Re(AI)magine Conversations

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Enterprise AI: Data Foundation to Business Value

Josh Meyer, Databricks & Devashish Mishra, Persistent

Devashish Mishra: Hello, everyone. Welcome to **Re(AI)magine Conversations**, where we explore how AI, technology and bold thinking are transforming enterprises. In every episode, we sit down with leaders who are shaping the future of data and AI, and we talk about what's really happening with organizations today.

I'm your host, Devashish Mishra, VP - Solutions Consulting at Persistent Systems. Joining me today is Josh Meyer, Global Head of Ecosystem - GTM Programs at Databricks. Databricks, as we all know, is the center of the modern data and AI platform movement, bringing data engineering, analytics and AI together on a single platform. At Persistent, we are witnessing how it comes to life while helping our clients get their data AI-ready and move from early experiments to real, tangible outcomes on platforms like Databricks.

Today, we are going to explore enterprise AI, how it is scales across industries and how platforms, like Databricks, are helping organizations unlock the full value of their data.

Josh, great to have you.

Josh Meyer: Thank you. Thanks for having me, Debashish. Pleasure to be here.

Devashish Mishra: Let's start with the big picture, Josh, from Databricks' perspective at the intersection of various industries and various partners globally.

At Persistent, we work with several of the most innovative organizations in banking, life sciences, healthcare, retail and communication and media. The pattern that we keep seeing is the same. Leaders have moved past asking "what AI works" and are asking right now "why it isn't scaling faster". You know, the ROI question.

From your perspective, how does this moment feel like to you? A real inflection point for enterprise AI adoption or something else?

Josh Meyer: Yeah, love the question! We're at such an interesting time, to be able to deliver to our customers and what our customers can deliver to their customers, it's a true transformational moment, which I think we all recognize.

We went from this amazing hype cycle to realizing - in a real public way - the power of AI and how it can transform our daily life and how simple, in many ways, it can be to do that. Of course, how that translates into enterprise value, into people, process, systems is a very different nature to the beast.

I think we are transforming from "we have this transformational technology" to now "how do we harness this power in the enterprise". And that's always tricky. I think that's why it's a bit of a different inflection point. We're coming off the hype and realizing that there is some fundamental capabilities and tools that we have to put in place. But to realize this power in the enterprise level, that's going to take work.

I think, systems and platforms like Databricks, and capabilities like Persistent's and what you deliver to the market, really is going to bring that to life over the next many years.

Devashish Mishra: I think this is quite aligned and a bridge between what we also see - the patterns - across various industries where we work.

As I said, banking or life sciences or retail, most organizations have powerful platforms, but the translation of platform capabilities into a working solution that impacts the ROI, that gap is getting wider than expected.

From our side, what we are doing is, we have built our own accelerator suite called iAURA using Databricks. It helps move things faster, in terms of processing, without starting a blank state. Some of these modules are also there in the Databricks Brick Builder Accelerator family.

But how do you see that gap closing between a platform capability and a working solution through partners, because this needs to translate to ROI or value to our end customers.

Josh Meyer: Traditionally speaking, that's always been the role that SIs like yourself have played. Platforms like Databricks provide tremendous capabilities that can do really innovative things to consolidate the data estate and transform the business. But ultimately, it's your ingenuity and understanding of industry, business processes, people, and translating the technology platform into the business. I think it actually plays a more critical role.

And those that invest in those capabilities to deliver faster to customers, I think, will be disproportionately rewarded in a favorable way. Because you can really connect what is typically your strengths around domain experience, around customers and industries, and really understanding their needs and tying that back to the technology.

And I think it's raised the bar and need for companies to invest in building platforms or platforms around the platform, if that makes sense. You know, investing in industry to bring that to life? Because there is an expectation from customers that you bring domain experience, but you're also able to deliver outcomes faster.

So I think the combination of deeply understanding the technology, like Databricks, having the domain experience around industry and then layering on solution capabilities to deliver faster with confidence - that combination is absolutely critical today and worth investing in for sure.

Devashish Mishra: What we have also seen is the context. It's not about the AI model anymore. How do we understand an organization's context to survive with their existing systems, their governance rules, their policies, and most importantly, the people who are operating those? That leads to the next question from my side. How are we looking at scaling a solution which stays at pilot or scale a wider solution within an enterprise, as an ecosystem?

Josh Meyer: First, maybe if I could touch on context, because I do think that's the key question of the day and very topical. AI is incredibly smart. We can ask it, personally, any question and get a response back with a reasonable degree of accuracy. So, the intelligence is already plenty smart. It'll continue to progress.

But, do we need it to answer a scientific question in order for us to resolve a customer service ticket? It's plenty smart and able to do that. That's why the data foundation and then the context against that data is absolutely paramount. AI without context isn't very valuable in the enterprise setting.

I do think that's why we have been so successful and our message has taken hold. The data foundation and organizing that data in a way that AI can leverage - what is called the institutional knowledge of an organization - is absolutely critical.

Devashish Mishra: And, what about scaling a solution from pilot to an enterprise-grade productionized version?

Josh Meyer: Also a key question for all technology leaders today. I think, the narrative was "We need to be investing in AI". So a lot of companies went out and endeavored to experiment, to prototype, to pilot. But that doesn't necessarily quickly translate into successful results that are scalable.

I think the science project can return some very interesting results, but the fundamentals of how we successfully deliver at scale through the enterprise haven't changed. We have to make sure that there's organizational alignment from top down, that there's a clear understanding of how we're trying to work together to change the organization, the business processes, the change management - the fundamentals that come in.

I also think picking the right use cases that AI can solve for, based on the readiness of the organization and the technology foundation from what you have or what you're moving to, is also critical. So, all of these themes are very similar to what we've been dealing with for decades.

It's just at a heightened, accelerated scale. And I do think, very much, that picking the right use cases, underlined by the right technology with the right partner with domain experience - the formula that I outlined previously - really helps bring it all together. I think that is the critical mix to being successful.

Devashish Mishra: So along with context, the other things that we hear the most is the trust. And now trust comes up in every customer conversations that we are having right now, especially in the regulated industries like banking, healthcare, pharma and some others. The ethical AI or responsible AI are topics that are gaining traction.

What is your view, in terms of organization's governance maturity, how it can define how fast they scale with AI? Some views around that?

Josh Meyer: Yeah. I couldn't agree more. Central to our strategy is AI governance capabilities. Governance and trust are synonymous with building confidence that the systems, processes, your data are all very secure in the systems that you implement. And so, we introduced and open-sourced our Unity Catalog a few years ago, which is core to our governance strategy, and we've continued to make it more and more intelligent, in terms of, how it manages data access controls, row table-level type access. That is really critical to the business.

But I also think, part of the trust conversation is, how do we ensure that our data is safe and secure, that we can get value out of our data, that we aren't prompting our IP or our data away from other third-party tools? So, having control over your own enterprise systems, data and processes is absolutely paramount and top of mind for all business leaders today, as they think about how they transform their organization and leverage their institutional knowledge for value.

I couldn't agree more. It is absolutely front and center for every enterprise conversation.

Devashish Mishra: But I'll take the step back, and again, going back to the ROI question, from an outcome perspective, in general, what do you see? The AI use cases - how they are paying across various industries or subverticals in terms of impact?

Josh Meyer: We are seeing amazing adoption across verticals. I think, we all know that there's so many opportunities to leverage AI and fundamental optimization across businesses and experiences. So, we've seen tremendous results in every single industry. You mentioned a lot of regulated industries, I know, Devashish, that you work in, and they're very keen on a lot of the regulatory reporting - that for each of the respective industries that they have to be able to report - to be able to do that more effectively and efficiently.

There's a lot of overhead to do that, and a lot of manual work. It's not necessarily always about how do we reduce the people doing the work. It's how do we make them more effective and efficient, how do we close the books faster, how do we discover new drugs or cures much faster, how do we provide faster SLAs to customer service?

All of these capabilities are absolutely being realized by many of our customers. I would suspect you're seeing much the same. In fact, I would love to hear from you as well, just as you work with your customers, what are some of the more common use cases or scenarios that they're really testing in the market and seeing some traction from?

Devashish Mishra: Sure, yeah. There are use cases across industries that we see predominantly coming on the processes, which are taking a lot of time, consuming a lot of documentation. You touched base around the site selection, the pharmacovigilance process, the regulatory processes, payment reconciliation and all.

So, wherever there is a huge amount of documents, where people are putting a lot of efforts to verifying those, translating into some insight which is required from regulatory perspective, that is where we see a lot of traction. And there are already proven use cases for customer services experience standpoint. People, I believe, have moved ahead to those and looking natively in their entire value chain.

With this, there's an interesting point looking at the things that are evolving. How Databricks is consistently doing so well leading the change and be a market leader?

Josh Meyer: Yeah. Very fortunate in the market position we have.

I think there's some fundamentals around just the DNA of the company and our leadership having the foresight and vision to invest in the market at the right places and the right times, and continuing our vision around our product roadmap is absolutely critical. Right place, right time for product-market fit, given the prevalence of data foundation and governance, AI optimization and the ability to create value with customers - all of that is coming together at a perfect time for our organization.

We've continued to see accelerated growth year over year, which is unique. I think, we live in a unique times. We're seeing companies grow in ways that we didn't believe was possible previously, maybe a bit defying gravity at times. And, I think, we very much fall into that camp.

As I look at the enterprise landscape and conversations that we're having here today - of how organizations take advantage of this moment and optimize for their future - I think we have the right formula and data foundation and capabilities to help deliver and realize that capability now.

We're being rewarded in the market by this tremendous growth curve that we're seeing by customers. I think, they are realizing the same thing and luckily choosing Databricks as their enterprise foundation of the future. So, all of these things are coming together rapidly and as we continue to look out in the future, I think it's very bright for the capabilities that we bring to market, how our customers can realize value, but also the opportunity, for Persistent and many others to be able to really invest in understanding our technology and bringing your unique experience to the table. That benefits your organization and how you translate that to really delivering for your customers.

I think, it's a tremendous opportunity in front of all of us right now.

Devashish Mishra: I think this feels like the right time to talk about how we have and will continue to work together. At Persistent, we have been building the Brick Builder ecosystem, achieving our healthcare, life sciences, banking, financial services, insurance, retail, governance, migrate and modernize Brick Builder specializations, and building accelerators through iAURA 2.0. This is the next version coming up that augments and complements Databricks products.

We also focus on industrial solutions. For example, if I take banking - this is around merchant risk. Our solution, built on Databricks, turns merchant risk management from a defensive control into something that actually supports sustainable merchant growth, while still strengthening compliance.

We are also glad to be featured as part of the Lakebase launch partner list, and more recently, we have paired with the Workforce Push, collaborating with Databricks and the Milwaukee School of Engineering to provide two hundred plus students hands-on exposure to product scale AI engineering, backed by our thousand-plus Databricks certifications.

Having said this, how does a joint investment accelerate specialization - domain understanding and even talent pipeline – and change the speed at which a customer gets to value?

Josh Meyer: First of all, truly appreciative of your investments across the spectrum. You outlined them really well. They all matter and they're different ingredients that ultimately help deliver for our customers day to day. And so part of it is investing for the future. That's the people piece. You always have to be continuing to invest in future talent and the talent that you have. It's the speed at which the market is moving and the innovation curve. You really have to double down on learning and enablement today, because what you learn today will potentially be obsolete in six months.

It's hard to believe, but it's true, right? So that continuous learning journey to double down on investing and making sure that your people understand the latest and greatest is so critical.

At the same time, as we've talked about solutions. We think about it from migrate, modernize and transform, which are the building blocks of core capabilities to deliver success with customers, no matter where they're at in their data and AI and enterprise journey.

Most projects start with fundamentally as a data ingestion or migration project from a legacy system that they're trying to optimize. So, having tools to move from legacy system to a new source system using AI modernization capabilities to do that faster, with more confidence, is critical to delivering outcomes faster.

But, once the data is in the lakehouse or Databricks, it's also about how do you optimize and use the latest and greatest tooling. Which brings the intersect together - platform acceleration meets your team's talent - and understanding of the capabilities, with a mind's eye delivering a business outcome.

And that's where the industry solutions are so important. I think all three of these components - migrate, modernize, and transform - they all play together, from talking to business leaders about how they're trying to deliver and the outcomes that matter to them, and then quickly translating that into rapid value and iterative projects that you can really deliver for the business.

I think these investments are really important and help Persistent be a leader in the space to be able to do this successfully for you.

Devashish Mishra: It has been exciting and a lot of efforts are going behind this. So, from your perspective, if you look ahead, what trends do you see and are most excited about in industries, ecosystems around AI – over, maybe, six to one year timeframe?

Josh Meyer: Yeah. The future's changing fast, isn't it?

Devashish Mishra: Yeah.

Josh Meyer: It's an exciting time! The same thing around optimizing AI spend is absolutely top of mind. The experimentation and the cost of that experimentation is front and center. That trend is very much going on.

I definitely see organizations trying to balance which model for which reason, balancing some of the amazing foundation model capabilities with open-source capabilities as well, so that the optionality or choices, I think is a trend that will continue and be more important as we go forward.

You don't necessarily need the Ferrari to cross the street, right? You need a great model to serve the use case at the most optimal cost. I think that capability, and we have a great lot of tools that help manage the switching and cost against those that's really critical.

I also think the database costs that help manage the agents is the next trend that we will see. That's why we've invested in our Lakebase capabilities and really bringing the Lakehouse, OLTP, Postgres capabilities or that transactional layer together because agents need data. They need to be able to spin up and access data rapidly for context and to be able to execute the tasks that they are given. We're going to start seeing that being an important trend and the costs around the associated database spends be a really top-of-mind foundation.

But that said, we will see a lot of transformation in the industry. Pick an early inning that you want to say we're in, but we're still in very early innings, probably past the first inning. We're going to see a lot of transformation to continue, and it's an exciting time to be able to be part of it and deliver this to our customers.

Devashish Mishra: Yeah, absolutely. Looking at the industry-specific models and the frontier models, like BioBERT, which is there for biomedical text. BloombergGPT is coming in from finance, gaining traction. This will be an exciting time, and looking at the interoperability and extensibility part, which Databricks provides, this is some place to look at.

Josh Meyer: Just to add, you brought up a good point around some of the uniqueness around industry. Clearly, there's horizontal or common capabilities, if you think around customer service. But I also think we are going to see more and more investment in unique models around industries. You mentioned banking and healthcare, training or fine-tuning models that really fit the need of the business.

It's more likely that we will see an organization have thousands or maybe even millions - if they're large enough - unique models that are trained specifically on their data, bringing in institutional knowledge. That will be a trend that we see changing as well - going from really large monolithic models with incredibly smart general intelligence to very small, unique, specialized intelligence models.

Devashish Mishra: This is great, Josh. Thank you for joining us today and sharing your insights. It is clear that convergence of data, AI and platforms like Databricks is opening up incredible possibilities across industries, and partnerships like Persistent and Databricks, are helping organizations move from experimentation to real-world impact.

Josh Meyer: Thanks for having me, Debashish. Appreciate today's conversation and all the great work that Persistent is doing in the market with us.

Devashish Mishra: Thank you. And thanks for tuning in to **Re(AI)magine** Conversations. If today's episode sparked new thinking, follow the show and share it with your network.

Have a story to tell or a guest you had love to hear from? Drop us a note at podcast@persistent.com.

Until next time, stay curious, stay inspired. Thank you very much.

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About Persistent

Persistent Systems (BSE: 533179 and NSE: PERSISTENT) is a global services and solutions company delivering AI-led, platform-driven Digital Engineering and Enterprise Modernization to businesses across industries. With over 27,500 employees located in 21 countries, the Company is committed to innovation and client success. Persistent offers a comprehensive suite of services, including software engineering, product development, data and analytics, CX transformation, cloud computing and intelligent automation. The Company is part of the MSCI India Index and is included in key indices of the National Stock Exchange of India, including the Nifty Midcap 50, Nifty IT and Nifty MidCap Liquid 15, as well as several on the BSE such as the S&P BSE 100 and S&P BSE SENSEX Next 50. Persistent is also a constituent of the Dow Jones Best-in-Class World Index. The Company has achieved carbon neutrality, reinforcing its commitment to sustainability and responsible business practices. Persistent has also been named one of America's Greatest Workplaces for Inclusion & Diversity 2025 by Newsweek and Plant A Insights Group. As a participant of the United Nations Global Compact, the Company is committed to aligning strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption, as well as take actions that advance societal goals. With 468% growth in brand value since 2020, Persistent is the fastest-growing IT services brand in 'Brand Finance India 100' 2025 Report.

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