



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Delivering high impact Microsoft Teams training in a rapidly changing landscape during COVID-19.

About The Customer

The McCurrach Group's purpose is clear and concise - to help brands sell more. With 120 years of experience, McCurrach have grown into a multi-brand, multi-service sales and marketing agency working with household names such as Microsoft, Nespresso and Unilever to deliver Field Marketing, Data and Digital Products, Experiential and Consultancy services.



With over 1200 employees across the UK, Ireland and moving into Europe, McCurrach is an agile and future-thinking organisation, something which has been emphasised through their recent rebrand. Over the last five years, McCurrach have had a clear strategy to move to the cloud, deploying key productivity services across Microsoft 365, alongside deploying their EPOS analytics solution DART into Microsoft Azure.

Identifying The Problem

In a similar situation to most organisations, McCurrach had to move their 1200 staff to fully remote working with no notice during to the COVID-19 pandemic, closing their Glasgow city centre head office and shifting close knit teams across their business units to home working. This introduced a need for seamless communication and collaboration for meetings and conversations both internally and externally which would typically have taken place in person. With such a diverse workforce across field, remote and office, McCurrach needed a solution within their existing investment to empower users to do more. They had a planned Skype for Business migration in 2020 as part of their wider cloud strategy, however the immediate switch to remote working in March introduced a challenging situation which meant that McCurrach would have to roll out Microsoft Teams to all staff at a much quicker pace.

Starting with configuration and deployment planning prior to the training in April, McCurrach needed to retrain staff across shared services, field, and sales to ensure that customer communication was not lost at a time when many organisations were moving from legacy tooling to Teams. Alongside the training of existing staff during an extremely busy time for retail organisations, new field and office-based or remote staff who had been onboarded also required training and to 'hit the ground running' with access to files and business critical information.

"The team at Akari are unmatched in breadth and depth of experience; They have an exceptional attitude and an approach to technology which is infectious. The Teams engagement created a simplified communication platform with exceptional integration possibilities, fast-tracked mobilisation and vastly improved the onboarding and implementation experience for the colleagues within McCurrach."

Colin McArthur, Network and Infrastructure Manager

Addressing The Challenge

Akari quickly developed a content creation and training plan, allowing us to create tailored and engaging training content which would have an impact and remain relevant to the teams within the different service areas of McCurrach. Following a user profiling exercise, we were able to plan out the initial key training sessions targeting power users and change champions for Teams to understand how individuals within McCurrach would use the tool to meet business and customer requirements;

These change champions would become the main points of contact across the business units. Core communication and collaboration features within Teams were covered, as well as advanced scenarios and surrounding governance for these, such as adding external guests into Teams and best practice for setting up and running meetings with internal and external partners and clients.

The initial topic-based training sessions were recorded, edited and published to allow users who were not able to attend the sessions to consume the content at their own pace, at a time that suited them, alongside bitesize videos to demonstrate how to use fundamental features within Microsoft Teams. Running these training sessions as interactive Teams meetings allowed McCurrach colleagues to ask questions and provide direct feedback which was used to plan out knowledge webinars and prepare internal support for common queries.

We then developed a core knowledge webinar to cover the identified areas of Microsoft Teams which would have the most impact. Larger groups were able to attend these webinars in their own time by subscribing to the weekly session or watching a session video on demand, which ensured strong coverage across business units as they were moving onto Teams which ensured strong coverage across business units as they were moving onto Teams. These were delivered as Teams Live Events which meant that users were accessing the training content through Teams whilst using the platform itself for communication and collaboration, allowing them to ask questions and provide feedback to the IT business partners running the sessions with Akari. The knowledge webinars targeted between 80-120 users per session per week to ensure that they could make use of the core functionality within Teams as quickly as possible whilst the solution was being rolled out.



Celebrating The Results



With a full deployment of Teams into the organisation over the course of just a few months, active usage increased from 1.5% to 70%, allowing McCurrach to stay connected, and internal teams were able to focus on delivering outcomes for their clients during an unprecedented period for the retail and service industry. From the training sessions delivered over the course of six weeks, McCurrach now have a bank of recorded content from which they can create new and engaging training for existing staff which can be consumed in their own time, and users have felt the benefits of being more connected than ever, even when working from home or being out in the field working from a tablet device.

Teams will play a particularly powerful role for new starts within the organisation; By making use of the training materials and being added to the relevant Teams, new colleagues can easily find content and immediately feel connected with meetings and conversations, alongside easier access to files and policies.

Working in partnership with household names, Teams has allowed office based and remote colleagues to communicate directly with partners and clients, not only making meetings more collaborative but by using the guest features within Teams, colleagues can invite clients and partners into the environment securely to share files and chat rather than converse via email or telephone.

Teams has rapidly become the primary productivity solution for McCurrach, and they are now investigating the use of applications within Teams from third party products which are used throughout the business and assessing where bots and custom apps might be integrated into core workflows. A key example of this is integrating Power BI dashboards into client specific Teams for presentation.

Overall, even though the move to Microsoft Teams was planned as part of a wider strategic move to the latest Microsoft Cloud technologies, McCurrach had to undertake this migration whilst working from home with colleagues spread throughout the UK & Ireland. The training delivered via Akari allowed them to focus on serving their clients and continuing to be innovative whilst learning how to make use of the new tools during the 'new normal'.

Why Akari?

We are Microsoft's *Global Diversity and Inclusion Changemaker Partner of the Year 2020*. Our strategy is to earn our customers' trust by focusing on business outcomes, good advice and best-in-class solutions to support the journey through digital transformation to digital business.

