



 **LOCATION**

Dubai, UAE

 **TIME**

10 Weeks

 **PARTICIPANTS**

20 People

About DEWA

Dubai Electricity & Water Authority (DEWA) has been the utility company of the Emirate of Dubai since 1992, managing electricity, water and district cooling needs. We currently employ 12,000 people across seven lines of business serving B2B and B2C customers (covering commercial, residential and industrial markets). With annual revenues of about US\$6 billion and earnings of US\$1.8 billion, we're considered a role model in the Gulf Region. The United Arab Emirates, represented by DEWA, ranked first worldwide for ease of getting electricity, as per the World Bank's 2018 Doing Business Report.

Preparation

In 2016, aware of the profound industry transformations forthcoming on a global and local scale, we decided to redefine our innovation strategy to remain relevant and, even more, to take a leading position in the future by creating and seizing new opportunities. To this purpose, we took the ExO framework as a reference and went a step further to engage OpenExO to propel our transformation.

Our primary goal was to shift from operating as a conventional utility to a digitized, innovation-driven one. The scope involved any and all aspects of the business, including energy, utilities, finance, service and government.

We were eager to test the ExO Sprint methodology in-house. DEWA was being encouraged by the Dubai government to try out new approaches to spark innovation, and a methodology like the ExO Sprint was a perfect channel for this. All divisions of DEWA were involved. The intention

Execution

We embarked on this phenomenal journey as soon as we could: the ExO Sprint kicked off in Dubai December 5, 2016, and ran to March 12, 2017.

We had wanted to expedite the pre-Sprint process and jump in prior to engagement of the full leadership team and final selection of participant teams. We learned, however, that this preparation is critical for the success of the Sprint. When we next do another engagement of this type, we will also choose a time of the year where most of the employees who need to be engaged in the ExO Sprint will have fewer competing demands on their time.



The Solution

The ExO Sprint was a unique opportunity for our different divisions to collaborate closely on a common purpose and experience the richness that this brings. It also helped to uncover untapped talent within the organization and open up opportunities for experimentation.

The teams developed seven initiatives that together represented a new business ecosystem for the company. The projects were developed based on transformative business models combined with exponential technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, water out of air and energy storage.

We achieved amazing results on multiple levels:

Strategic:

DEWA was the first organization in the region to learn the ExO methodology. We became an early adopter and received a boost in the right direction of innovation.

Personal:

The ExO Sprint introduced our employees to new resources (internal and external), and participants gained a new understanding of where and how they could implement emerging technologies.

Cultural:

The ExO Sprint introduced effective collaboration, helped in overcoming cultural barriers and offered a new approach to developing ideas and solutions.

Ideas:

Some of the ExO Sprint initiatives were taken on by our R&D department, including the initiative to transform air into water; others were presented to the Dubai 10X program for disruptive innovation launched by the Government of Dubai.

Follow-Up

DEWA continues to work with concepts similar to the ones developed during the ExO Sprint through the investments in startups it carries out as part of the Dubai Government Accelerators' program and its comprehensive Research and Development Program. Our employees gained a heightened awareness of innovative resources and technology, and the culture became collaborative—clear evidence of a shift in mindset.

A goal for the organization was to test a completely new approach for creating value along with a new velocity for decision-making. In the end, not only did we achieve this, but we also experienced significant positive benefits such as increased team collaboration and instituting experimentation and agile exploration of new technologies and trends into all facets of our work.



"The ExO methodology offers a path to convert great ideas into viable business opportunities."

Marwan Bin Haider
EVP Innovation And The Future, Dewa

