

# Planon Accelerates Its Smart Building IoT Strategy By Acquiring Axonize

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On June 7, 2021, real estate and facilities management software vendor Planon announced the acquisition of Axonize, the developer of a low-code, highly scalable Internet of Things (IoT) platform. To learn more about the acquisition and implications for customers, Verdantix interviewed the Planon leadership team and analysed our broader research on smart building software. Our analysis finds that Axonize will provide Planon’s customers with enhanced IoT connectivity for buildings, by bringing greater scalability and speed to IoT data collection. The combined Axonize-Planon offering will also provide a strengthened technology portfolio for facilities services firms, facilitating the delivery of demand-based services. Real estate and facilities management executives should use this report to understand the significance of the acquisition and inform their technology roadmaps.

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## ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED

Axonize, Bezeq, Brown University, Deutsche Telekom, DHL, Groupe TERA, Honeywell, ISS, Mitie, Planon, Schneider Electric, Siemens, Sodexo.

# Planon Enhances Its Technology Stack Through The Acquisition Of IoT Specialist Axonize

On June 7, 2021, integrated workplace management system (IWMS) vendor Planon announced that it had acquired cloud-based Internet of Things (IoT) platform provider Axonize. This report helps buyers of real estate and facilities management software understand the significance of the acquisition. To learn more about how the move will affect Planon's strategy and product portfolio in the future, Verdantix spoke with Peter Ankerstjerne, Chief Strategy Officer at Planon, and Erik Jaspers, Product Strategy & Innovation Officer. The deal brings together:

- **Market-leading IWMS platform vendor Planon.**

Founded in 1982, Planon is a Netherlands-headquartered provider of real estate and facilities management software. The 800-employee vendor has over 2,500 customers using its IWMS solution directly and a further 1,000 organizations using the Planon solutions via facilities management services firms (see [Verdantix Green Quadrant: Integrated Workplace Management Systems 2019](#)). The majority of Planon's clients are located in Europe and North America, with a strong footprint in the business services, education and public sectors, including organizations such as Brown University and Siemens Real Estate. In 2020 Schneider Electric made a investment in Planon, signalling a continued strategic partnership between the two firms.

- **Israel-headquartered start-up Axonize, offering an easy-implementation IoT platform.**

Founded in 2015, and based in Tel Aviv, Israel, Axonize is a 16-person developer of IoT software that helps facilities managers and service providers monitor sensors and devices across the built environment. The firm was founded by a team of technology veterans who saw an opportunity to address some of the pain points in older-generation IoT platforms that lacked scalability and delivered slow time to value. In addition to its IoT platform, Axonize has developed a series of out-of-the-box dashboards for monitoring building performance across air quality, energy usage and space utilization. Its marquee customers include Deutsche Telekom, DHL and ISS.

## Axonize Will Supercharge Planon's Capability To Capture And Process Building IoT Data

Planon's latest acquisition is software start-up Axonize, which provides a scalable IoT platform with smart building dashboards. In the near term, Planon will offer Axonize as a stand-alone product, before integrating it with its IWMS platform through application programming interfaces (APIs). This acquisition supports Planon in:

- **Providing customers with scalable IoT connectivity for smart buildings.**

The acquisition will enhance Planon's ability to collect and process high-volume IoT data from open building systems, such as data from smart elevators, HVAC, security systems and sensors. Axonize's key enabling technology is its cloud gateway, which receives, normalizes and transforms incoming data from systems based on common protocols such as BACnet, IoT-N, LoRaWAN and Modbus. In the near future, Planon plans to form integrations between the Axonize platform and Planon Universe, helping customers bring rich time-series IoT data into their IWMS to enhance processes and gain new insights from trend analysis.

- **Offering buyers low-code capabilities to build out their own workflows and apps.**

Axonize developed its IoT platform with simplicity in mind; users can build applications and custom rules

without using specialist back-end development resources. As Verdantix saw in a software demo, users can leverage Axonize's application engine to easily configure rules and workflows that are triggered based on device readings. Firms can also reuse business logic across other workflows or projects, reducing the duplication of processes. Axonize believes that in the majority of cases, customers require zero professional services to configure the platform, reducing the cost of ownership. Israeli telecommunications provider Bezeq used this functionality to reduce the time taken to build an IoT app to just a few days.

- **Responding to growing customer demand for data-driven workflows.**

In the near future, customers will be able to use the Axonize platform to bring granular building data into Planon's workflow platform. This will enable firms to trigger interventions or adjust maintenance schedules following a change in a building's operating conditions. For example, firms could bring granular space utilization data into Planon's work order management system to automatically adjust cleaning or maintenance schedules. This integrated offering will support firms adopting predictive maintenance and demand-based facilities regimes (see [Verdantix Six Best Practices To Strengthen Your Building IoT Analytics Programme](#)).

- **Strengthening its digital portfolio for facilities services firms.**

Both Axonize and Planon have a growing roster of customers in the facilities services sector. Axonize's platform helps facilities services firms capture near real-time data on building utilization and asset performance, whilst Planon Universe for Service Providers supports customer onboarding, service-level tracking, relationship management, scheduling of mobile field technicians and financial management. The addition of Axonize to Planon's product portfolio will be welcome news for existing services customers with ambitions to further deploy technology to enhance services for customers (see [Verdantix Market Overview: Digitizing Facilities Management Services](#)).

- **Developing operational building digital twins using high-velocity IoT data.**

Digital twins promise the next stage in the evolution of building optimization, helping firms unlock new insights, optimize complex workflows and better predict events (see [Verdantix High Value Use Cases For Smart Building Digital Twins](#)). The IoT platform from Axonize will enable Planon to build operational digital twins that provide users with a real-world view of asset performance and operating conditions. To extend this, Planon will have the opportunity to build out advanced analytics that trigger workflows based on an analysis of both real-time data and predictive insights. For example, other digital twin solutions on the market can automatically activate heating or cooling based on real-time occupancy data, space utilization predictions and outside temperature.

- **Delivering on its strategy to make its platform more customizable for customers.**

In September 2020, Planon launched a new strategy to make its IWMS platform more open and customizable for customers and partners (see [Verdantix Planon Drives Forward Its Strategy By Opening Up Its IWMS Platform](#)). The Axonize acquisition provides Planon with a richer range of connections for smart devices and building technology systems from vendors such as Honeywell, Schneider Electric and Siemens. It will also provide facilities services firms and systems integrators with new functionality to quickly build their own software applications that draw on IoT data.

# Planon's Expanded Technology Portfolio Will Support Customers On Their IoT Journey

By acquiring Axonize, Planon will enhance its technology stack for capturing and analysing building IoT data supporting digitization programmes. Prospective users who will benefit the most from the acquisition are:

- **Services firms looking to digitize their service delivery.**

The digitization of the facilities management sector has been slowly gathering pace over the past three years, with large service providers such as ISS, Mitie and Sodexo rolling out IoT monitoring platforms and mobile apps for field workers. These solutions enable the more efficient use of labour based on usage insights and help services firms keep an auditable log of work. The combined Axonize and Planon offering will be a good fit for services firms running digitization programmes based on capturing more granular building data and implementing demand-based workflows. Most facilities management firms prefer configurable off-the-shelf software, to avoid 18 months of software development work and ongoing in-house software development.

- **Facilities management teams aiming to smarten up cleaning workflows.**

Whilst cleaning has been traditionally overlooked by digitization programmes, the COVID-19 pandemic has driven facilities managers to consider a role for sensors and monitoring platforms to make cleaning more effective and efficient. According to our 2021 Global Corporate Survey with 285 building occupiers, 40% of firms are evaluating IoT technology to smarten up cleaning processes (see **Figure 1**). Firms looking to use sensor insights on space utilization to drive more precise cleaning schedules should explore the Axonize offering. ISS has already used the Axonize platform at a customer site to cut daily cleaning schedules from 15 to four, driving a reduction in labour requirements and causing less disruption for building users.

- **Firms with ambitions to scale up IoT implementations to new areas.**

Existing Planon customers looking to scale their IoT programmes to new areas should explore adding the Axonize platform to their real estate technology stack. According to our 2021 Global Corporate Survey, facilities managers are evaluating the role for IoT technologies to support ten facilities process areas, including fault detection, hotdesking and physical security management. However, firms looking to scale up IoT programmes across old buildings will likely face a myriad of challenges. In particular, acquiring data from old proprietary systems is complicated and expensive, often requiring firms to return to the same vendor that installed their building management system (BMS).

- **Sensor providers offering software applications to enhance their hardware.**

The past three years have seen significant growth in the volume of sensor vendors offering hardware to monitor space utilization and indoor air quality (IAQ) (see [Verdantix 10 Exciting Indoor Air Quality Technologies To Watch In 2021](#)). The Axonize platform can help sensor vendors enhance their customer offerings by providing a dashboard view of the health of sensors and a toolkit to build data visualization dashboards. It also opens up the opportunity for sensor vendors to seamlessly integrate with Planon solutions. France-headquartered IAQ sensor vendor Groupe TERA has already used the Axonize software to build a monitoring dashboard, helping it to achieve recurring revenues with its clients.

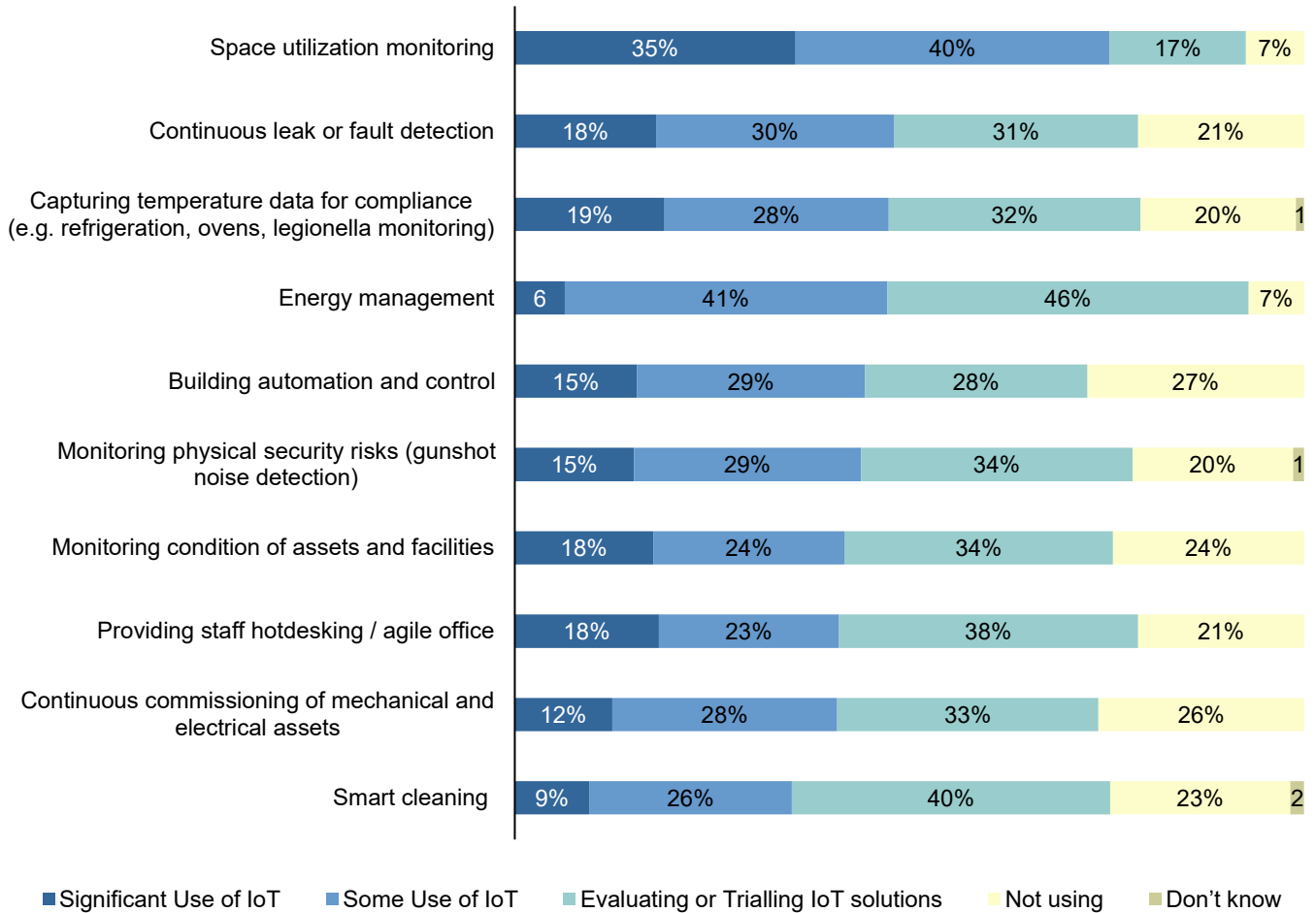
- **Building managers seeking more granular insights into energy consumption.**

Many firms still lack a precise view into energy usage trends, as they rely on high-level data from utility bills and building-level meters. As firms launch more ambitious decarbonization strategies, they will benefit from a more granular view on energy usage from submeters deployed at the room or asset level

FIGURE 1

### Deployment Of IoT In Facilities Management Across Ten Usage Scenarios

“Do you currently use, or plan to use, IoT solutions for the following facilities management processes?”



Note: Data labels are rounded to zero decimal places; percentages less than 7% are written as numbers; chart is ranked by first two response options

Source: Global Corporate Survey 2021: Smart Building Technology Budgets, Priorities & Preferences

N=285

(see [Verdantix Best Practices : Planning For Net Zero Carbon Buildings](#)). Axonize’s out-of-the-box energy monitoring dashboard, combined with submeters, will help firms pinpoint underperforming assets and track the return of energy efficiency projects.



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