



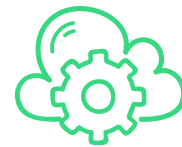
Future-Proofing: How AIA Upskilled to Become a Cloud-First Enterprise

AIA Group is a technology leader at the forefront of the insurance industry, moving away from the operational silos and legacy processes the sector is known for, and towards well-informed, software-enabled collaboration at scale. Their north star is to build a highly skilled and engaged workforce capable of reliably delivering services that are simpler, faster, and better connected. To accomplish this, the company's corporate strategy, referred to as TDA (Technology, Digital, & Analytics), was designed with the objective of transforming AIA into a truly customer-centric, world-class digital insurer.

AIA's workforce spans across geographies and communities, all with the mission of helping millions across Asia live healthier, longer, better lives. Nurturing and growing culture, building leaders and workforce capabilities, and supporting and developing their people so they can achieve their maximum potential are all key priorities for the company's people organization.

Challenge

The life insurance industry and the skills required to stay at the forefront are evolving rapidly and show no signs of slowing down. From July 2020 to December 2021, AIA had invested heavily in expanding its technology, digital, and analytical capabilities, resulting in a 29% increase in the headcount who were tasked with supporting these initiatives. This rapid growth brought with it its own challenge of how to onboard, train, upskill, and assess skill gaps for these new cohorts rapidly and at scale



100+ Major projects deployed that leverage cloud-based AI and analytics



85% Cloud adoption rate reached, en route to goal of 90%

In 2021, 75% of their customer claims and 73% of service requests were submitted digitally. With the goal of being a technology leader in the insurance industry, AIA is two years into a three-year program meant to transform all 18 business units within the organization. The vision of this program was to build a future-proof organization that would be simpler, faster, and more connected by emphasizing resilience and efficiently capturing growth opportunities through the abundant use of analytics and automation. The organization even implemented a Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Standard, detailing its guiding principles on the use and application of AI throughout the enterprise.

By the end of 2021, approximately 70% of their IT infrastructure was cloud-based – a significant leap from 39% the year prior and a testament to their cloud-first commitment. In order to reach their goal of 90% by 2023, in 2022 AIA launched a formal effort with Cloud Academy to close the gap and transform their IT team to solidify their cloud maturity. By November of 2022, they were well on their way, having reached 85% cloud-based infrastructure.

Study materials and content focused on Microsoft Azure's various certifications were of particular importance to AIA, the training for which is often unavailable on competing platforms. Vikas Bhandari, the Director of Group Engineering and Delivery (Cloud & Infrastructure) knew all too well the importance of upskilling a workforce, and the role it plays in supporting a rapid and ambitious cloud transformation. Having led successful large-scale transformations in the past, Vikas was tasked with leading the effort for AIA and observed a significant need for upskilling, but knew they needed something beyond traditional e-learning.

Solution

AIA Group's Head of Delivery, Kelvin Tong, knew that any potential solution needed to meet certain requirements. Namely, an extensive breadth of courses and training on all aspects of a cloud transformation, ample coverage of topics related to Microsoft Azure, content that stays up-to-date with the constantly changing landscape of cloud technologies, and the ability to comfortably manage and adapt to a scaling team, with each member having their own unique collection of skills and learning objectives.



Societies and their insurance and healthcare needs are constantly changing, and our business must evolve to remain relevant to our customers, partners, and employees. We needed a high-adoption solution that would support our upskilling efforts in this evolution.”

– **Biswa Misra**, Group Chief Technology and Life Officer, AIA Group

Using Cloud Academy's Smart Assessments, AIA was able to quickly assess each user's skill level, bypass content they already know, and target the skills required to exceed achieving the business objectives they're responsible for.

Beyond an upskilling and learning management solution, it is also important to AIA that they found a partner that aligned with the company's values of maintaining a highly engaged workforce. AIA takes pride in employee engagement, conducting employee surveys annually to monitor inclusiveness and collaboration across all businesses and functions. In 2021, AIA ranked in the 90th percentile of the global finance and insurance industry with an employee engagement of 65%, far exceeding the industry average of 20%. Having a highly engaged workforce fosters innovation, leads to an eagerness to learn new tech and establishes a foundation for career progression and skill expansion amongst incumbent employees – a mission Cloud Academy stands by.

Upskilling efforts for AIA have been focused on four key areas, collectively providing a competitive technological advantage while allowing employees to further their careers and directly contribute to business-wide objectives. Through the use of Cloud Academy's ability to design highly customized learning paths and programs, AIA defined four "Academies", each designed in partnership with world-leading institutions, supporting an employee's journey from beginner to intermediate, to expert, and ultimately, a leader. Employees can progress through the Cloud, Agile, Analytics, or Design Academy, dependent on the employee's career goals and the needs of the business.

While AIA's primary cloud provider is Microsoft Azure, the team still encountered instances where training was needed to address skill gaps related to AWS, GCP, and even Ali Cloud. Thanks to Cloud Academy's breadth of available content, AIA was able to find the appropriate learning path to meet the need in each situation, ensuring the company's broader transformation efforts never missed a step.

Lastly, with the Skills Readiness solution, Cloud Academy provides analytics and adaptive assessments that allows organizations like AIA to quickly see which employees are primed for reskilling, how many existing employees have a given skill, and what new skills need to be acquired before the next major project is underway. Skills and skill gaps can be observed by individual, team, or across the entire organization, and accounted for using AI-driven training programs, enabling companies like AIA to anticipate and address skill gaps before they ever become a bottleneck.

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Cloud Academy is a critical part of instilling a learning culture in our technology talent across AIA's while building the in-house capabilities to leverage and enhance our investment in Cloud”

– **Marcel Malan**, General Manager and Head of Group IT Operations, AIA Group



Cloud Academy offers a clean design, is easy to use, and has a large library of content. It's also device agnostic so our people can access this content on the move, in the office, at home – wherever they need to.”

– **Vikas Bhandari**, Director of Group Engineering and Delivery (Cloud & Infrastructure), AIA Group

Outcomes

After establishing a goal of having 100 employees complete intermediate or advanced-level training in their respective learning paths, AIA can report comfortably exceeding that target in their first year with Cloud Academy. By the end of 2022, AIA has over 180 employees completing intermediate and advanced training, with another 600 in the pipeline for 2023.

Cloud Academy's self-service curriculum design model, comprehensive and constantly updated content library, and complete flexibility in when and at what pace employees could learn enabled AIA to meet and exceed their upskilling goals.

To date, the TDA transformation supported by Cloud Academy's learning solution has improved turnaround time for customer transactions, with close to 60% being completed within the same day. AIA has also successfully increased the velocity of project deployments, delivering more than 100 major projects that leverage AI and analytics in operationally critical areas such as underwriting, claim handling, training, and employee recruiting, ultimately being named the Digital Insurer of the Year by InsuranceAsia News. Most importantly, AIA is solidly on its way to meeting the objective of 90% cloud adoption in their IT organization, way ahead of the industry average, the keystone objective of the TDA transformation program.

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