microsoft Teams channel post/replies	0.02	0.06	0.20	0.61	1.58
Viva Engage posts/comments/replies	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.31
Population					
Number of people	40,030	25,233	34,840	29,295	6,916
Percentage of people	29%	19%	26%	21%	5%

The activity data in the table is based on the M365 Usage Reports collected and processed with [SWOOP Analytics for M365](#) and is for 180 days. The data is presented as a weekly average and covers a total of 136,314 people.

Let’s start at each end of the scale (high activity at Level 4/5 versus low activity at level 1/2) and then look at the middle (Level 3).

Most active people

(Activity Levels 4 and 5)



People at Activity Level 4 and 5 are using all the collaboration tools and use them intensively. An average person sends 50-75 emails, spends 6-9 hours in Microsoft Teams meetings/calls and accesses 50 files in SharePoint/OneDrive per week. This person is active across all seven collaboration activity types. 21% are found in Level 4, **but just 5% in Level 5.**

People on Level 4 and 5, which make up 26% in total, have good digital literacy when it comes to using M365. When you spend many hours a week in calls/meetings you'll start to explore the rich functionality available such as the whiteboard feature, screen-sharing with sound, trying out different meeting types etc. I would suggest the same applies to all the other areas of M365.



This cohort only needs a smaller amount of education about new features, and they'll pick it up if it is of value to them.

Least active people

(Activity Levels 1 and 2)



At the opposite end, we find Activity Level 1 and 2 are people who use the collaboration features little. At Level 1 a person sends seven emails, one Microsoft Teams chat message and opens one file in SharePoint or OneDrive per week. **29% of people can be found here!**

People in Activity Level 2 (19%) are starting to show a bit more use of M365, and what drives up their use is Microsoft Teams chat and OneDrive. There is a 10-fold increase in Microsoft Teams chat messages and OneDrive files. The latter is not surprising, since the files shared in chat messages are stored in OneDrive. The meeting activity is less than half an hour per week.

Level 1 and 2 totals 48% of people, or in other words almost half. You can characterise the use of M365 as very limited with a focus on one-to-one interactions (email, chat). There is almost no use of Microsoft Teams channels and Viva Engage.

Are the low activity levels due to M365 not being relevant to these employees? To dive deeper into that we performed a job title analysis for the 65,000 people

in our sample who make up Levels 1 and 2, and we expected to find the majority to be related to non-desk-based roles in production, factory and maintenance where the use of M365 is often limited to breaks, if at all. However, only 10% of the job titles we found could be aligned with frontline roles. The 10% included job titles like Production Worker, Maintenance Mechanic and Operations Associate.

For the remaining 90% of people in Levels 1 and 2, M365 would appear to be highly relevant to get the job done. These job titles were, for example, Business Consultant, Financial Analyst, Application Development Senior Analyst, IT Security Consultant, Software Engineer, Electrical Engineer, Data Engineer, Administrative Assistant, Project Coordinator, and Project Manager.

Today they spend little, or no, time in M365, so we should assume their knowledge is limited – at best - to the basic functions of sending a message to a colleague, storing a file and joining a meeting. Lifting their digital literacy may not be needed if their work doesn't require the use of M365, but if their work could benefit from it, we have a massive opportunity to deliver business value.



In other words, most people who fall in Levels 1 and 2 seem to be relevant for M365 usage, however, they aren't using it much and are unlikely to get more value from M365 without help. They need to be 'sold' the benefits and hear from others how their working life is made easier with M365.

The middle people

(Activity Level 3)



People at Level 3 make up 26% of people in our sample. They send 29 emails, are in Microsoft Teams calls/meetings for two hours, and send 72 chat messages per week.



Just like the people in Level 1 and 2, our Level 3 cohort is yet to discover how effective it is for a team to collaborate in a Microsoft Teams channel, or take part in cross-organisational communities on Viva Engage.

If we add the Level 1, 2 and 3 together they represent a whopping 74% of people, which means we have significant opportunities to use M365 better to collaborate and communicate. Unless this improves, you are incurring a lot of cost without reaping the benefits. I would even go as far as saying that organisations cannot work effectively in a hybrid work setup with these usage

characteristics. Hybrid work requires intensive use of M365 for intra-team, cross-team and cross-organisational collaboration. Relying on email and chat for this is destined for failure.



The good news is that even small initiatives can have an outsized impact on efficiency and engagement. For instance, at **NZ Post** an email with a daily report tracking all packages sent across the country was replaced with a post in a Microsoft Teams channel. The result was immediate, with a reduction of literally hundreds of emails each day, and everyone in the team has full access to the conversation and each and every reply.



At **CityFibre**, the UK's largest builder of independent full-fibre infrastructure, its Sales team uncovered significant opportunities working in Microsoft Teams channels. An entire team purposely moved away from Microsoft Teams chat to a common Teams channel structure that is now serving 80 account management teams. This enables every employee at CityFibre who has a question about a particular customer account to go to the Microsoft Teams channel, learn what they need to know and ask questions of the relevant people.

This seemingly simple shift has been a game changer. Suddenly knowledge isn't lost in chat, never to be seen again, but captured in a Microsoft Teams channel for everyone to reap the benefit. It also eliminates fragmented email chains, and the need to seek out up-to-date information on the status of account activities.



Slight changes in behaviour leads to exceptionally large ROI

One of the major findings in [SWOOP Analytics' M365 Benchmarking Reports](#) was that there is significant return on investment (ROI) to be gained from just small shifts in collaboration practices like those mentioned in the examples above.

For instance, when you replace just one daily email with a message posted to a Microsoft Teams channel or Viva Engage [you'll be saving 11.25 minutes](#). We refer to this as working on becoming more "Email Liberated" (see more further below). Saving 11.25 minutes per day may not sound like a lot, but when you add it all up, we're talking big numbers. The below figures are based on an average hourly wage of \$80.

1,000 people = \$3,841,372 per year saved
5,000 people = \$19,206,862 per year saved
20,000 people = \$76,827,451 per year saved
50,000 people = \$192,068,629 per year saved

As the examples and the ROI numbers show, funding a digital literacy program will deliver very solid results.

It should also be mentioned that any investment in training people in AI (Artificial Intelligence) competencies, which arguably require that people have high digital literacy, might be better suited for the Level 4 and 5 people, and then focus on improving the basic digital literacy skills for the remaining 74%.



Lift digital literacy with SWOOP Analytics

Using SWOOP Analytics' M365 collaboration insights will show your people's collaboration habits on M365 at the individual, team/segment, and enterprise level. It includes **seven collaboration habits** which are all centred around improving collaboration using M365:

- 1. Email Liberated:** Reduce reliance on email by complementing it with Microsoft Teams and Viva Engage.
- 2. Chat Liberated:** Avoid shifting an overreliance on email to an overreliance on chat.
- 3. Asynchronous Collaborator:** Learning to balance meetings with asynchronous interactions in Microsoft Teams and Viva Engage.
- 4. File-sharer:** Balance the use of files in OneDrive ('my files') with SharePoint ('our files').
- 5. Camera Confident:** Meetings where people have the camera on to allow for better reading of non-verbal clues.
- 6. Screen-sharer:** Have meetings where people share the screen.
- 7. Community Contributor:** Balance the use of Microsoft Teams with cross-organisational sharing in Viva Engage.

Each collaboration habit gets a score between 0-100, and an overall Collaboration Score is calculated as an average of all the habit scores. With [SWOOP Analytics for M365](#) you can easily identify and track groups of people, and as you start convincing them about the value, you can track if their usage changes too.



For example, open [SWOOP Analytics for M365](#) and locate the “Segment Comparison” report to see the Collaboration Score of each segment:

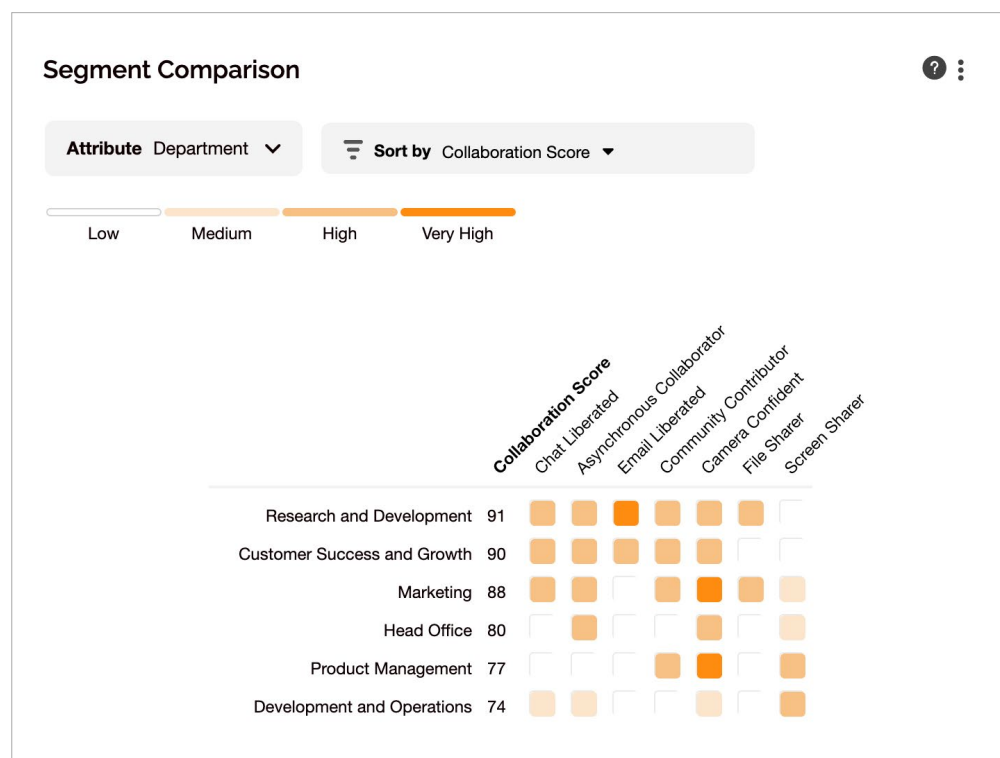


Figure 1- Segment Comparison report in [SWOOP Analytics for M365](#).

You can use this report to find high performing users and get them to help you explain how they use M365, and then invite them to explain the value to others. Likewise, you can identify segments that have lower scores and keep a laser-sharp focus on improving their digital literacy.

Activity Level 1, 2 and 3



Focus the energies on business areas where an increased use of M365 will add value to their work. We know that this is a very substantial percentage of people, and we know they are using M365 irregularly.

The data from SWOOP Analytics would likely show a usage pattern like this:

- **Collaboration Score** in the 20-30 range (26 in the example below)
- Very high reliance on email and chat (**Email Liberated** score of 2 in the example below)
- With **little or no use of Microsoft Teams channels or Viva Engage** (in the example below there were 12 channel messages and 1 Viva Engage message in contrast to 254,903 emails sent!)



Figure 2 – Example Collaboration Score in [SWOOP Analytics for M365](#).

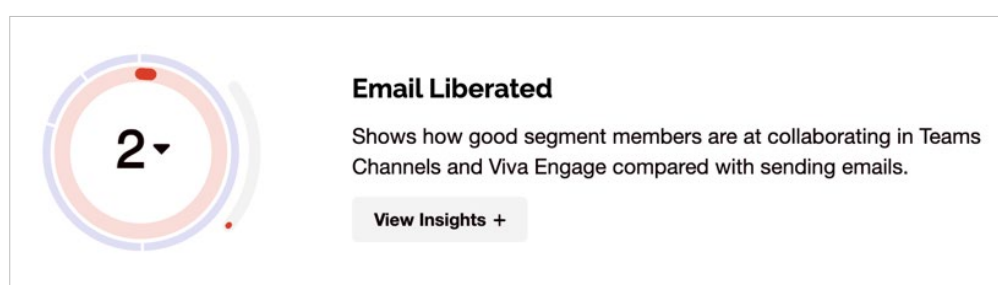


Figure 3 - Example Email Liberated score in [SWOOP Analytics for M365](#).

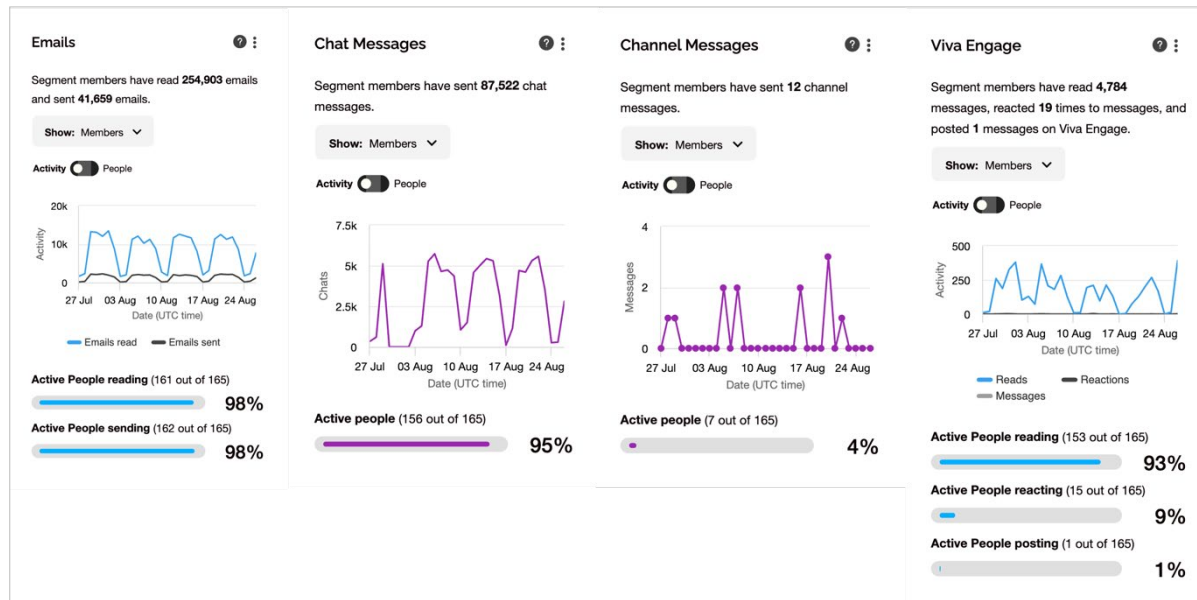


Figure 4 - Example Activity Counts in [SWOOP Analytics for M365](#).

You can clearly see from the SWOOP Analytics data above that this segment of the business could substantially benefit from a digital literacy program. Today, its use is confined to the most basic aspects of collaborating and communicating using the M365 tools. But how do we approach it? Let's explore that.

Start with the value, then training



First explain what's possible and use examples as much as you can. For example, [VHB](#), a US-based engineering, planning, and design firm, made a team commitment to move off email and shift all department communication to Microsoft Teams channels. It streamlined its processes and improved efficiency. For instance, someone needing help on a project received multiple responses within minutes on Microsoft Teams, which would have taken much longer via email.



Similarly, [New Zealand Trade and Enterprise](#), a trade promotion agency, used Microsoft Teams channels to allow employees to work asynchronously across multiple time zones and geographies to deliver a major in-person event in San Francisco. They had started working in email and Microsoft Teams chat but were soon lost in the sheer amount of documentation and conversation. Once they moved their work to a Microsoft Teams channel, all conversations, files, meetings, agendas, minutes and more were easily accessible to everyone in the team no matter where they are located around the world, or what time zone they were working in.

The initial focus is on educating people about the value of working with the M365 suite of tools. Since their usage of M365 is low, you will likely need to complement with training. But here's the critical thing: **Don't rely on individual training.** Collaboration is about working together, so **people who work together need to agree on how they will use M365** for this. Therefore, the training must be at the team level.

Use [SWOOP Analytics for M365](#) to track if your digital literacy program is working. Within a week, you should start to see changes in the usage patterns, and the following month you should see an increase in the collaboration score.

Activity Level 4 and 5



Your target audience here is different to Levels 1, 2 and 3. The Level 4 and 5 people are in M365 all the time. They know the basics of all the tools, so their needs are vastly different, and they will be able to learn more from their peers than from any introduction course.



When smart energy company **Danfoss** introduced a suite of new digital applications across the organisation, people immediately began asking; “What is Planner? What is Forms? What can I do in Forms? Why can’t Forms do this? Why can’t we do that?”. The digital workplace experience team knew Danfoss had many very experienced colleagues who could help answer those questions. This led to setting up what has become a very successful “Smart Worker community” in Viva Engage where people share knowledge and insights about using M365. This peer-to-peer learning is much more effective for people who have the basics covered, but want to go deeper in specific areas.

Instead of investing in tools training, we suggest you will get much higher return on your investment by **teaching people to agree on how they will use the tools as a team**. The challenge is that people have developed their own habits for using M365 that are hard to break. This can lead to chaos when you have people with different habits trying to work together. Working together and agreeing on a team charter that outlines where the team stores files, which channels they use to communicate etc will greatly improve team productivity.



For example, **Cricket Australia**, the national body for the nation’s cricket associations, developed a structured approach to using Microsoft Teams, which has significantly improved its collaboration and communication. Here are some key aspects of how it has agreed on using Microsoft Teams:

- **Defined channels and structure**
Cricket Australia has clearly defined Microsoft teams channels for different topics and functions. For example, its Tech Leadership team has channels for General, Finance, People, Planning, Security and Operations. This structure helps keep discussions organised and ensures that relevant information is easily accessible to team members.

- **Rules for file sharing and communication**

Files relating to teams' work are shared within the team on Microsoft Teams. If an email is sent that pertains to teamwork, it is copied into the team on Teams to maintain a single source of truth. This practice helps reduce email clutter and ensures that all team members have access to the latest information.

- **Accountability and best practices**

Cricket Australia emphasises accountability and adherence to best practices when using Microsoft Teams. If a conversation or file is mistakenly placed in a chat instead of the appropriate channel, team members are encouraged to correct it. This approach fosters a culture of continuous improvement and ensures that Teams is used effectively.

- **Integration with meetings**

Teams run their meetings from the Microsoft Teams channel, rather than through Outlook calendar. This ensures all recordings, files, and discussions remain within the Teams environment, making it easier to track and reference past meetings. It also streamlines the meeting process, as team members can quickly post updates and discuss topics without waiting for formal meetings.

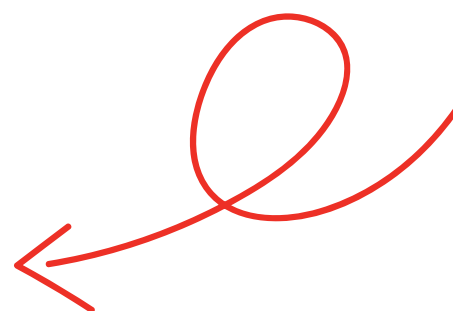
- **Training and support**

Cricket Australia's manager of technology adoption joins other team sites on Teams to provide guidance on best practices and offer advice for areas for improvement to help people make the most of Teams' features.

By implementing these practices, Cricket Australia created a cohesive and efficient digital workspace that enhances collaboration and communication across the organisation. This approach has been particularly beneficial in reducing the need for face-to-face meetings and enabling remote work.

Only with [SWOOP Analytics](#) are you able to target your limited resources where they will have the greatest impact, and measure if your initiatives are working.

Try [SWOOP Analytics for M365](#).
It's the best way to deliver your digital literacy program.



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