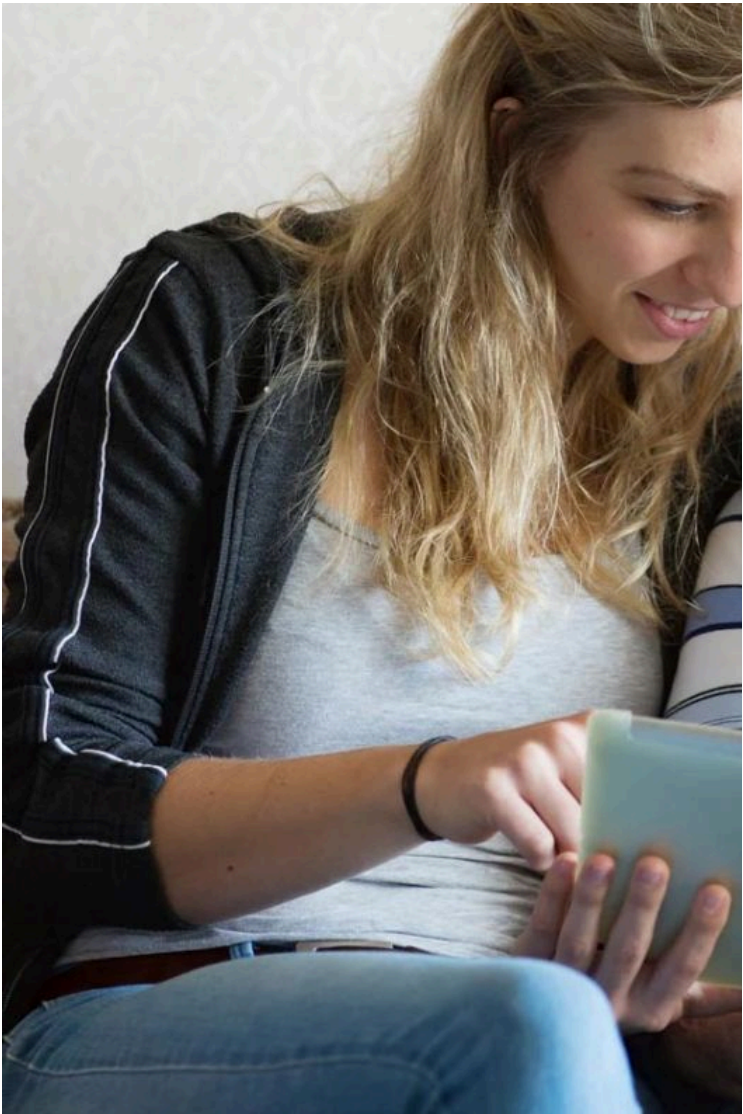


AI: operational excellence customer relations

The use of personal services is expected to increase by more than 35% by 2050 according to INSEE. IRCEM is on the line to support employees and employers in this sector.



Overview A chatbot at the service of customer excellence AI:

With more than 3.3 million individual employers, home directly affected by changes and societal challenges, su



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longevity of the population.

A national expert in social protection for family jobs and challenges, the IRCCEM Group rightly places solidarity at its strategy to provide the best possible service to its clients. Its "Quintessence 2030" business project integrates biodiversity in order to adapt its services to the new challenges of tomorrow.

In the personal assistance sector, the need for information from clients and their families is part of IRCCEM's mission.

Firstly, because both employers and employees are private individuals, companies, then, there is a need for increased support because neither are experts in regulation.

Secondly, because pension, provident and insurance issues are complex and many changes – and the pandemic has only accentuated this complexity.

"To meet all these demands, we had already made a significant effort to document our sites", says Ludovic Decarpigny, IRCCEM's Transverse IT Service Manager, "but we found that these documentations were not consulted enough... Already a partner of IRCCEM in terms of infrastructure, IBM offered to support us on this subject in a different way from traditional ESNs." IBM Cloud Expert Labs (formerly IBM Garage for Cloud), an innovation center working in agile co-creation on cutting-edge technologies, took up the challenge.

Design Thinking sessions were first organized to identify how to better respond to customer requests: either by enabling them to easily find answers themselves, or by enabling IRCCEM to respond more accurately and quickly. "We didn't know about Design Thinking until 2018," recalls Ludovic Decarpigny, "about ten people took part, from customer relations professionals to the company's IT specialists. All the ideas discussed were presented. It wasn't just about technology, the innovations also concerned organizational changes on which the operational and IT managers found themselves in agreement".

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4,000 Conversations per month

The chatbot relieves customer relations teams of **4,000** conversations each month

90% Completion Rate

The success rate for Chatbot conversations that provide a response to the customer is **90%**

“We had made a considerable effort to put documentation for our customers online... but we found that it was rarely consulted compared to the number of emails

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A chatbot at the service of customer excellence

It was the chatbot project that was finally selected. Its objective: to automate certain responses and point to online documentation of IRCEM sites.

The project was split into two parts: an artificial intelligence part and a more technical part, linked to the chatbot's GUI and its integration into the site. For each of these tasks, a team was formed comprising an IRCEM developer and an IBM Cloud Expert Labs developer. The team was headed by a project manager. This co-development organization was particularly well suited to the company: "Because our business is based on handling confidential data, IRCEM has a strong culture of internalization and control of our IS," confirms Ludovic Decarpigny, "so we wanted to acquire all the expertise on these developments so that we could continue to manage and grow these projects ourselves".



“Beyond automation, the chatbot was also a way for IRCEM to discover the implementation of technologies that are not very common within

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our IS: AI and the connection of certain components of our IS with the cloud.”

Ludovic Decarpigny

Transverse IT Service Manager at IRCCEM

To enrich the knowledge base, the team began by exploiting a corpus of emails already received. The theme of social action (support for customers in difficult situations such as serious illness, disability, over-indebtedness), was chosen as a priority because it represents a large number of queries and has a lot of online documentation. IBM Cloud Expert Labs trained the IRCCEM teams in the use of watsonx Assistant. "The interface provided by IBM Cloud makes it easy to get to grips with watsonx Assistant, configure it, test it and check that it's working properly. We can quickly identify how it interprets users' messages, correct it if necessary and improve understanding through machine learning. All this makes the use of AI very accessible, which is a real strength, as it allows us to concentrate on our application rather than on configuring services," confirms Alexis Flouw, Software and Development Engineer.

During the acceptance phase, business and customer relations experts were brought in to test the chatbot. Then, once the AI's understanding was deemed sufficient, the decision tree was moved into production for the public launch. "IBM's cloud-based feedback tools enabled us to track the chatbot's adoption right away, and identify any comprehension issues. We trained people to correct the learning process, and this was done over time," explains Ludovic Decarpigny. Once the first topic had been mastered, IRCCEM extended the chatbot's knowledge to other areas, such as retirement and provident insurance. During this period of development, and thanks to the successful transfer of knowledge, IRCCEM worked autonomously, calling on IBM only very occasionally.

AI: from chatbot to “augmented” advisor

The chatbot now accounts for almost 4,000 conversations a month, covering around a hundred different purposes. Specific updates have been implemented, such as Covid-related questions. Despite this success, the IRCCEM teams realized that the number of emails was continuing to rise... The chatbot does indeed have its limits: some customers don't want to talk to what they consider to be a robot. Others prefer to write emails in order to be more precise.

A new Design Thinking session has enabled us to imagine another use for AI within an assisted messaging system. The principle: when the customer enters the content of his email in a dedicated window, the AI analyzes his texts to provide him, in real time, with

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general or personal information taken from his IRCEM data. In the end, if the customer does not obtain the satisfactory information at the time of entry, his message leaves to be processed in the traditional way by an advisor. "Since the launch of this service 9 months ago, we have observed that the assistant is activated 7 times out of 10. And following its intervention, between 5 and 10% of people finally decide that sending their message is no longer necessary," summarizes Ludovic Decarpigny.

Recruiting employees to manage customer relations is becoming increasingly complex. While AI can help reduce incoming flows of requests and therefore control workloads, it should also enable us to go further.

This is the medium-term ambition of IRCEM, which wants to "augment" the advisors thanks to AI, by making it easier for them to search for documents in the database and extract data.... This will free them from the most repetitive tasks, giving them more time for higher value-added tasks. For Ludovic Decarpigny, "it's a double opportunity to offer a more precise, rapid and efficient customer service, while offering our advisors a more attractive mission."



About IRCEM

Groupe IRCEM is a non-profit, jointly-managed social protection group dedicated to the home and family employment sector. Founded in 1973, it protects its members from life's risks and supports the most vulnerable by placing its raison d'être: "to optimize the disability-free life expectancy of its members" at the heart of its 3 institutions: IRCEM Retraite, IRCEM Prévoyance and IRCEM Mutuelle. IRCEM's mission is to protect over 1.4 million childcare assistants and employees of individual employers, as well as 750,000 pensioners.

More information about [ircem.eu](https://www.ircem.eu)

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