XU Group
Knowledge for Growth

skills hub

# Industry: Automotive Supplier

Anticipating trends in mobility, seizing them, and turning ideas into unique products has always been our strength at ZF. The pace of change has significantly increased. Keeping our **competencies and skills up to date** and mastering the change is challenging and exciting at the same time. Our **qualification initiative** could only be established jointly due to its size and complexity. It is a great pleasure for us to have an experienced partner like **XU sustainable** by our side, who not only provided a technological solution, but also implemented a program with **expertise, network, and a competent team** that is already more cost-effective and efficient than change management. We have established a new culture of learning in record time, which **greatly enriches and advances our company.**

**Daniela Prinz**
Global Head of Learning & Competency Development, ZF

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# ZF in Transition – Global Qualification Initiative with XU sustainable Establishes New Learning Culture

In the face of rapid economic changes, technology corporation ZF Friedrichshafen AG is not only dealing with adapting its products to ecological standards but also facing the urgent challenge of surviving in the fiercely competitive automotive market.

Increasing competition, the emergence of new market participants, and the speed of change are putting significant pressure on the company. Added to this are new requirements for employees and job profiles, geopolitical crises, global conflicts, securing raw materials, and the need for CO2 reduction.

In this complex environment, it is essential for ZF not only to transform its own products but also to transform the further education of its employees to be structurally compatible with change to remain successful in the long term. This led to the start of a unique partnership with XU sustainable – through the introduction of the learning platform „Skills Hub." It combines measurably successful learning content in the areas of electromobility (2022) and digitization (2023).

# About ZF

With around 165,000 employees worldwide, ZF is one of the key players in the automotive supply industry. 90,000 employees are classified as knowledge workers and have access to a personal computer. Skills Hub is the qualification initiative at ZF, which focuses on learning in transformation with a focus on various megatrends. Part of the initiative is the eponymous learning platform.

Learning platform Skills Hub interface

The company's mission is clearly defined: to enable clean, safe, and affordable mobility for everyone. However, it is important to recognize that the real challenge lies not only in this mission but rather in the rapidly changing external circumstances. New technologies as well as changing requirements for employees require a fundamental and sustainable change in almost all company structures and processes.

Moreover, it is about comprehensively transforming the company from within. This requires not only sound knowledge but also a deep understanding of the company's strategy – to better understand decisions and actively contribute to shaping such a change.

> „In consequence, this means: Only together with its employees can and does ZF intend to win the race for the mobility of the future."

As part of the company strategy „Next Generation Mobility," ZF is therefore launching the largest qualification initiative in its history in collaboration with XU sustainable. The goal is to optimally prepare the workforce for the challenges of the future and to effect sustainable change, especially in the future market of electromobility.

## Solution Approach to Successful Transformation: How ZF Actively Shapes the Future of the Automotive Industry

The White Label learning experience platform from XU sustainable provides the basis for a tailored solution for ZF, which is developed in close collaboration on an equal footing. This enables general knowledge management on megatrends, promotes comprehensive qualification and competence building, and considers individual learning content from ZF.

The digital learning platform of the ZF qualification initiative Skills Hub allows for a user-centered experience that focuses specifically on the needs of the respective employees. This is enabled by engaging course content – supported by live sessions, digital exchange formats with external and internal experts, and other curated learning content – in the media library, which promotes customized learning. Participation is voluntary, and learning content can be tailored to personal preferences and learning patterns.

Everyone should have the opportunity to be part of the future – that‘s why we support companies like ZF in equipping their workforce today with the knowledge and skills for the job profiles of tomorrow.“

**Nicole Gaiziunas**
Co-CEO and Founder of XU

# How XU sustainable Contributed to the Project‘s Great Success

The learning experience platform Skills Hub serves as a one-stop shop for employees. To make the complexity of the respective megatrends electromobility, digitization, and sustainability accessible to learners, an innovative knowledge model was developed for each. This model breaks down the megatrend into relevant topics for the target groups and serves as a central orientation:

- The development of specific learning content took place in monthly releases, with care taken not to overwhelm the learners.
- The short learning units of maximum 30 minutes allow for integration into the learners‘ everyday lives.
- With the help of a knowledge check, one‘s own learning progress can be measured.

# XU sustainable relied on various engagement measures

Activating the learners and guiding them were crucial for the project's success. XU sustainable supported this with various engagement measures, including:

- Online launch events
- Use of multipliers within the company
- KPI-supported mailings
- Contributions in the intranet
- Gamification

In addition, information was placed on posters and info screens at various locations of the target groups. Targeted communication was carried out via emails and features on the platform.

# A Paradigm Shift: Measurable Results of the Collaboration

For ZF, one intention was paramount from the beginning: Employees should be enabled not only to better understand the megatrends and decisions within the company but also to actively assume the role of agents themselves. Yes, they should see themselves as designers and developers of change and act accordingly in a solution-oriented manner.

For performance-oriented monitoring, the project was set up with Skills Hub based on data and aimed at three central KPIs. The three indicators should relate to the following metrics: 1. Number of active users, 2. Completion rate of the modules, and 3. Registration rate for the live sessions.

With the first megatrend electromobility, among other things, within one year, 10,000 active users within the ZF division Electrified Powertrain Technology should be gained. For the digitization megatrend, the goal was then 20,000 active users out of a total of 90,000 persons who regularly work at a desk. The following numbers prove the high acceptance of the initiative:

## target 1

- 20.000 active users of a possible 90.000 within 12 months
- result: 24.979 participants

## target 2

- desired completion rate on the platform = 50 %
- result: 73 %
- 13.641 hours of learning accomplished

## target 3

- desired booking rate for live sessions = 50 %
- result: 48 %

**Skills Hub is very popular: 74% of respondents said that they would recommend the platform to their colleagues.**

Status 10.10.2023

An initial assessment fully confirmed the approach of XU sustainable and ZF within the framework of the qualification initiative: Skills Hub enabled employees to internalize the learning content within a short period of time. Additionally, as desired, a direct application of the learned in practice was shown. Another strong proof of the success of ZF and XU sustainable is found in the recognition by external experts. The jointly created transformative qualification initiative for the electromobility megatrend was awarded the German HR Excellence Award 2022. The entire initiative was awarded the eLearning Award in the „Change Management“ category in 2024.

# At a Glance: Success of the Qualification Initiative in Numbers

**September 2021**
Start of the megatrend e-mobility for one division of ZF

**Oct.2022 - Oct. 2023**
Company-wide roll-out of the qualification initiative Skills Hub with the megatrends e-mobility and digitization

**33 hours**
Course content on digitalization provided, including 16 hours tailored learning content

**at least 13.641**
hours ZF employees spent learning

**Award 2024**
eLearning AWARD 2024 in the category “Change Management”

**2022**
Awarded the German HR prize

**until summer 2023**
Monthly course releases on digitization in 11 areas of knowledge

**21.070 places**
for live sessions with different main focuses (introduction, focus topic and special courses)

**99%**
of the licenses purchased were retrieved

# Near Future Prospects

But the journey does not end here: From February 2024, the topic of sustainability is in the starting blocks in the form of additional courses, live sessions, and media library content. It promises to further enrich the learning culture at ZF. The platform itself will be continuously developed to meet the constantly changing requirements.

# Long-Term Outlook & Biggest Gain

The partnership between ZF and XU sustainable has not only created a learning platform. Rather, it signifies a major change in how knowledge will be vividly conveyed in the organization in the future.

Thanks to XU sustainable's solutions, ZF achieves effective change management, fostering understanding and acceptance among employees through targeted further education and comprehensive enlightenment. The holistic nature of competence building is central, involving all persons and processes in the value chain – a fundamental requirement for sustainable competence development. Skills Hub at ZF now not only represents a tool for the further development of employees. It has, as desired, become a driver for change management, innovation, foresight, and continuous adaptation to the requirements of a changing working world surrounding electromobility, digitization, and soon sustainability. With Skills Hub, learning has become a matter of course and part of the corporate culture.

ZF has understood: Genuine transformation can only succeed if the entire ecosystem is involved. The significant change has now been initiated with the help of XU sustainable.

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