

Converteo - From Chatbot to AI Agent Lacoste's Experience in Transforming Customer Care

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Preamble

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Main Points Discussed

1) A customer care transformation built around two complementary AI use cases

The Lacoste project was not only about replacing a traditional chatbot with a more advanced conversational AI. The core ambition was broader: to use AI both for end customers and for customer care advisors.

Two dimensions were highlighted:

- Customer-facing AI: enabling customers to interact with an AI assistant aligned with Lacoste’s brand tone of voice.**
- Employee-facing AI: equipping customer care teams with tools that simplify their daily work, reduce repetitive tasks, and allow them to focus on higher-value interactions.**

This dual focus was described as a form of “symmetry of attention”: improving the customer experience while also improving the employee experience.

2) The project was launched in a context of rising customer expectations around AI

The speakers emphasized that customer expectations are evolving quickly as people become more familiar with AI tools in their daily lives.

In the case of Lacoste, the existing solution, particularly in the U.S. market, was based on decision-tree logic. While this type of chatbot was appropriate for previous technological standards, Lacoste saw an opportunity to move toward a more advanced conversational experience.

The project was also a way for Lacoste to “put a first foot” into AI and agentic technologies, with the objective of learning through a concrete use case before scaling AI more broadly across the organization.

3) The MVP had to balance speed, continuity of service, and long-term ambition

A key constraint was timing: Lacoste had an existing tool to replace by the end of February 2026, with no acceptable interruption of customer care service.

To meet this deadline, the team chose to rely on Google’s AI and customer relationship technologies rather than build everything from scratch. This enabled faster production readiness while creating a foundation that could support future AI

use cases, including online sales, internal productivity tools, documentation, meetings, presentations, and potentially coding-related use cases.

The project therefore had two parallel objectives:

- **Short-term MVP:** launch a functional, reliable conversational agent quickly.
 - **Long-term roadmap:** build a scalable AI foundation for future customer experience and internal transformation use cases.
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4) The solution was designed to fit into Lacoste's existing technology stack

Although Google was used for the AI layer, Lacoste's environment remained heavily linked to Salesforce.

A key design principle was to avoid adding cognitive load for customer care advisors. The AI solution was integrated into existing tools, especially Salesforce, so that advisors did not have to manage an additional platform.

This was particularly important because the project aimed not only to automate customer interactions but also to improve the work environment of customer care teams.

5) Brand identity and tone of voice were central to the design

For Lacoste, the way the AI expresses itself was almost as important as the factual accuracy of the response.

The speakers explained that Lacoste pays strong attention to wording, brand image, and tone of voice. This created a tension: marketing teams initially wanted to control specific phrases and predefined messages, but testing showed that overly constrained responses made conversations feel unnatural.

The project therefore required a shift in mindset: moving from fully scripted brand communication to a more flexible AI-driven interaction, while ensuring that the AI still respected Lacoste's brand identity.

6) The project followed an agile and user-centric delivery approach

The team structured the project around design, build, and delivery phases, but with a highly iterative logic.

Although there was only one final production launch, the project was organized so that the chatbot could theoretically have gone live earlier with increasing levels of functionality:

- after around two months: ability to answer frequent customer questions
- after around three months: connection to order tracking
- final phase: escalation to a human advisor

This approach allowed the team to progressively test, improve, and validate the conversational experience before full deployment.

7) A key challenge was moving from deterministic processes to probabilistic AI

One of the main transformation challenges was cultural and methodological.

Traditional customer journeys and digital interfaces are deterministic: if the user clicks somewhere, a predefined result appears. With generative AI, the same question may lead to slightly different answers depending on the context, user history, or phrasing.

The speakers stressed that teams had to learn how to work with this probabilistic logic. This required new testing methods, new acceptance criteria, and continuous prompt iteration to reach the expected quality level.

The central question became: how much freedom should be given to the AI, and where should the experience remain controlled and scripted?

8) Human escalation was deliberately designed as part of the experience

The project did not aim to replace human advisors entirely. On the contrary, the speakers insisted that customers should always know whether they are speaking with an AI or a human.

The interface was designed to clearly distinguish AI responses from human responses. For example, the AI writes progressively through streaming, while human responses appear differently, with typing indicators and visual cues.

The objective was to keep the customer journey fluid while preserving transparency and trust in the interaction.

9) The future of conversational UX remains open and not fully standardized

A discussion emerged around whether clear design standards already exist for distinguishing AI from human interactions.

The conclusion was that some standards are emerging, largely influenced by tools such as ChatGPT, for example streaming responses. However, there is still no fully established design standard for hybrid conversations combining AI and human advisors in the same interface.

Several future UX questions remain open:

- Will conversational interfaces replace traditional search bars?**
- Will chat bubbles remain the dominant format?**
- Will AI support co-navigation on websites?**
- Should AI interfaces become more embedded into the broader browsing experience?**

Lacoste's ambition was to test these emerging standards while keeping the interface modular enough to evolve quickly.

10) AI agents were also built to support customer care advisors

Beyond the customer-facing chatbot, the project included AI agents designed for customer care teams.

These agents support advisors by:

- automatically qualifying incoming cases**
- pre-filling contact reasons and case information**
- summarizing conversations and recommended next actions**
- linking customers to the right customer record**
- assisting with translation between French and English in the North American context**
- adapting responses to Lacoste's tone of voice**
- helping analyze conversation sentiment and quality**

The objective was to reduce tool fragmentation and allow advisors to work more efficiently from a single integrated environment.

11) Escalation rules were designed to protect both customers and employees

The AI was also used to manage escalation intelligently.

Some cases can be proposed for escalation, for example when the customer wants to speak to a human. Other cases require faster or mandatory escalation, especially when there is a risk of losing a sale, a payment issue, or a brand image concern.

Conversely, for aggressive or insulting customer behavior, the system can avoid immediate live escalation and redirect the case toward colder channels, such as email or callback.

This reflects an important ethical and operational principle: AI should not only improve customer experience, but also help protect customer care teams from emotionally difficult interactions.

12) Early results were positive across customer satisfaction, self-care, and efficiency

The first results shared during the webinar were encouraging.

The speakers noted that:

- customer satisfaction had improved compared with the previous solution**
- the self-care rate was trending positively, with the chatbot answering more questions directly**
- escalation to human advisors decreased during opening hours**
- conversation duration decreased, especially for AI-handled interactions**
- new features became possible, such as offering callback or email follow-up outside opening hours**
- analytics became more advanced, enabling better understanding of customer needs and conversational pain points**

The project therefore appears to have delivered both service quality improvement and operational efficiency gains.

Conclusion

The Lacoste case shows that moving from chatbot to AI agent is not only a technology upgrade. It is a broader customer care transformation involving UX design, brand identity, employee experience, change management, and operating model adaptation.

The key success factors highlighted in the webinar were:

- starting with a concrete MVP and a clear deadline**
- integrating AI into existing tools rather than adding complexity**
- preserving the role of human advisors in the customer journey**
- adapting methods to probabilistic AI rather than deterministic workflows**

- **using AI to improve both customer experience and employee experience**
- **building a scalable foundation for future agentic AI use cases**

Ultimately, the project illustrates a pragmatic approach to AI transformation: start with a focused operational use case, create measurable value quickly, and use the MVP as a first step toward a broader AI-enabled customer experience roadmap.