Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning

November 17-18, 2025 | London, UK

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Static and Dynamic Connectionism

We all know what a great customer experience feels like. It's when your favourite café remembers your order, when your mobile provider solves a problem before you even notice it, or when a sports organisation makes it easy for you to engage without endless paperwork. These moments don't happen by accident — they happen because organisations understand their customers deeply and act on that knowledge.

But here's the reality: while companies now collect more customer data than ever before, many still fail to turn that information into action. Feedback surveys gather dust. Ratings sit in dashboards. Online reviews go unread. Meanwhile, customers grow frustrated, feeling like their voices don't matter. Businesses lose loyalty, revenue, and reputation.

This is where advanced analytics and machine learning can flip the script.

From Telecom to Hospitality: My Journey with Analytics I first saw the power of analytics in the telecom industry, working with one of the most competitive mobile markets in the world. With more than 80 million customers, the challenge was enormous. Even a tiny increase in customer churn — people switching to a rival network — could cost millions.

So we built models that went far beyond traditional demographics. Instead of grouping people by age or gender, we looked at their behaviours: how often they used data, how they interacted with offers, what their spending patterns looked like. This segmentation allowed us to tailor products and communications with far more relevance.

On top of that, we built churn and retention models that identified customers at the highest risk of leaving. Armed with these insights, we could reach out with personalised offers before they decided to switch. The result? A 20% improvement in customer retention.

We didn't stop there. Cross-sell and up-sell models revealed hidden opportunities to match customers with new services they actually wanted, boosting sales by 10%. And through conjoint analysis — a method that reveals what customers truly value in pricing — we restructured tariffs and offers, striking the right balance between profitability and fairness.

Those experiences taught me an important lesson: customer experience isn't about reacting to problems. It's about anticipating needs, acting early, and building trust through relevance.

Years later, I applied these same principles in completely different industries. At Greene

King, one of the UK's largest pub and restaurant groups, segmentation models helped us understand distinct guest profiles — families looking for value, couples looking for experience, and loyal locals who returned weekly. Predictive models showed us how staffing, menu design, and even local events influenced satisfaction. That insight allowed managers to take action before complaints escalated, saving costs while making guests happier.

Even in sport governance, with UK Anti-Doping, the lessons carried over. Here, the "customers" were athletes and partner organisations. By applying segmentation and behavioural analysis, we discovered which groups were more likely to engage with education programmes, and predictive models helped us direct limited resources to where they would make the biggest difference. The result was improved efficiency, stronger relationships, and increased trust in a highly scrutinised environment.

Why Customer Experience Needs Analytics More Than Ever

Today, customer expectations are higher than ever. A diner in a local pub expects the same level of personalisation as they get from Amazon or Netflix. An athlete expects a sports body to provide the same smooth digital experience they enjoy from online shopping.

This "experience spillover" means customers no longer compare you only to your competitors. They compare you to the best service they've ever had anywhere. That's a high bar.

Meanwhile, businesses face tighter budgets. Leaders need every investment in customer experience to demonstrate measurable returns. That's exactly what advanced analytics offers: a bridge between happy customers and healthy business performance.

A Simple Framework

From my cross-industry journey, I've come to believe that organisations can make the biggest impact by following three principles:

1. Segment to Personalise

Don't just rely on age or income brackets. Understand behaviours, motivations, and needs. Design products and experiences for those groups in ways that feel relevant and meaningful.

2. Predict to Prevent

Don't wait for complaints. Use predictive models to forecast churn, dissatisfaction, or demand patterns. Solve problems before customers even notice them.

3. Experiment to Improve

Don't assume you know the answer. Test it. Use A/B experiments and pricing optimisation to learn quickly what works best and refine your approach continuously.

This framework shifts customer experience from being reactive and costly to proactive and profitable.

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Final Thoughts

Analytics is not about replacing people with algorithms. It's about giving organisations the tools to listen better and act smarter. The best analytics cultures empower managers, staff, and leaders to use data as a guide, not a crutch. Customers don't see the models behind the scenes — but they feel the difference in every interaction.

Across telecom, hospitality, and sport, one truth has been clear to me: when organisations listen to their data, they learn to listen to their customers. And those who learn to predict, personalise, and perform will be the ones who thrive in the future.

Biography

Sajal Kanti Howlader is an Insight Analyst with extensive experience in applying advanced analytics and machine learning to improve customer experience across sectors including telecoms, hospitality, and sports governance. His expertise spans predictive modelling, behavioural segmentation, and data-driven strategies that deliver measurable business impact. Sajal has led initiatives that enhanced customer retention, optimised operations, and strengthened stakeholder engagement. He is passionate about turning data into actionable insights and advocates for analytics to anticipate needs and enable proactive decision-making within the hospitality industry.