



**Case Study:** Travel & Hospitality – Digital Business

# Bot Brings European Airline Closer to Its Customers

## Developing next-big-thing technology to meet fast-changing traveler habits.

Competing in a digital world requires connecting with customers on their preferred technology, via their favorite platforms. Today, this means mobile and messenger. Chat is quickly becoming the communication method of choice among mobile users who expect to instantly interact not only each with other, but their favorite businesses too.

Driven by the popularity of WhatsApp and Facebook, messenger platforms are considered to be a gamechanging development, and the technology is giving way to “the next-big-thing;” that is, conversational interface, which is expected to have a bigger impact than smartphones.

This low cost airline had witnessed an enormous shift in its customers’ usage patterns to chat apps. The leader in holiday travel knew it needed to find new ways to serve this base, using more than just human interface. At the same time, Mirabeau, a Cognizant Digital Business, had been creating conversational interfaces and exploring bot technology, when it realized an opportunity for this client to meet the new demand for chat among its customers.

## At a Glance

Releasing a product in an early stage of development might seem risky, but for this European airline, launching their flight search capability in Facebook Messenger was worthwhile.

They wanted to take full advantage of the opportunity afforded by digital technology for accelerated time-to-market, machine learning and real-world feedback that results in realtime improvement.

Client review: “Bots are here to stay and will change everything.” “Companies that have not begun exploring the opportunities available should start doing so right away. The sooner you start learning and getting comfortable with the potential of this technology, the more prepared you’ll be when it becomes the industry standard – which may happen in a matter of months.”

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Mirabeau was developing new experiences, through a new generation of artificial intelligence and cognitive services based on Microsoft Azure's Cortana, which has capabilities like natural language understanding, facial recognition and emotional detection. From there, bots can be developed to help people do anything from buy products and find information, to use services — all in a more intuitive way.

We came up with the idea to enable a bot to allow passengers to book their flights through Facebook Messenger. After seeing the prototype, the airline was enthusiastic about the idea and wanted to get started developing the real solution immediately.

Leveraging our client's business knowledge and customer insights along with our technological and design expertise, and using Agile and Lean development practices, teams worked in one-week iteration sprints.

This allowed for quick system adjustments according to specific questions and challenges encountered in the development process. Testing was performed and improvements deployed concurrent to development. The key was finding the points in the interaction where chat could provide real value. Simple click-based functions

were added to eliminate any gaps and accelerate the transaction.

Just weeks after the initial concept was completed, their flight search capability was ready. Our team takes advantage of cloud technology to make improvements based on real-time feedback and analytics.

With the right balance of text chat and click-based automation, the solution creates a flowing conversation on Facebook Messenger that smoothly guides customers through the ticket selection and purchasing process.

Our client knows its success depends on being where its customers are, but keeping up with their ever-changing digital habits was challenging.

Instead of succumbing to the pace, however, this company leveraged the latest technology to stay a step ahead. And, by creating a dialogue with its customers, the airline can ensure its new offering continues to evolve with their needs.

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## Fast development resulting in quick go-to-market product.

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Cognizant (Nasdaq-100: CTSH) is one of the world's leading professional services companies, transforming clients' business, operating and technology models for the digital era. Our unique industry-based, consultative approach helps clients envision, build and run more innovative and efficient businesses. Headquartered in the U.S., Cognizant is ranked 195 on the Fortune 500 and is consistently listed among the most admired companies in the world. Learn how Cognizant helps clients lead with digital at [www.cognizant.com](http://www.cognizant.com) or follow us [@Cognizant](https://twitter.com/Cognizant).

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## Cognizant

### World Headquarters

500 Frank W. Burr Blvd.  
Teaneck, NJ 07666 USA  
Phone: +1 201 801 0233  
Fax: +1 201 801 0243  
Toll Free: +1 888 937 3277

### European Headquarters

1 Kingdom Street  
Paddington Central  
London W2 6BD England  
Phone: +44 (0) 20 7297 7600  
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7121 0102

### India Operations Headquarters

#5/535 Old Mahabalipuram Road  
Okkiyam Pettai, Thoraipakkam  
Chennai, 600 096 India  
Phone: +91 (0) 44 4209 6000  
Fax: +91 (0) 44 4209 6060