



# EQUIPPING A WORKFORCE OF 60,000 TO WELCOME THE WORLD AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI

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Training should be about more than just going through the motions of onboarding and compliance. If you want to give your people the knowledge and skills to do their jobs better, you need to know they've actually learned something. But meaningful training can be hard to facilitate—let alone when you're doing it for 60,000 people. That's the challenge we had at Expo 2020 Dubai.

For 170 years, world expos have showcased the greatest innovations to shape the future. They offer a unique international stage for people from all over the world—diplomats, trade partners, investors, tourists and more—to exchange ideas and build connections. If you dig into the biographies of the world's greatest minds, you'll often find they visited world expos, where they were inspired by new technologies and the promise of a brighter future.

Expo 2020 Dubai will deliver that experience, bringing countries from across the globe together to imagine how we can create a new world together. Over six months, from October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, we'll host 10,000 events across 200 pavilions. As the world's greatest show, it's a unique experience that can't be replicated online. That's why, when the pandemic struck, we knew we would have to delay the start of the event.

After the past 18 months, people need the hope, inspiration and energy of Expo 2020 more than ever. To make all of this happen flawlessly and deliver a consistent experience for every attendee, **we turned to Axonify to ensure everyone in our workforce has the right training, knowledge and skills to perform their best.**



# CATERING TO A LARGE WORKFORCE—AT SCALE

I've spent the last six years as part of the team putting together Expo 2020. My role is to help our workforce of 20,000 volunteers and 40,000 contract workers reach their highest potential through learning and development that equips them to deliver on their role at event time.

While our contractors work for 300 different companies, they're part of our team for Expo and we need them to know all the details of the event, including its themes and how to interact with visitors. The smallest, but perhaps most critical, segment of our workforce is our 2,000-strong expert staff. It's our job to leverage their expertise, design and deliver learning content tailored to their needs and ensure everyone has the knowledge and resources to work in unison.

Delivering a consistent and quality experience for your customers requires thorough, ongoing training for both employees and contractors alike. In order to get them doing the right things, learning needs to be reinforced.

And when you're training 60,000 people for an event this large, you have to break it up into more manageable pieces. Our goal with a workforce of this scale is to cater to individual needs as much as possible, but not so much that we're designing 60,000 individual learning paths. That means understanding the workforce broadly: their experience, existing skills and competencies and the gaps our program has to fill. To deliver a memorable event, we need to make sure everyone progresses with right-fit training—and no one gets left behind.

Unfortunately, our original solution didn't have those capabilities. We were using our workforce management system as a de facto online learning platform to support in-person training, but it wasn't designed for learning, and especially not for personalized, ongoing reinforcement. Because the online training we first created had to fit within that platform, it was rudimentary and built to support a one-and-done approach.

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# CONTRACTOR TRAINING THE RIGHT WAY



In late 2017, our CEO, Her Excellency Reem Al Hashimi, said she wanted all visitor-interacting contractors to receive more robust training by Expo. Every person involved in Expo 2020 had to do more than just walk the walk. They also had to be able to deliver a consistent, quality experience to every attendee.

Our organization has a talent pool of people who have worked at large-scale events like the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup in the past and understand the importance of creating that consistent experience. But often, in these types of events, the contract workforce is completely neglected when it comes to training for the customer experience. They sometimes know only enough to perform their individual role without understanding how it contributes to the bigger picture. Our CEO's vision to do contractor training right afforded us the opportunity to rethink training altogether across the organization. And we needed a learning platform to do it. Of the six solutions we considered,

*Axonify quickly stood out from the rest. I liked how the platform delivered a fun, fast, personalized experience for employees, while giving me instant data-rich insights into their progress.*

Plus the local team at **Biz Group**, an Axonify partner, added additional technical support services as part of the solution. We bought **Axonify** thinking we would use it to deliver the same training as our original platform, but we learned we could do so much more. It's like we bought **Axonify** as a utility vehicle, but it turned out we had a Ferrari sitting in the garage—capable of getting us through the high-pressure race leading up to Expo.

When COVID-19 pushed the event back, we used that time to redesign our content, focusing on developing better training material and deploying it via Axonify to engage employees on their mobile devices. One of the biggest improvements was having content that could be continuously reinforced leading up to and throughout Expo to ensure our team could deliver a consistent experience for attendees. We couldn't have done that without a platform like **Axonify**.

Eighteen months after we first implemented **Axonify**, we now use the platform for not just contractors, but our entire workforce. On top of building role-specific knowledge, the new solution is helping our team develop core skill sets and leadership competencies that we didn't have the time or resources to support before **Axonify**. By maximizing our internal capacity, we're confident our team has what it takes to deliver a seamless and memorable event experience



## GETTING LEARNING INTO 60,000 HANDS

Delivering training straight to our team's mobile devices was a game changer. It allowed us to put fast, fun learning into the hands of 60,000 volunteers and contractors. The magic of Axonify is that our team actually enjoys logging in to the platform. Training is broken down into bite-sized sessions of three to five minutes. Learners watch a short video, followed by a short quiz and their competency is assessed based on both their knowledge and confidence level. The software adapts to the person to reinforce exactly what they need to know, ensuring everyone receives a unique experience from the same content without us having to design many different learning paths.

Axonify doesn't just tell us who is learning—it also tells us what they're retaining.

From day one, we gave contract leaders access to a dashboard in Axonify called LeaderZone, where they can access analytics to see exactly how their teams are performing throughout training. That puts the power in those leaders' hands and gives them the data they need to support how their teams learn

From a business point of view, Axonify helps my team look at training more broadly and gives us a bird's-eye view on how we can drive engagement. We look at who is enjoying what elements of the platform, times of day that are most popular, whether learners are accessing content via mobile or desktop, and more. Ultimately, we want more people on the platform, engaging daily, so one of our key metrics is the number of times someone logs in each month.

Axonify has helped us clearly see that if someone logs in one to five times a month, they acquire about half of the knowledge. Whereas if they log in more than 20 times a month, their knowledge is 95%, which translates to confidence on the job and delivery of the experience we want attendees to have.



*In one day, I had 400 tour guides going through their orientation. I could already see that, with Axonify, their knowledge threshold had moved from a baseline of around 60% into the high 90s. I don't know of any other LMS with that level of insight.*



# INCREASING ACCESS AND ENGAGEMENT



Using Axonify, my team leverages proven ways to help people build that daily habit of continuous learning. We send daily notifications to remind volunteers and contractors to log in, for example, and we also have QR codes for people to scan while they wait in line at our on-site coffee shop. With training you can complete in five minutes or less, it's easy for people to fit learning into their work day. We also take advantage of the platform's built-in competition and reward features. Staff receive points for completed training and compete against one another and other teams for free coffees or spa vouchers.

We have a large toolkit to play with in Axonify that helps us drive better engagement and results. It's great to see people who haven't enjoyed learning in the past having fun and getting competitive. When leaders in the organization brag about the points they earned in Axonify, we know it's working.

In Axonify, we can cut down on what used to be long, onerous compliance training, ensuring people learn and retain the information they need to stay safe—for example, in our onsite basement, which is the size of 620 football fields. There's a lot going on down there and only one road in and one road out. Over a six-month period, some 10,000 people access that basement—so people have to know the safety protocols. Previously, all 10,000 people had to sit through a two-hour in-person training session that, on top of being tedious for participants, is logistically a huge, cumbersome process. With Axonify, we set up a QR code at the entrance to the basement. People can scan it with their mobile device, watch the training video and then answer questions to access the basement. It's fantastic.

The amount of time, energy and effort saved is incalculable. But with the platform's robust analytics, we've been able to track some measurable improvements, too. Overall, since switching to Axonify, we've seen engagement levels jump to as high as 80%, with contractors and volunteers logging in to train up to three times a week. Over the span of three months, we've been able to dramatically reduce administrative and logistical effort, delivering the equivalent of over 11,000 hours of training directly to our team's mobile devices.





# WELCOMING THE WORLD TO THE FUTURE USING THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

I'm sure we've all taken training that follows the same old approach of firehosing information. It doesn't matter if you sat in the chair and slept for two hours—you still pass. That's why our new approach isn't just more enjoyable for our team—it also works. Axonify represents something that hasn't really existed in training until now: measuring people's engagement and what they're actually learning.

I don't want to work in an L&D industry where we just overload people with training content and hope it sticks. Considering Expo 2020 will show attendees the future of our world, I believe our training should follow suit—and the future of training is about delivering an engaging experience that fits into people's daily workflow. There is definitely still a place for instructor-led training, but by taking a blended approach to learning, everyone gets the best of both worlds.

Part of the Expo 2020 mission statement is to leave a meaningful legacy. The legacy of this learning platform is that we will develop a workforce that is more hospitable, optimistic, excited and engaged than ever before.

