AvePoint®

The University of Auckland Delivers Compliant Self-Service and Secure Management for 5,000 Microsoft Teams Users with AvePoint Cloud Governance

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND — NEW ZEALAND

Customer Location
Auckland, New Zealand

Industry
Education

Platform
Microsoft 365

Critical Needs
- Enable remote work and collaboration in Microsoft Teams
- Cut down time spent provisioning new Teams
- Avoid sprawl and incorrect settings
- Delegate ownership, manage lifecycles, and improve user experience in Teams

Solution
- AvePoint Cloud Governance

⭐ Success Highlights

- Simple, self-guided setup process to create new Teams
- Automated guidelines to support efficiency, ownership, lifecycles, and compliance
- Substantial reduced time for IT maintenance
- Actionable data about creation, purpose, and pain points of Teams
- Greater momentum for launching student-focused Teams rollout

🔍 Customer Profile

Founded in 1883, the University of Auckland is a public research university based in Auckland, New Zealand. With more than 40,000 students enrolled, it is the country's largest university. The institution was named New Zealand's leading university in the QS World University Rankings 2022, and it generates roughly $230 million in annual research revenue.

⚙ The Challenge

Microsoft Teams was first introduced in September 2019 at the University of Auckland to support collaboration, but staff in some areas were slow to adopt the new technology.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

The rush brought approximately 5,000 Auckland employees onto Teams by March 2020. But the surge magnified existing concerns — including excessive Team creation, unchecked management, and overly broad security settings that could create a poor user experience.

"An owner would set up a Team, everyone would use it, and then the owner would leave and no one has a clue," Turner said. "There was also no validating the correct people who should have access … and there was a whole heap of stuff being created without two owners."

Furthermore, there wasn't a clear provisioning process to ensure a Team's settings were appropriate for the task. The university had relied on designated staff "champions" to manually create Teams for employees, but the process was time-consuming and inconsistent.

With remote work expected to continue — and as plans to roll out Teams for Auckland students

are discussed — the university needed to sustain effective collaboration with self-service functionality and without compromising security. Leaders knew a third-party solution added capabilities would be crucial.

"We spoke to other universities that didn't have any form of governance in place," Turner said. "The road they were on just sounded scary."

💡 The AvePoint Solution

With AvePoint Cloud Governance, the university has transformed its busy Teams environment by creating a hub for secure collaboration equipped with automation.

Cloud Governance empowers users with self-service IT resources for provisioning, moving, or restructuring Microsoft 365 content, as well as lifecycle and permissions management. The solution integrates not only with Teams but with the broader Microsoft 365 platform — including Yammer communities and SharePoint sites — so users can make informed decisions.

Designed to promote sustainable adoption, Cloud Governance can be tailored to set different policies based on a user's needs, data sensitivity, and relationship to the company (including external users). If concerns change, users may request an update in order to stay compliant.

University of Auckland IT leaders began considering Cloud Governance several months before the pandemic, and they were encouraged by positive testimonials from existing customers and a demonstration from AvePoint sales.

"They could easily show us how Cloud Governance could do all the things that we wanted," Turner said.

More than a year after deploying the AvePoint solution, the chaos in Teams has become calm.

Now, any University of Auckland staff member can set up a Team with Cloud Governance. "It walks them through a questionnaire: information about what is needed, if this is for a department, how long they envision the Team being required for, and so on," Turner said.

The details may prompt a detour. "We do ask if they're going to be storing information that is personally identifiable, such as records," Turner said. "The result might be that we don't want to automatically create a Team."

To avoid sprawl and inactivity, Cloud Governance asks Team owners at Auckland to recertify every six months. If no reply is received after three months, the Team in question is archived.

Adding parameters and self-guided processes to the University of Auckland's ecosystem (which now numbers about 1,500 Teams) hasn't drawn complaints. "We're not hearing anything from users, and that's a good thing," Turner said.

👉 The Bottom Line

With Teams governance a way of life, Turner can't imagine the University of Auckland without it.

"You can easily do a Teams implementation without governance, but then you end up paying for it later," Turner said. "It's only going to be a year down the track when you realize that you've left yourself in a horrible mess. The more it is like that, the less people will actually use Teams."

He also praised AvePoint's involvement throughout. "We definitely felt we had a close partner to go on the Cloud Governance journey together," Turner said.

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> — STUART TURNER, PROJECT MANAGER, THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND