



Case study



Industry

Food & beverage

Use case

Employee onboarding, employee upskilling, compliance training, frontline training

Solution

[Absorb LMS](#), [Absorb Create](#), [Absorb Analyze](#), [Absorb Engage](#)

Challenge

- Reliance on paper-based processes.
- Lack of consistency across regional training programs.
- Increase course completions to meet legislative requirements.
- Move ILCs online.

Solution

- Absorb LMS for flexible, data-rich, and full-featured LMS.
- Absorb for all learning programs, certifications, and tests.
- A single, cohesive learning platform across multiple European markets.

Results

- Higher course completion rates.
- Major growth in engagement (from 50-60% to 90-99%).
- Synchronization across multiple European markets.
- Improved reporting and compliance.

Summary

The European arm of food and beverage franchise Five Guys has been rapidly opening new stores. To meet a range of legislative requirements, the company needed a robust and consistent learning program in 4 different markets. However, regions used their own learning systems and relied on paper-based reporting, creating gaps and irregularities. Absorb LMS offered Five Guys the single, cohesive portal it needed to train crew members efficiently and effectively. The solution helped Five Guys dramatically improve course engagement, drive completion, and meet its reporting obligations.



Neil Whitaker
Senior Learning & Development
Manager

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Absorb helps Five Guys JV Ltd. unify learning and compliance across four European markets

[Five Guys JV Ltd.](#) is the European-based part of a joint venture family that includes Five Guys Enterprises in the US and Five Guys International.

The popular burger and fries chain originated in 1986 as a take-out restaurant in Arlington, Virginia, USA. Jerry and Janie Murrell gave their sons an ultimatum: go to college or start a business. When the boys chose business and focused on burgers, hand-formed patties and fresh-cut fries soon garnered the brothers a cult following.

Fast-forward to 2003 when Five Guys leveraged its local popularity to start offering franchising opportunities in Virginia, then across the US and, eventually, around the world.

The first Five Guys store to open beyond US borders was at Covent Garden in the UK in 2013. Over the past 13 years, Five Guys has scaled its European operations, growing stores year on year in four countries. With just under 10,000 employees, the joint venture now operates close to 300 stores across the UK, France, Germany, and Spain.

Compliance and consistency

With such an impressive expansion comes a few growing pains.

Five Guys employees learn special food preparation and service skills and complete compliance courses on food safety, health and safety, and allergen awareness. However, the European restaurant operation faces different legislative requirements from the UK, increasing the training burden for learning and development teams.

This was challenging as each country had its own learning portal and processes. There was no way to sync training. Records and reporting remained largely paper-based and workshops were being recorded via email. With so many gaps and inconsistencies, the operation lacked an overall view of learning performance.

Five Guys JV Ltd. decided to centralize education efforts and adopt a new learning and development software for all four markets. A single online learning environment would **improve consistency and communication and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of learning programs**, from onboarding to professional development.

After a selection process in 2022, Five Guys JV Ltd. chose Absorb LMS for its learning program.

“After shortlisting, we put the vote out to the operations team and the learners, admins, and managers who are actually going to use it in store,” says Neil Whitaker, Senior L&D Manager for Five Guys JV Ltd. “They fell in love with the **look, the feel, and the functionality of Absorb, and how user-friendly it was from a learner perspective.**”

After initial testing, Five Guys advanced directly to implementation. Existing data was collated and entered into import sheets. The platform performed exceptionally well.

Five Guys aspired to launch over 4-5 weeks in all four markets and achieved that goal. After a brief 48-hour blackout period, the team switched between the old platform and the Absorb solution to launch successfully in the UK. The system went live two weeks later in France, one week later in Germany, and one week later in Spain.



A successful launch for seamless learning

A huge part of the launch was an awareness campaign. “The mindset of people is part of it,” explains Whitaker. “We shared bite-sized promos to preview what’s coming and help build momentum and anticipation.”

The team ran a three-month marketing campaign to promo Absorb and Absorb features, including Absorb Create, Absorb Analyze, and Absorb Engage. They held a competition across four markets to invent an in-house name for the LMS. The prize went to “Five Guys Academy.”



“We hoped everybody would be interested to log on and have a look around. We didn’t really have any challenges. It went very smoothly across the board.”

With Absorb LMS up and running, the L&D team created learning journeys that **blended online compliance and skills training with on-the-job training**. Employees certified in one program on Absorb are able to move up to management programs that include both workshops and online preparation.

“We use Absorb for all of that,” says Whitaker. “From the online courses to the ILCs, to booking the days. Certifications, online tests, it’s all done through Absorb.”



The team used Absorb Engage features, such as **billboard dashboards and automated notifications**, to inform crew members about new course launches and remind them about course completion dates. These techniques **drove engagement and time to completion in support of compliance requirements**.

The company leverages Absorb Create, a generative AI tool, to develop high-impact learning materials in-house and save costs. By building in Absorb, the company is phasing out expensive external authoring tools and content libraries. “Absorb Create is a massive feature for us,” notes Whitaker.

To help employees access learning content at work, stores have Wi-Fi and an L&D tablet devoted to compliance training. Micro-learnings under 20 minutes are easy to set up and administer on Absorb. Crew members can complete them quickly during quiet moments at work or access them on their personal time from their own phones.

A massive jump in **employee** **engagement**

Prior to Absorb, certification was manual and disorganized. The **observational checklists** needed to certify crew members on workstations such as the fry station and the grill were done in store with paper and Excel sheets. “There was an unfortunate lack of consistency,” Whitaker says.

Moving the learning program to Absorb gave the company a chance to put everything in order. They went from having information and reporting scattered and incomplete to collated and stored properly. Collaborating and working together on the same technology platform united the regions.

Absorb’s Analyze feature drove additional improvements by provided more **data granularity** than Five Guys JV Ltd. had before. **Dashboards showing engagement scores, logins, time of day, and other details helped decision-makers identify opportunities for further enhancements to learning programs and processes.**

On the employee-facing side, Absorb was groundbreaking for learning KPIs.



“In the first six months, the **biggest lift came from increased engagement** with the LMS,” Whitaker explains. “Our former platform felt more like a checkbox exercise — ‘Here’s your course.’ Absorb created something far more **immersive and experience-driven.**”

Engagement had previously hovered around 50-60%. With Absorb, it shot up to 99% in the UK, 97% in France and Germany, and 90% in Spain.

Completion rates for compliance courses also saw a significant uplift, jumping from 70% to 96%. Absorb’s **user-friendly approach and engagement features** were important factors in boosting employee interest and accountability.

Compliance tracking, another priority for adopting a single LMS, was enabled and improved dramatically with Absorb. Employees took mandatory courses through the LMS and managers could easily see who hadn’t completed necessary modules.

To date, the company estimates it has achieved substantial cost savings through avoided fines, driven by improved compliance practices and reduced regulatory risk.

Absorb Create’s AI tools similarly proved their value in ROI. The company saved over £15,000 in the first 12 months by creating bespoke training modules instead of relying on third-party content. They’re also using Create to generate quizzes, saving teams time and effort.

Moving forward, Five Guys JV Ltd. has initiated the roll out of Absorb Analyze to managers across all markets to leverage its benefits for reporting. They’ll also focus more on Absorb Create as they prioritize moving away from more generic offerings to Five Guys branding and more customized training for employees.

“Finding innovative ways to keep learning fun and engaging is key,” says Whitaker. “We’re focused on keeping the platform fresh and relevant, so learners are always discovering something new. Absorb gives us the tools to continuously evolve the experience and keep people coming back.”



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