

Should you choose Microsoft 365 Copilot or Copilot Studio to build your agent?

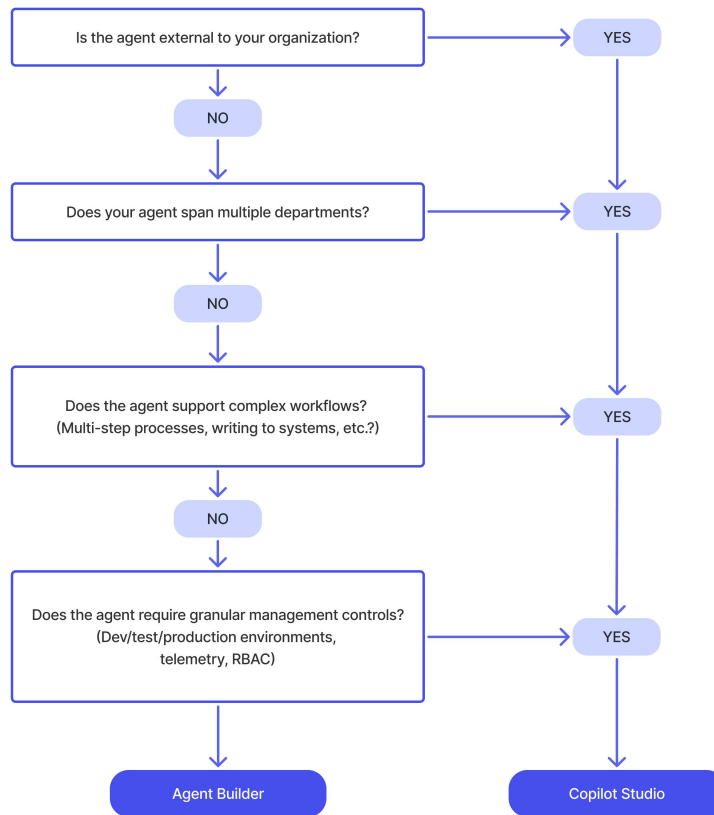
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The Agent Builder feature in Microsoft 365 Copilot and Copilot Studio are powerful tools for building secure, scalable, and intelligent agents that work across multiple Microsoft 365 and business systems. Both tools allow you to create agents, but they serve different needs. This article describes the differences between the two tools to help you choose the one best suited to your needs.

When choosing a tool, consider the following factors :

1. Target audience – Who will use the agent?
2. Deployment scope – How widely do you plan to share the agent?
3. Function – What tasks will the agent perform?
4. Does your administrator/agent need detailed application lifecycle management?

The following decision diagram will help you determine the right tool for your situation.



In short :

1. Choose Microsoft 365 Copilot and use the Agent Builder feature if you want to quickly create an agent for yourself or a small team, using natural language and existing content (for example, a bot that answers questions from your team's SharePoint files or emails). Agent Builder is simple, easy to use, and integrated with the Microsoft 365 Copilot experience, so you can build agents in context without writing code.
2. Choose Copilot Studio if you need an agent for a broader audience (such as an entire department, organization, or external client) or if the agent requires advanced capabilities like multi-step workflows or custom integrations, or if you need more control over deployment and management. The full version of Copilot Studio is a standalone web portal with a rich set of tools for complex or scalable solutions.

Note :

If you choose to use Microsoft 365 Copilot to create your agent and then want to take advantage of the features available in Copilot Studio, you can clone your agent to Copilot Studio.

The following table provides a more detailed feature comparison.

Features	Microsoft 365 Copilot	Copilot Studio
Access point	Microsoft 365 Copilot app	Copilot Studio
User type	Information officer	The inventors and developers

Features	Microsoft 365 Copilot	Copilot Studio
The agent's target audience	Individuals or small groups	External departments, organizations, or clients
Agent type	The agents asked questions politely and demonstrated organizational knowledge.	Agents dealing with complex situations, such as multi-step workflows or business system integrations, require strong corporate governance and control measures.
Key capabilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural language editing 2. The question-and-answer scenarios focus on content based on organizational context from Microsoft Graph. 3. Respect users' rights to their Microsoft 365 data. 4. Using the Microsoft 365 Copilot orchestrator, platform model, and services. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Widespread publication and distribution 2. Supports multi-step logic, approvals, and branching workflows. 3. Supports advanced AI models and integrates with Azure AI services. 4. Provides access to built-in and custom connectors for connecting to external data sources outside of Microsoft 365. 5. Automated capabilities 6. Lifecycle management tools include version management; development, testing, and production environments; role-based access control; telemetry and analytics.
Use cases	<p>Use Microsoft 365 Copilot to build:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bot Project FAQ answers frequently asked questions based on the project documentation. 2. The product documentation assistant helps employees search for information in internal product manuals or wikis. 3. The guidance agent helps new team members find answers from internal knowledge repositories. 	<p>Use Copilot Studio to build:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The agent assists customers in creating support request tickets and forwarding the issue to the responsible person. 2. The agent categorizes employee IT requests and forwards them to the appropriate support team. 3. Sales assistants in CRM retrieve sales data, take notes, or initiate approval processes.
Management and operation	It is primarily managed through the Microsoft 365 admin center.	Managed through the Power Platform admin center with more detailed options for enterprise scenarios.

Copy the agent from Microsoft 365 Copilot to Copilot Studio.

You can copy an agent created in Microsoft 365 Copilot to Copilot Studio when you need enhanced capabilities or broader integration options. This ensures that work done in Microsoft 365 Copilot is not lost and can be extended in Copilot Studio without having to start from scratch.

Switching to Copilot Studio unlocks additional features, such as richer customization options, administrative controls, and expanded connectors. When you clone your agent, its core configuration and instructions are

preserved. You can then enhance them using advanced settings unique to Copilot Studio.

Consider copying an agent to Copilot Studio when:

1. You need enterprise-grade deployment options.
2. You want to integrate with more data sources or implement enhanced security policies.

Request for licensing

Both Agent Builder in Microsoft 365 Copilot and Copilot Studio are included in the Microsoft 365 Copilot add-on license for authenticated users. If you don't have a Copilot license, you can use Copilot Credits or a per-use paid plan to access either experience.

You can also use Agent Builder in Microsoft 365 Copilot for free to build agents based solely on web knowledge.

Agent Builder Management Principles

The Agent Builder feature in Microsoft 365 Copilot allows users to create agents that function as reusable templates. These agents help retrieve insights from Microsoft Graph by packaging recurring prompts and connecting content. They operate within the existing enterprise environment and respect Microsoft 365 controls .

Agent Builder applies the following key management principles:

1. **No new privileges** – Agents respect existing Microsoft 365 permissions. If a user does not have access to a SharePoint site, Teams channel, or Outlook mailbox, the agent will not display content from those sources.
2. **Integrated visibility and auditing capabilities** - Agents are visible in Microsoft 365. Standard audit logs, activity reports, and DLP/retention policies apply.

IT administrators manage agent visibility, sharing, and lifecycle policies in the Microsoft 365 admin center through the **Copilot > Agents** page . Administrators can:

1. View agent repository and agent metadata.
2. Enable, disable, assign, block, or remove agents to comply with organizational policies.
3. Configure billing based on usage and consider agent usage and consumption.
4. Enforce compliance using Microsoft Purview (sensitivity labels, audit logs).

Administrators can also manage agent sharing controls through **Microsoft 365 Admin Center > Copilot > Settings > Data access > Agents** .

Copilot Studio Management Principles

Copilot Studio supports the creation of more complex agents, often created by the creator or developer. These agents can integrate external data sources, call APIs, orchestrate complex workflows, and connect to systems outside of Microsoft 365—ideal for departmental or enterprise-wide solutions.

Copilot Studio applies the following key governance principles:

1. **Structured development** – Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) enables development across development, testing, and production environments.
2. **Connection management** - Administrators control the systems that agents can connect to, reducing the risk of unauthorized access.
3. **Environmental-level policies** – Data Loss Prevention (DLP), role-based access, and auditing are enforced at the environmental level.
4. **Flexible deployment** - Agents can be published on Teams, websites, and custom endpoints with granular access controls.
5. **Secure collaboration** - Agents support view/edit permissions for cross-functional teamwork with supervision.
6. **Development and publishing oversight** – Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) supports development/testing/production environments, and publishing to the organization's application portfolio requires administrator approval. This ensures transparency and control over what is made publicly available.

IT administrators use the Power Platform admin center to manage:

1. Agent and connector environment.
2. Publishing lifecycle policy and process.
3. Compliance is ensured through Microsoft Purview (sensitivity labels, audit logs, retention periods).
4. Analyze telemetry data and use it to monitor agent behavior and ensure policy compliance.

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