



Thomas Chanzy **Thomas Chanzy** • 1stVerified • 1stBilingual (EN/FR) Public Affairs Executive | Government Relations | Stakeholder Engagement | Integrated Communications | People Leader | Trusted Connector & Pragmatic Problem SolverBilingual (EN/FR) Public Affairs Executive | Government Relations | Stakeholder Engagement | Integrated Communications | People Leader | Trusted Connector & Pragmatic Problem Solver3h • 3 hours ago •

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Does [hashtag#AI](#) really make work easier?

Yesterday, I attended a practical AI workshop organized by [AAGEF Ontario](#) at the [Centre for Social Innovation \(CSI\)](#) and led by [Ken Timsit](#), with presentations from [Xavier Chaillot](#), [Daniel Elya](#), [Stephen Relph](#), and [Julia T.](#)

The discussion focused less on hype and more on concrete applications of AI in everyday business operations.

Some examples of how the panelists use AI included:

- Triaging emails and customer inquiries, automating responses, and building workflows.
- Analyzing creative briefs.
- Creating marketing assets and ads that comply with brand guidelines.
- Building a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system from scratch.
- Generating and distributing business intelligence scans.
- Supporting security infrastructure and identifying threats.

A few takeaways stood out to me:

- ✓ The productivity gains at the operational level are real.

Tasks such as CRM development and market scans, which are traditionally outsourced at significant cost, can increasingly be handled internally.

One panelist mentioned that a high-quality presentation that previously took up to 5 hours to produce can now be completed in 45 minutes. AI can design slides, extract internal data, and reduce dependence on multiple internal teams and external suppliers.

- ✓ At scale, the return on investment is still unclear.

Several CEOs and industry leaders have publicly questioned whether current AI spending is generating proportional returns.

When implementation costs become massive, the productivity gains become harder to quantify and justify.

✓ AI implementation raises governance and accountability questions.

In many organizations, AI initiatives sit across multiple departments: technology, finance, operations, administration, and legal. As implementation becomes more complex, ownership becomes critical.

One panelist mentioned that, within six months, his company expects to hire a Chief AI Officer dedicated solely to AI-related strategy and governance.

💡 CONCLUSION: There is a difference between saving hours of work and creating long-term value.

The jury is still out on the deeper impact of AI on jobs, productivity, and work processes, but one thing is certain: AI is not going away, and organizations and professionals need to learn how to work with it.



Edmond Mellina [Edmond Mellina](#) • 1stVerified • 1stRenowned thought-leader / expert in Nimble Change Leadership™, change agility, agile decision-making & culture change | Executing strategic transformations & building agile capabilities across sectors | ORCHANGO Renowned thought-leader / expert in Nimble Change Leadership™, change agility, agile decision-making & culture change | Executing strategic transformations & building agile capabilities across sectors | ORCHANGO 1h • Edited • 1 hour ago • Edited • Visible to anyone on or off LinkedIn
Using hashtag#AI Agents was the topic last night @ **AAGEF Ontario** – the association of alumni from France's "Grande Écoles" (the equivalent of the Ivy League). **The event-format was different though...**

Instead of a classic presentation, the evening started with a panel "discussion" moderated by [Ken Timsit](#). I've put discussion between quotation marks because it was more experience sharing than discussion: the panelists ([Julia T.](#), [Stephen Relph](#), [Xavier Chaillot](#) & [Daniel E.](#) – as well as Ken) took turn sharing some of their [hashtag#UseCases](#) with tools such as Claude, Gemini, Hermes Agent, OpenClaw, Base 44, etc. They also told us what prompted them to get into the tool; how long it took them to go from *merely playing* to *leveraging productively*; etc.

After that, each panelist went to a break out room where audience members joined them based on interests. Each group got into a deeper dive and broader sharing of their respective experiences.

Thanks / merci [Ken](#) for being the instigator & lead organizer for this event; and [AAGEF Ontario](#), [Bruno Lebeault](#) and all the volunteers for everything you do to keep our alumni community connected!! 🙌 👍