



**AXONIFY CASE STUDY:**

# How retail giant, Briscoe Group, completely re-engineered its training approach in less than 6 months

**“It’s been a whirlwind,” says Aston Moss, General Manager of Human Resources (HR) at Briscoe Group, one of New Zealand’s largest listed retailers. “The speed at which we’ve been able to transition from our incumbent vendor and rebuild our content—while developing completely new capability in our team—is really impressive.”**

An impressive feat, indeed. Moving Briscoe’s 2,000 employees, almost 90 locations (including retail stores and support functions as diverse as warehousing, a contact center and professional support services) to a brand new platform was a heavy lift. On top of that, rebuilding training content and strategy—and *doing it all in less than 6 months*—is a remarkable accomplishment.

**COMPANY:**

New Zealand’s largest listed retailer with origins dating back 150 years.

**INDUSTRY:**

Retail

**KEY CHALLENGES:**

- Find a cost-effective solution that communicates key business objectives to every employee
- Reinvent a one-dimensional training approach to better align with business objectives
- Drive company-wide enthusiasm and adoption

**SOLUTION:**

Transitioned 2,000 employees and almost 90 locations to a new platform while rebuilding training content and strategy.

**RESULTS:**

**<6 mo**

Rebuilt entire training content & strategy

**34%**

Knowledge lift in key topic areas

**96%**

Current knowledge levels

**3+ /wk**

Training frequency across all departments

**88%**

Voluntary participation

## Continuing Briscoe's evolution

The original Briscoe business has been around for 150 years. And, over the last 30 years, the company has continued its expansion to include three trading brands: Briscoes Homeware, Rebel Sports, and a high-end Living and Giving homeware gift store. Although Moss appreciates the strong history of his organization, he didn't want its training approach to be stuck in the past.

When Moss arrived at Briscoe about two and a half years ago, it was immediately apparent to him that he needed to take the company's training approach in a different direction. Briscoe's previous training platform, a learning management system (LMS), had limited measurement capabilities, content that was mostly compliance-based and poor employee engagement. "It was quite one dimensional," explains Moss. "There was a lot more we could do from a learning and development perspective to better align with our business objectives."

## Fixing a fragmented training process

As a seasoned HR professional, he was already familiar with the concept of the forgetting curve and how people have difficulty remembering information if it's not reinforced. So he knew watching a 15-to-30-minute video and then answering a few questions was a fruitless effort.

But, it wasn't just the delivery of content that was ineffective, it was the quality of the content itself which was deployed through an overall fragmented training process. Take customer service training, for example. It was either delivered through a face-to-face session or via an online module. But according to Moss, "the online modules for customer service weren't actually tied to the most important part of the customer experience—the one at our registers or checkouts. So the challenges with our existing training process were quite clear."

## When you have friends who have the right tools

Moss set out to completely re-engineer the company's current training approach, and he knew that also meant finding a solution that would provide a centralized, cohesive training experience. Fortunately, he happened to know Drew McGuire the director and owner of Capability Group (CGL), a company that specializes in corporate development and change management consultancy. "Drew had been talking about this amazing product," explains Moss. "We looked at a number of other solutions, but Axonify really stood out."



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### **ASTON MOSS**

GENERAL MANAGER OF HUMAN RESOURCES,  
BRISCOE GROUP

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The Axonify Microlearning Platform is the only learning platform built for business performance because it ingrains knowledge deep enough to change behavior on the job. That's why it appealed to someone like Moss who is well-versed in how to deliver impactful employee training. "Axonify stood out for a host of reasons. Its simplicity, the modern approach and the brain science behind it resonated with me. It's our single one-to-one communication platform and provides us with a unique ability to broadcast key messages that drive important business issues to each and every person," shares Moss. "It's not just sexy technology; there's real depth to it and that was evident when we compared other products. With my background in a variety of other commercial roles, I knew we needed a training approach that would deliver change in the business—and those changes needed to impact the bottom line."

## A committed partner + self-sufficient solution = business success

From an implementation standpoint, Moss could rest easy knowing CGL would stand alongside Briscoe and ensure the set up and deployment of Axonify would go off without a hitch. CGL not only helped Moss complete the entire implementation as the local vendor and reseller of the Axonify platform, but also brought extensive knowledge and expertise in retail to the table. "I consider myself, and our business, exceptionally fortunate for the great support from Drew and the team at CGL, along with Christine and the Axonify team, as we embarked on this journey," says Moss. "Equally importantly, I need to acknowledge the extensive efforts and dedication of my Organizational Development (OD) team, particularly Dominique, my OD Manager, and Shaz, one of our OD Advisors, without whom we'd never have implemented so quickly and effectively."

Although CGL played a crucial role in rebuilding Briscoe's training content and transforming its approach to training, Moss and his team appreciate being able to take the reins throughout their day to day. "We don't like having to go to our service providers again and again because it's expensive and time consuming. Retail is a very "now" business. If you're met with delays, it negatively impacts the customer experience," explains Moss. "One of the fantastic features around Axonify is our ability to self administer. It is such a thoughtfully designed platform. We can design, develop and amend our own content and look up all the metrics to drive internal conversations. If we don't understand something, we know we can have a discussion with anybody at CGL."



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## Going in with eyes wide open

The other big consideration for the Briscoe Group was cost. There will always be cheaper vendors with fewer features and capabilities, or flashier, more expensive ones. So weighing the must-haves and nice-to-haves in a solution, along with the cost vs benefit of each, can quickly become an arduous activity. For Moss, the capability of a platform was just as important as affordability.

"As retailers, we're pretty cost conscious, so having to expand my budget for a more expensive solution wouldn't have been feasible. But the pricing came out at just the right spot," says Moss. This is because Moss and his team considered the long-term cost of operation—not just the initial setup and rollout of the platform. "It's really easy to buy a product off the shelf with a deceptively lower cost upfront. But then come all the add-ons—and suddenly, your total cost of operation spirals out of control," explains Moss. "We were given absolute transparency around pricing of Axonify, so we know we have certainty around costs and that's really important to us."





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**ASTON MOSS** GENERAL MANAGER OF HUMAN RESOURCES, BRISCOE GROUP

### How to drive adoption from the top-down

Moss involved Briscoe's Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer right from the beginning and ensured he had their buy-in before bringing in other members of the executive team. From there, he built a group of business managers who became advocates for the system and launched the pilot across a set of stores. "By the time we were ready to roll out Axonify throughout the rest of the business, there was already so much enthusiasm for it—so it wasn't a hard sell," says Moss.

Having buy-in from the top is crucial, but what's even more important is gaining adoption from the people who need to stay engaged with training throughout their day-to-day. But, the challenge with workplace training, in any industry, is that if employees don't see value in the content or the way it's being delivered, they will simply tune out, disengage or ignore it altogether. They won't remember the training your company has spent resources on, meaning their behaviors and decisions will remain unchanged—and so will your bottom line.

"When I started two and half years ago, it took quite a bit of effort to get participation up on the old system," shares Moss. "But we haven't had that same challenge with Axonify." In fact, the Briscoe Group now boasts an **average participation rate of 88%** with **employees logging in more than 3 times a week** across all departments.

### Proof you can drive employee engagement in any environment

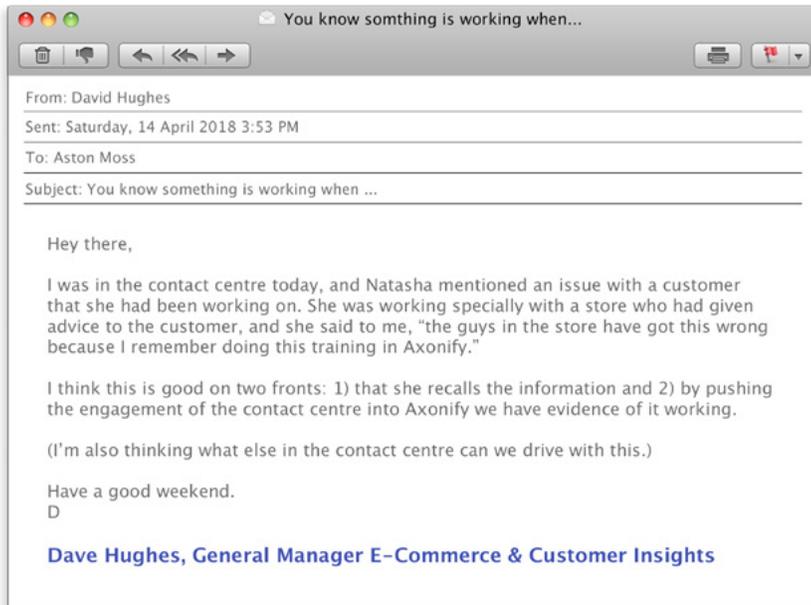
Along with the overwhelmingly positive employee feedback, what Moss found most interesting was how the **participation rate of the Distribution Center was one of the highest team averages**. "This is a group of people who drive forklifts and move boxes all day. For many of them, English is not their first language, they're not particularly tech-savvy as it's not a requirement for their role, and they haven't previously been that engaged with learning," explains Moss. "So the fact that they ranked 4th on our leaderboard is a testament to the quality of Axonify, the quality of content, and of course the overall leadership and approach taken by the management team in that area. If you can make learning happen in that environment—you can make it work anywhere."



## The ripple effect

The transformative power of training with Axonify really hit Moss when employees from the Contact Center—who had received general training on Axonify, but no training specific to their department or job function yet—were actually recalling information to improve customer service.

Moss shared this email from the General Manager of e-Commerce & Customer Insights who is responsible for the Briscoe Contact Center:



“We haven’t created customized training materials for this particular area of the business yet,” reiterates Moss, “but the fact that this employee recalls the right information from general training to make the right decisions is exactly what Axonify is all about.” Moss is confident that their old training approach would not have permeated throughout the business to such a widespread degree.

In fact, this new approach to training is now extensively influencing wider organizational development efforts. “As if the transformation using Axonify for our online learning wasn’t enough, we have started applying the underlying methodologies and techniques in all areas of learning and development in the business,” says Moss. “Our partnership with CGL and the work they’ve done with us to increase our technical capabilities has carried through, influencing both our face-to-face training and content.”



Like any successful leader, Moss understands the value of current competency, which he contrasts to the analogy of the ‘sheep dip’.

What exactly is a sheep dip? Well, according to Moss, “Once a year, farmers put their sheep through the ‘dip’ to ensure they don’t get any bugs.” This annual refresher goes a long way for a flock of sheep—but your employees are not sheep, and they need more than a yearly reminder on training. “So, likewise, for us to mandate learning on a particular topic annually, then test that learning five minutes later, does not mean that person has retained knowledge deep enough to recall it a month or even a week later. That’s why I love the reinforcement Axonify provides.”

Because the modern workplace has significant regulatory requirements on what and how retailers can sell, there’s a heightened expectation on employers to actively manage employee health and safety. “Axonify gives confidence that our team, once trained through the platform, is continually reminded about safe work practices, and their knowledge grows through to application—rather than degrading to forgetting over time,” says Moss.

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### Cutting through the clutter with reinforcement

The continuous reinforcement approach definitely appears to be working. In fact, the Briscoe Group has seen **an average employee knowledge growth of 12% across all departments and current knowledge levels are now at 96%**, with knowledge in certain key topic areas growing by **as much as 34%**.

The leaders at Briscoe recognize people have busy workdays with a lot of things competing for their attention. They understand that when you bombard people with information, the chances of all the crucial pieces actually sticking in an employee’s mind are severely limited. “The multiple levels of learning and reinforcement that are worked into Axonify’s methodology resonates with our modern approach to training,” explains Moss. “Breaking information down into small chunks that are digestible, understandable, and can be remembered by our people and then reinforced by a powerful platform is so important. I have never seen a technology that embodied that before—Axonify is that technology.” Moss can now ensure Briscoe’s employees are always currently competent, rather than competent once a year.

### Planning for continued success

With his eyes on the horizon, Moss intends on making sure leadership has an enduring sense of confidence in its people. His plans for the near future involve a focus on continued employee growth around core topics such as personal safety, customer service, loss prevention, compliance with trading laws, and more.

Now that he and his team have completely re-engineered Briscoe’s approach to training by rebuilding content and the capability of their team, Moss plans on enjoying the fruits of his labor after working through business metrics with the help of CGL and Axonify. “We have a very strong program around manual handling and forklift incidents, so our priority will be to demonstrate how much of a reduction in safety incidents and injuries can be attributed back to training efforts,” shares Moss. “The next one will be customer service and sales, along with our net promoter score. I’m wildly excited about the future uses we will be able to both discover and use with the functionality of this well-designed and easy-to-use system. It’s really everything I could hope for and more.” 