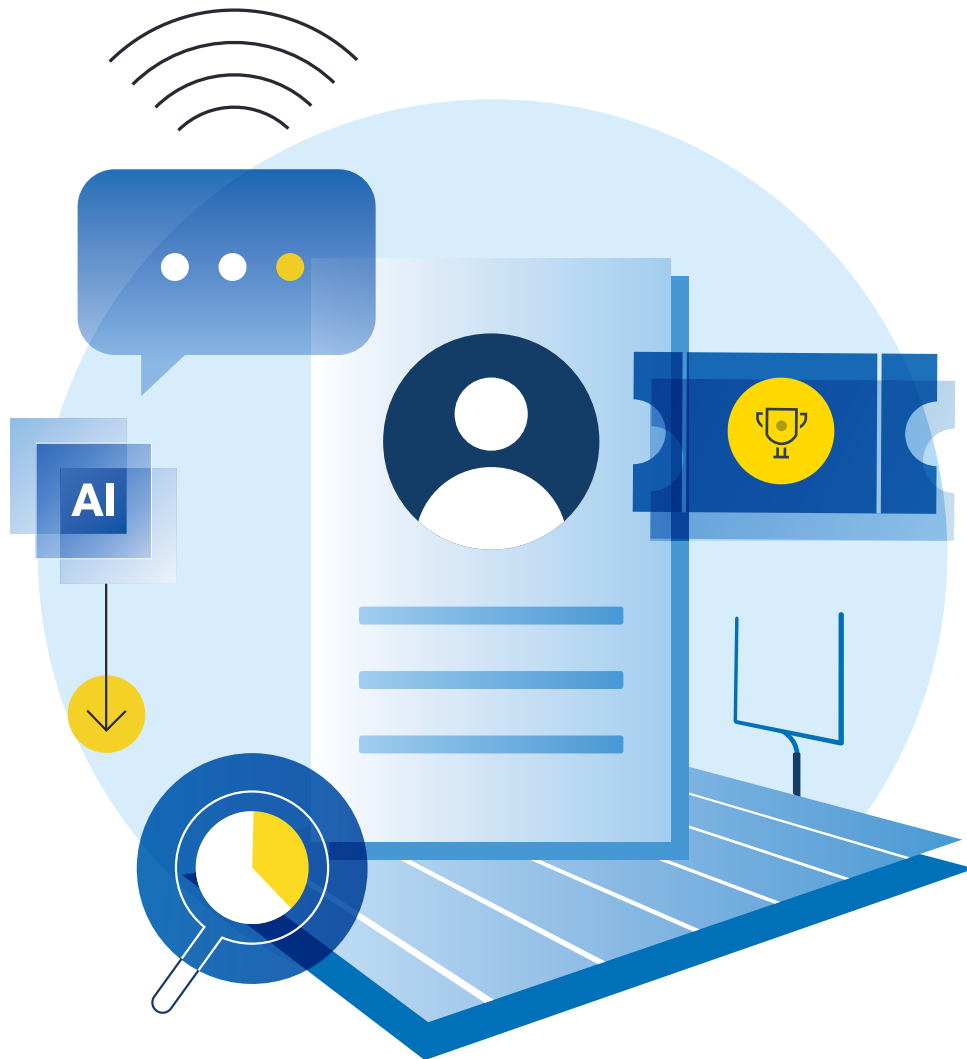


# Grow Brand Presence and Deepen Loyalty with Data-Driven Fan Experiences

AI is Changing the Game for Sports Marketers





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The race for fan loyalty is on, and the rules have changed. In today's digital-first world, fans are bombarded with content across platforms. Sports marketers are no longer competing for airtime. They're competing for attention in a fragmented, fast-scrolling landscape. Now, personalization is the differentiator that helps brands stand out from the crowd.

While some organizations are already activating advanced personalization strategies, others are just beginning their AI journey. The good news? You don't need a full tech overhaul to get started. Begin with the data you have: centralize fan insights, identify key engagement touchpoints, and pilot small initiatives like personalized email campaigns or targeted in-venue messaging. Even simple steps can unlock new revenue streams and deepen fan loyalty.

Activating real-time data to personalize a sports fan's journey has the potential to generate long-term value for sports marketers. By combining a modern tech stack and custom AI with human expertise, CapTech's Data-Driven Fan Experience (DDFX) solution enables sports organizations to deliver personalized fan experiences in real time.

### Activating Fan Data in Real Time:

- > Drives engagement and conversions
- > Optimizes operations
- > Unlocks new revenue streams



# 82%

of consumers say personalization influences their brand choices more than price or convenience.

The organizations that invest in AI infrastructure now will not only meet rising consumer expectations, they'll win fan loyalty, while other brands play catch-up.

## Sports Marketing is a Power Play

Sports marketing is experiencing a surge in investment and impact. In 2025, 39% of U.S. B2C marketing executives plan to increase their spending on large-scale sports sponsorships, while [28% intend to enter the space for the first time](#).



# 87%

of marketing executives agree that their [sports sponsorships drive tangible business growth](#).

What makes sports marketing especially powerful is its ability to resonate with younger audiences. Most U.S. sports fans across major leagues are under 45, and Gen Z is the fastest-growing segment. This demographic isn't just watching — they're buying. [Gen Z is most likely to purchase from brands that sponsor](#) their favorite teams, and tech-forward leagues like TGL are capturing their attention, with 42% of viewers falling within the advertiser-coveted 18–49 age group, tying with the NBA for the highest across all sports.

## Personalization Scores Big with Young Fans

To connect meaningfully with today's sports fans, especially Gen Z and Millennials, brands must move beyond broad messaging and embrace personalization as a strategic necessity. These younger audiences expect more than just entertainment. They want experiences that reflect their preferences, behaviors, and identities.

In fact, [82% of consumers](#) say personalization influences their purchasing decisions more than price or convenience. Among sports fans aged 18–29, [personalized content is the top priority](#) when engaging with sports media.

## CapTech's 2025 Consumer Study Reinforces this Trend:



**67%** of respondents are willing to share preferences across brands for more tailored experiences.



**85%** of Gen Z respondents say joint loyalty programs increase their brand loyalty.

For example, a joint loyalty program between a sports team and a food delivery service could use agentic AI to offer game-day discounts, tailored to a fan's viewing habits and team affiliation — resulting in measurable conversions.

Personalization transforms passive viewership into active engagement, making fans feel seen and valued. For instance, sports organizations can use real-time data to deliver personalized highlight reels, exclusive merchandise offers, or interactive game-day experiences tailored to individual fan profiles. Brands that harness AI and consumer data to deliver customized engagements will be the ones that optimize their marketing spend, increase revenue, and build lasting loyalty.

## What is Agentic AI?

While generative AI can create content and provide answers based on predefined algorithms, agentic AI takes action. It can autonomously plan, make decisions, and perform tasks on its own, making it a powerful tool for proactive, real-time marketing strategies when paired with human oversight and validation. [Read more in CapTech's 2025 Tech Trends Report.](#)



## Outdated Data Infrastructures Remain a Common Hurdle

The promise of AI-powered personalization is compelling: real-time, data-driven experiences that deepen fan engagement and fuel quantifiable business growth. But many sports organizations and their brand partners struggle to turn this vision into reality. Personalization at scale hinges on accurate, accessible, real-time customer data, yet most companies fall short.

**In fact, 60% of business leaders admit they lack confidence in their organization's data-AI readiness to realize meaningful GenAI business value.**

A major barrier is fragmented data ecosystems. Fan insights are often trapped in silos, scattered across outdated systems that weren't built for speed or integration. These legacy infrastructures often lack the flexibility to support real-time decision-making, so it's nearly impossible to deliver the seamless, individualized interactions today's fans expect.

As fan expectations for relevance and immediacy continue to rise, the gap between what consumers want and what brands can deliver is widening. Until organizations modernize their data strategies and build AI maturity, the full potential of personalization will remain out of reach.

## Modern Data Systems, AI, and Human Intelligence Work Together as a Team

AI doesn't operate in a vacuum. When paired with human expertise and supported by modern data infrastructure, it becomes a powerful tool for customizing real-time engagement strategies that reflect individual fan behaviors, preferences, and identities.

## An integrated approach between people and technology allows sports marketers to move from reactive campaigns to proactive, data-driven engagement strategies that scale.

To deliver personalized fan experiences, organizations must first build a foundation that enables real-time decision-making. This includes:



**Centralizing fan data** across ticketing, mobile apps, social platforms, and CRM systems.

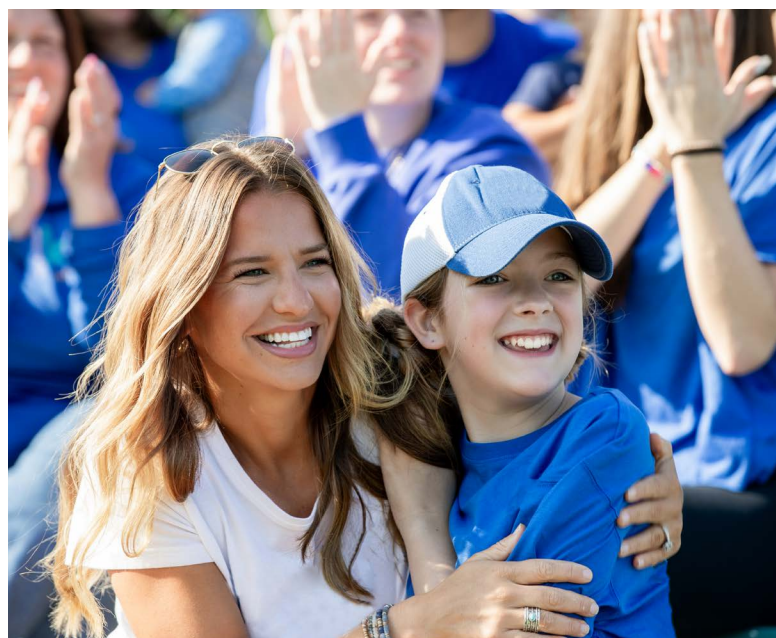


**Modeling fan identities** to unify fragmented data into actionable profiles.



**Orchestrating engagement** through AI agents or rule-based systems that respond to live signals like location, behavior, and preferences.

For example, a fan attending a game could receive a merchandise discount on their phone based on their past purchases, live location in the stadium, and team affiliation, resulting in higher conversion and satisfaction. These kinds of interactions are made possible by frameworks that continuously analyze data streams and adapt in real time.



## The Playbook for Growing Brand Value and Deepening Fan Engagement

Personalization at scale requires more than just technology. It demands a strategic framework that blends automation with human oversight. Whether you're using custom AI agents or manual segmentation, the goal is the same: turn real-time data into immersive experiences that drive loyalty, operational efficiency, and sponsor value. And regardless of whether you're just beginning your AI journey or scaling an existing strategy, the key is to start with the data you have, build a flexible framework, and evolve through iteration.

### Driving Fan Loyalty through Personalized Experiences

Personalized fan engagement isn't just about technology. It's about timing, context, and relevance. While at the 2025 PGA Championship, CapTech used real-time location data, behavioral signals, and mobile engagement to deliver targeted push notifications that aligned with fan movement and interests.

For example, as fans approached the 10th tee, they received a message inviting them to visit a nearby sponsor tent. This simple, well-timed interaction drove over 1,500 visits and a 58% conversion-to-buy rate.

**Across the event, app engagement surged by 139%, demonstrating how real-time personalization can enhance both fan satisfaction and business outcomes.**

These results illustrate how organizations can use existing data, including location, app behavior, and purchase history, to create meaningful, measurable interactions. Whether through AI agents or rule-based



automation, the key is to align engagement with the fan's journey in real time.

### Creating Value for Venues with Data

Beyond fan engagement, data-driven systems can improve venue operations through predictive analytics and real-time alerts. By analyzing heat maps and geo-tagged data, event organizers can anticipate congestion and adjust traffic flow accordingly.

Responsive communication with venue staff is also critical. For instance, when weather conditions change, automated alerts can initiate protocols to deploy staff and direct fans to shelter or alternate routes. Geo-targeted messages offering early-entry incentives, like a concession coupon, can help stagger arrivals and boost sales.

These operational strategies don't require a proprietary platform. Any organization with access to live fan data can implement similar approaches to boost safety, improve logistics, increase revenue, and enhance in-person venue experiences.

## Unlocking Sponsor Value through Contextual Engagement

Sponsors are increasingly looking for ways to move beyond static signage and engage fans in meaningful moments. Data-driven personalization enables brands to align with the fan journey, delivering offers, content, and experiences that feel timely and relevant.



**A traditional event marketing impression is valued at just \$0.012, but a data-driven impression can deliver \$3.34 in direct value and over \$10 in total impact, based on real-world outcomes.**

CapTech's work at the 2025 PGA Championship demonstrates how sponsors can drive value by using location-aware messaging, but these strategies are not limited to one platform. Any organization with access to fan location and behavior data can design sponsor activations that are more targeted, interactive, and performance-driven. The goal is to create experiences that resonate with fans and deliver clear value to partners.



## Monetize the Entire Fan Journey

Personalized engagement doesn't stop at the stadium gates. With the right data infrastructure, sports organizations can extend the fan journey across every touchpoint, from travel and hospitality to retail and digital media.

Imagine a game day that begins with a tailored hotel check-in, continues with a rideshare promotion timed to a fan's ticketed entry, and evolves into real-time concession offers triggered by location and behavior. These experiences are powered by unified fan profiles and real-time orchestration, not by any one platform.

Organizations can start small by identifying key data sources and mapping the fan journey. From there, layering in location signals, behavioral triggers, and personalized messaging can unlock new revenue streams and deepen loyalty.

## Curate Data-driven Experiences Beyond Sports

The same personalization frameworks used in sports can be applied across industries. Whether it's retail, hospitality, or healthcare, the opportunity lies in delivering timely, relevant, and individualized experiences.

**A loyalty app** can trigger a real-time offer when a shopper enters a store.

**A hotel room** can adapt instantly to guest preferences.

**Wearable tech** can prompt care adjustments based on patient data.

These aren't just use cases. They're signals that data-driven engagement is becoming the norm. Organizations that build flexible, scalable frameworks for personalization will be best positioned to meet rising expectations and drive measurable impact.



## The Future of Sports Marketing is Personalized

The sports industry is at a turning point, with fans demanding more than entertainment. They crave relevant, connected experiences. At the same time, sports marketers and operators are under pressure to increase revenue and optimize every aspect of the venue experience.

**Activating fan data for personalization is the most powerful lever for business growth, and it's poised to generate more long-term value for brands than media rights alone.**

From personalized fan journeys and smarter venue operations to precision-targeted sponsor activations, CapTech and its AI tooling empowers sports organizations to grow through innovation. The companies that embrace this shift will not only lead the

next era of sports, they'll win something even more valuable than market share: lasting brand loyalty.

And for those just beginning their AI journey, the path to personalization doesn't require perfection, just progress. Start with the data you have, pilot small initiatives, and build toward larger data-driven solutions.

Now is the time to reimagine your fan engagement strategy. Start activating your data to deliver personalized experiences that drive loyalty and long-term growth.



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