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Innovation of the year – energy firm

Axpo

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Energy companies with large origination and trading businesses sit on a vault of valuable data, unique learnings and key insights. Yet few harness this information at scale to improve decision-making, commercial success and client value across the organisation.

An exception to this is Axpo, winner of Energy Risk's 2026 Innovation of the year – energy firm award, for its development of a centralised data and analytics (DnA) platform that provides a shared environment for data, analytics and model development. With around 450 users, spanning over 20 countries, the platform is already delivering business improvements and increased value to clients through enhanced team collaboration, according to Axpo's, chief DnA officer, Gaudenz Koeppel.



Gaudenz Koeppel, Axpo

“The sharing of models, code, data and analytical practices across desks and locations means we can test strategies, forecasts and improvements across regions, then scale what works quickly into other markets,” says Koeppel. The ability to reuse models and pool cross-market experience is particularly valuable in balancing activities and battery management, he adds. “Here, learning across markets helps us steadily improve analytics and decision support.”

Building the platform involved a focus not just on technology but on people and culture.

Axpo began investing in machine learning and advanced analytics in 2019, deciding on a ‘hub and spoke’ approach – with central co-ordination but decentralised engagement – that underpins the DnA platform today. In 2022, the firm initiated its data and analytics community to foster knowledge exchange, networking and upskilling among practitioners. This community played a pivotal role in shaping the platform's development by gathering requirements, collecting real-world use cases, and serving as early adopters, ultimately driving strong engagement when the platform went live in November 2024.

“We didn't want to take a top-down approach and force this onto people,” says Thomas Gebetsroither, lead DnA operations. “We wanted to drive engagement by creating a community of users that then talk about the benefits of the platform and inspire others.”

Having different teams coming together early in the project also created common terminology and language around data that is often a barrier to data-based projects, says Nadja Herger, adoption manager at DnA. “This has been a huge advantage and significantly streamlines what previously required co-ordination across multiple local setups and different data terminology.”

Establishing the community also provided Axpo with a large taskforce for cleaning data. “We created a federated setup to help us clean the data, rather than it all being done by a big central team. It's another innovative angle of this project,” Gebetsroither adds.

The early work on the platform coincided with a ramp-up of renewables generation across Europe, which further accelerated the need for it, says Gebetsroither. “We had more weather-driven wind and solar in our portfolios that needed to be managed and commercially optimised in a very different way from a gas-fired or nuclear power plant,” he says. “Suddenly, we had millions of data points and very different economics, and we needed a new approach to analysing these assets operationally and commercially.”

Now, users of the platform can see dashboards that span Europe and give them instant insights into a range of issues, from how well different trading strategies are working in different markets, to which markets might be reaching saturation point for a particular technology, thereby providing early signals for markets elsewhere.

The other major benefit of the platform is the enhanced quality of insight Axpo can now provide clients via, for example, its Energy Market reports, says Andy Sommer, head of fundamental analysis, modelling and meteorology at Axpo. Increased market complexity – from 15-minute power pricing to heavy reliance on weather forecasting – has made it harder for firms, especially energy-intensive non-energy firms, to manage this amount of data themselves. “Additionally, today's markets are so interlinked and sensitive to headlines that it's very hard to cut through the noise from crisis events, such as the ongoing Russia/Ukraine conflict and the situation in the Middle East, to understand the implications for an individual firm,” Sommer says.

“The platform allows us to gather data and knowledge gained across all locations, and then filter that according to individual client needs,” says Gebetsroither. “So, the platform provides a common backbone but then we can produce very localised analytics reports and actionable insights.”

This empowers origination teams to have more informed, direct conversations with clients, combining real-time analytics with commercial expertise, he adds. “As the DnA platform becomes more embedded in our operating model, teams can spend less time on manual analytics and more time with customers, deepening their understanding of customer needs and translating insights into more competitive, tailored and durable solutions.” ■