

Mobility Plaza®

Exploring Galp's transformation journey - from forecourt to service hub

We visited one of Galp's service hubs in Alcalá de Henares (Spain) to learn more about their transformation and their unique approach to employee training.



The transformation of forecourts into mobility stations has been developing for over a decade. The idea of a 'hub' has become the natural step up from traditional petrol stations. This is exemplified by Galp, a multinational energy company with large networks in Spain and Portugal. We visited one of their HUBs in Alcalá de Henares (Spain) to learn more about their transformation and their unique approach to employee training.

With a presence of 1,300 service stations in the Iberian Peninsula - 574 located in Spain - Galp has become a major economic player in the region. Their innovative character was on display in May 2022 when they became the first European forecourt operator to open a fully autonomous store.

In 2018, Galp began the transformation of its petrol stations into service HUBs, a concept that combines sustainable mobility, quality food services, and digital technology.

From forecourt to service HUB

Galp's HUB concept is based on three fundamental pillars – an offer of high-quality catering adapted to current trends, the integration of multi-energy services, and the digitalization of the network.



David Cervantes, Galp

"We want to turn our service stations into destinations rather than just passing places. Our HUBs offer a differentiated experience that meets the needs and expectations of our customers," says David Cervantes, Business Development Manager in Iberia.

The transformation has been a gradual but significant process. In 2023, Galp concluded the transformation of 391 stores into HUBs in Iberia and plans to add another 124 by the end of 2024, covering 55% of its Iberian network.

Changing consumer habits provide new sales opportunities. Customers now come to a site looking for breakfast, snacks, lunch, and others. The Iberian retailer is trying to adapt its offering to these changes.

A key part of these hubs is the addition of services. Customers can refuel, charge, access premium café and restaurant services, online pickup, cashback, access information on solar panel installation, recycle trash, and use WIFI to get a bit of work done. One particular service that has enjoyed great success is the dog wash.

"The dog washing service is available at approximately 30 HUBs. In Iberia alone, Dogwash served around 33,000 canine customers in 2023. This initiative shows Galp's commitment to meeting evolving consumer demands," explains David.

In terms of e-mobility, Galp has 5,000 charging points installed in Portugal and Spain. In 2023, it closed with 1 million recharges across its e-mobility network.





Training centers to tackle labor issues

A common issue for convenience stores and forecourts around the world is labor. With the expansion of services, a food offering with complex recipes, and a shrinking labor pool, operators face a huge challenge to ensure they have the right employees available. Galp has been tackling this issue since 2004 through its training centers in Portugal. In November 2023, it opened the first Spanish one at a service station in Alcalá de Henares.

“In addition to generating employment, these centers are also committed to the continuous training of employees; preparing them to face the constant changes in business through exclusive training plans adapted to each of the facilities. They help combat labor shortages,” says Pedro Silva Gomes, Training Manager at Galp Mobility Iberia.

The courses, which take place in special areas annexed to a service station, mostly focus on customer service, innovation, and food offerings. Pedro believes it’s important that these courses are taught at the actual locations to stay ahead of trends.

Since its opening, the training center in Alcalá de Henares has trained 20 employees.



Focus number one - quality food

Unlike other players around the world, Galp has decided to use their brand for the convenience store and café. One of their biggest areas of focus has been their gastronomic offer. After deciding to go with advanced cafeterias and premium restaurants, the retailer is hoping to change the way customers perceive service stations in Spain and Portugal, transforming them from fuel and snacks into culinary destinations.

"In the new HUBs, customers can enjoy a wide range of high-quality food offerings, including local products from carefully selected suppliers. Customers are showing interest in these spaces, and their repeat visits are the best way to know we are meeting their needs," adds David Cervantes.

Menus are seasonal, adapted to different regional areas, and continuously reviewed. The food team, headed by Juan Bosco, quickly adapts to new trends such as pastrami sandwiches and truffle burgers.

Nicolas Polijronos carries out the culinary training in Spain, helping Galp employees produce more complex dishes. "It's not only about the quality of the dish; it's about aesthetics. The dish needs to be visually attractive to the customer," he explains while he carefully spreads sauce on a sandwich.

With a focus on innovation, sustainability, and food, Galp continues the transformation of its network into multi-service, energy hubs in Spain and Portugal.

Written by Oscar Smith Diamante