

September 2, 2025

Newsletter

To All Members of the Press

IRIE KOKEN CO., LTD.

Our Journey in AI Adoption and Utilization

A Top-Down Challenge Leading to a Tailored Implementation

Steady Progress from Education → Evaluation →

Implementation

IRIE KOKEN CO., LTD. (Head Office: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; President & CEO: Norihiro Irie; hereinafter referred to as “our company”), which develops and sells bellows used in semiconductor manufacturing equipment and high-speed rail systems, is pleased to announce the process and case studies of our AI adoption. While AI implementation is widely encouraged today, many companies struggle to apply it effectively in practice.

As a development-oriented company engaged in high-mix, large-volume production, standardizing operations through AI is particularly challenging for us. Nevertheless, we have successfully implemented AI through a reliable process starting with employee education, followed by evaluation and implementation. Our unique training program, the “SHUHARI Academy,” is part of our initiative to cultivate employees who can learn diverse knowledge and demonstrate originality.



Group photo of all AI contest participants

■ The Night Before the Decision: Leadership-Led Learning and Policy Formation

How many companies have had their top executives learn AI programming before deciding on AI adoption? While this may be common in IT firms, we are a manufacturing company.

Our President Irie, a former systems engineer with a science background, and an executive officer (also with engineering/SE experience at the time) chose to study AI programming through our correspondence education. With prior programming and AI experience, they concluded that building AI tools from scratch and educating employees internally would be extremely difficult and not suitable for our company.

Instead, they decided to focus on “business efficiency” and explore quick-win solutions using existing AI tools. A key requirement for implementation was “improving AI literacy among employees,” which led to the selection of an external training provider in 2022.

■ AI Education Program

After evaluating several training programs, we selected a six-month course. Out of our approximately 200 employees, 40 (25%) voluntarily signed up. Participation was not mandatory, but this reflects our company’s philosophy of fostering employees who seek knowledge and originality.

The course was delivered via an online app, allowing employees to study during work breaks, and all participants successfully completed the program.

■ AI Application Contest

After completing the training, we held an “AI Application Contest” to explore how AI could be implemented. The contest, held in 2023 and 2024, encouraged participants to think critically about AI applications in their work.

Proposals included clear problem identification, expected benefits, added value, cost, and implementation difficulty. The contest was judged by top executives, including the president, ensuring practical and employee-driven ideas were considered for implementation.



Overview of the contest venue

■ From Contest to Implementation

Following the contest, the first implementation was in the Quality Assurance Department, based on a winning proposal by Executive Officer and QA Department Head, Mr. Nobuyasu.

Mr. Nobuyasu, who also serves as an executive at our affiliate IKC KOREA, frequently communicates with overseas contacts. Given the nature of QA work, urgent meetings are common, and arranging interpreters was a challenge. The AI translation



Mr. Nobuyasu, Executive Officer and Head of QA, who spearheaded the AI adoption

software eliminated hesitation caused by language barriers.

Due to the sensitive nature of QA work, standalone use (not cloud-based) was a prerequisite to minimize data leakage risks.

The selection process focused on three criteria:

1. Translation accuracy
2. Cost-performance and ease of implementation
3. Usability

Five companies were shortlisted, and three underwent one-month trials (totaling three months). IKC KOREA members also participated, verifying translation quality in both Japanese-Korean and Korean-Japanese directions.

■ Post-Implementation Results

The benefits extended beyond shorter meetings. Time spent on post-meeting reviews and minutes was also reduced. More importantly, the hesitation to hold meetings due to language barriers disappeared. QA work demands confidentiality and urgency. Eliminating language obstacles allowed the team to focus on their core mission—ensuring quality.

Mr. Nobuyasu commented:

“We still use interpreters for important meetings to avoid errors. However, interpreters don’t always convey nuances. With the AI translation software, Japanese text appears in real-time, helping us understand nuances and shorten meetings.”



On-screen explanation

■ Future Outlook

Unexpected benefits also emerged. As communication increased through the AI tool, employees became more curious about their counterparts and began studying languages on their own. This AI initiative has sparked intercultural exchange, and we expect even more active communication going forward.

Mr. Nobuyasu emphasized:

“AI is a support tool, not a replacement for humans. In QA, where past data and know-how are critical, AI cannot fully replace human capabilities. But as a support tool to prevent errors and supplement human limitations, AI can deliver real results.”

We plan to expand AI use to other departments and enhance collaboration with overseas offices and production sites through multilingual, multi-location meetings.

Company Overview – IRIE KOKEN CO., LTD.

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Established: May 24, 1966

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