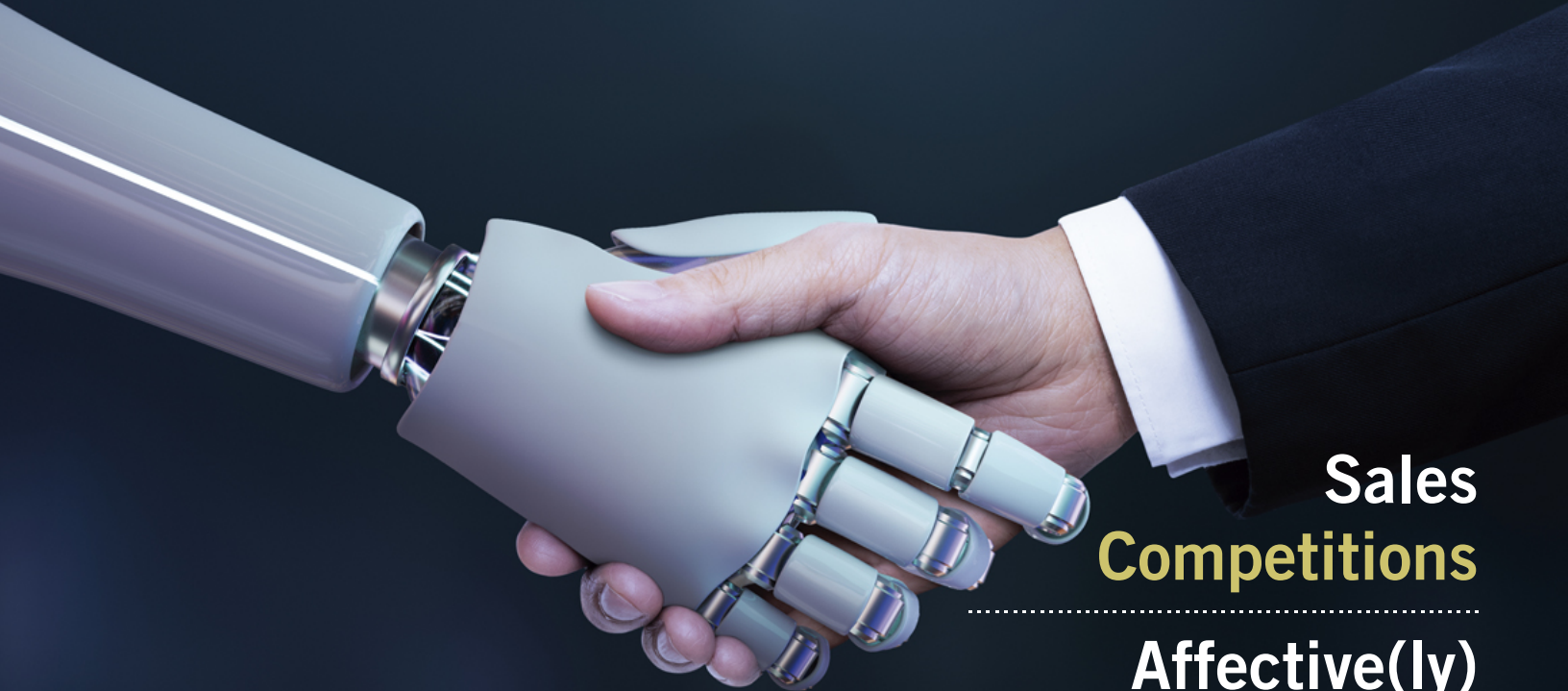


NEWSLETTER

**CMSI** connect

Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation

SPRING 2024



**AFFECTIVE  
INTELLIGENCE**

Sales  
Competitions

Affective(ly)  
Research

Behavioral  
AI Lab

Navigating an  
AI-Driven Future

# “HISTORY DOES NOT REPEAT ITSELF, BUT IT DOES RHYME.”

As we look for guidance on what the future holds it’s informative to look at past trends for clues for how the future may present itself. Think back to the internet in 1995. The technology of the 1995 internet is largely unchanged from today. What has changed is what we do with the internet. The internet of 1995 was built on IPv4, routers, fiber, and mark up languages. Today we have IPv6, routers, fiber, and markup languages. Yes, there have been technical advances, but the changes are for the most part incremental and driven on capacity needs.



Photo of IBM PC Clone from 1995

## Quiz time:

What were the top 5 web sites in 1995 and 2024?

1995: AOL, Yahoo, Geocities, Netscape and Webcrawler.

2024: Google, YouTube, FaceBook, Amazon, Yahoo

Bonus Question:

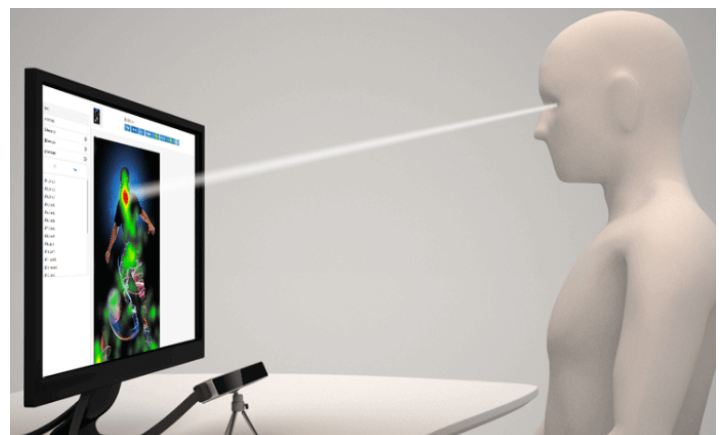
When were Google, YouTube, and FaceBook founded?

Answer: 1998, 2005, 2004

Similarly, the technology that makes up the AI “black box” is largely known. AI technology changes going forward will be more incremental and driven by application demands. That said, AI’s impact will resonate for years as the technology changes how we work and live. The biggest companies and applications that will exploit AI may not even be founded for 3 to 10 years.

Our AI research focus in the Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation is to develop understanding of the implications of AI on human behavior. Earlier this year we shared results of research on hyper realistic avatars (HRAs) and the importance of timely disclosure. The research revealed that respondents showed little difference in information retention, trust, and engagement when receiving training from the recording of a

live person or HRA. These findings suggest HRAs or more broadly synthetic media could deliver significant value. Imagine being able to have an instructor teach in a student’s native language, or update sales training and help videos by editing a text document. Amazing!





*Photo of The CMSI Customer Experience and Behavioral AI Lab.*

However, as a cautionary tale the research also showed a massive 165-point swing (200 is the maximum) in sentiment from the live person (81.4%) recording to the undisclosed HRA (-84.7%) after disclosing to the study participants if the recording was a live person or HRA. Interestingly, the sentiment was only 25 points lower when respondents were notified in advance that the instructor in the video was an HRA (57%).

There was significant interest in this research from both the public and academic groups. In addition to the media stories about this research noted later in this newsletter in the “In the News” section on page 14, the research was also reported at the 2024 Affective(Iy) Research, AMP, and NeuroIS conferences.

The center is also contributing to advancing the marketing curriculum with a new course this fall that will provide students with hands-on experiences with the Marketing Technology stack. Topics include AI, Human Insights Research, Web 3 (block chain, crypto, gaming, NFTs), CRM, and marketing automation. Center researchers (Nate Hartman, Jay Civitillo, and Rob Hammond) also shared insights on the top three issues facing sales organizations at the AMP 2024 conference, Automated Lead Nurturing (ALM), Sales

Development Resource (SDR) productivity setting meetings, and Sales Training Effectiveness. Thank you for your partnership. This is an exciting time at USF and the Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation. Enjoy the newsletter. Rob.



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SELLING WITH THE BULLS

# Interesting facts:



- 360 Role Plays
- 720 Scheduled Networking Conversations
- 120 competitors
- 27 companies with over 100 participants
- 22 universities from 15 states





## Reimagining the Sales Curriculum

We reimagined the sales curriculum this year to connect the curriculum more tightly with the sales co-curriculum. A networking event with Business Partners was embedded in the coursework for each of the sales classes. Instead of having one separate optional networking event in the evening each semester, networking is taught in the classes and students participate in a networking event during class as part of course assignments.



## Business Professionals in the Sales Program are Business Partners

Despite our sales faculty having nearly a century of sales experience, class sessions that include Business Partners routinely receive some of the highest satisfaction scores from sales students. Students are deeply interested in learning about a career in sales from practicing sales professionals. We divide the class into small groups to facilitate rich engagement.

In these three pictures Business Partners joined a hybrid (in-person and online combined) Advanced Professional Sales class to talk about all facets of sales. For this session the class was divided into three groups (two in-person groups and one online) and business partners rotated between the three groups.



# The USF Business Development Club

The USF Business Development Club recently showcased their exceptional talent and prowess at the Selling with the Bulls Intercollegiate sales competition. Competing against teams from various universities, they demonstrated their strategic selling skills and ability to excel in a competitive environment. Notably, one student from the team distinguished themselves by achieving recognition as a winner in the lead generation category. Their achievement highlights the team's commitment to excellence and their capability to deliver outstanding results in sales competitions. Through their dedication and determination, the USF Business Development team continues to uphold the university's reputation for producing top-tier sales professionals.

Five members of the Business Development Club traveled to Kennesaw State University in March to represent USF at the National Collegiate Sales Competition. Amidst fierce competition from universities across the nation, our team showcased exceptional talent and professionalism. Out of the four students who competed, the remarkable efforts of two members resulted in offers for internships, highlighting their exemplary sales skills and business acumen.



Additionally, another team member's outstanding performance caught the attention of recruiters, leading to an invitation for a full-time position interview. Their success underscores the dedication and caliber of talent within our Business Development Club, reaffirming our commitment to nurturing future sales leaders.



# Exploring Opportunities: Business Development Club Members' Experience at Enterprise Connect

Chosen representatives from the Business Development Club were extended invitations to partake in the Enterprise Connect trade show in Orlando. This event served as an invaluable introduction to the realm of B2B tradeshows, offering insights on effective approaches to vendors and opportunities to delve into emerging technologies. Moreover, attendees had the privilege of participating in exclusive meetings with industry experts, including sessions with business leaders such as the head of global procurement for a prominent digital customer experience company.



Two of the most junior members of the Business Development Club (both freshmen!!), participated in the AMA Collegiate Sales Competition in New Orleans. Despite their relative lack of experience, both students represented our school admirably and garnered recognition for their commendable efforts. Additionally, they managed to carve out some time for sightseeing amidst the competition's demands.



The final event of the semester is the Dinner and Discovery Event where students and partners of the Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation meet to practice selling and enjoy a great dinner together. In addition, seniors are given a stole to wear at graduation. New this year are special awards presented to students who demonstrated exceptional leadership and determination participating in sales competitions. Pictured above are two of the outstanding students Emily Therrien (left) and Olivia Stimpson (right).

# SELLING BY THE BAY



The club introduced a novel tradition known as Selling by the Bay, where students journeyed to the St. Petersburg campus to hone their sales expertise. Unlike typical events, this unique format required no prior preparation, with details unveiled only as the event commenced. Participants were grouped into teams of three in the morning session, with each assuming roles as the salesperson, buyer, and judge.

Through rotations, they practiced diverse selling techniques, each tasked with promoting a different product. Following a discovery session, students collaborated to craft presentations in the afternoon, leveraging newfound insights to enhance their pitches. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing enjoyment and appreciation for the opportunity to engage in simulated sales scenarios as both buyers and judges. Encouraged by its success, multiple iterations of Selling by the Bay are slated for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year.







# Affective(ly) Research

[Affective\(ly\) Research](#) is an annual gathering where researchers working with biometrics and emotional insights gather to collaborate and exchange best practices.



## Event Highlights:

- Networking & Dinner Session
- Research Presentations & Panel Discussions
- Insights into Biometrics and Emotional Research

- Dates: 29 February (evening) – 1 March 2024
- Hosted by: Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation, University of South Florida
- Platinum Sponsor: iMotions - World's Leading Biometric Research Platform
- Location: University Student Center, USF St. Petersburg Campus

# Navigating the AI-Driven Future: The Role of Data Analysts in 2024

By Joyce Vanessa Yagual



In an era where artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping industries at an unprecedented pace, the role of data analysts stands at the forefront of transformation. As I delved into conversations with Triparna de Vreede PhD, I gained invaluable insights into the evolving landscape of data analytics and the pivotal role played by AI technologies.

# Navigating the AI-Driven Future: The Role of Data Analysts in 2024

By Joyce Vanessa Yagual - Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation

Meet **Triparna de Vreede**, an assistant professor and associate director at the School of Information Systems and Management, Muma College of Business, University of South Florida. With a PhD in industrial/organizational psychology and a master's in management information systems from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, coupled with an MBA from Osmania University, Triparna de Vreede brings a multidisciplinary approach to her research. Her expertise lies in Human-AI Interaction and its impact on employee well-being, making her a pivotal figure in understanding the evolving landscape of data analytics. In this interview, Triparna de Vreede offers invaluable insights into the role of data analysts amidst the AI-driven future of 2024.

The focus will be much more on the prescriptive aspects of data analytics rather than the descriptive or technical aspects. Large Language Models (LLMs) can generate insights and patterns from data, but data analysts will play a critical role in interpreting and contextualizing these findings. They will use their domain knowledge and understanding of business objectives to translate insights into actionable recommendations. The data analysts, thus, have to be much more attuned to more strategic visions of the organization and evaluate how the patterns can be best used to realize them. Data analysts will increasingly work alongside Large Language Models (LLMs), leveraging their capabilities to enhance analysis and decision-making. They will need to understand how to effectively integrate Large Language Models (LLMs) into their workflow and communicate their findings to stakeholders.

## What is the role of a data analyst in 2024?

The advent of AI is changing most, if not all, position descriptions. Data analyst is no exception. The role of a data analyst in 2024 will not be very different from what it has been previously, but very soon it will move from actual data crunching and interpreting the data to create insights to collaborating with AI to examine the patterns and examining the various impacts the data patterns will have on the organization.



## Can you provide an overview of how Artificial Intelligence (AI) are impacting various sectors, particularly the field of data analytics?

AI is transforming industries and data analytics is no exception. AI is revolutionizing the way analysts process and derive insights from vast amounts of structured and unstructured data. Machine learning algorithms can identify patterns and correlations that may be difficult for humans to detect, while AI-powered tools automate repetitive tasks like data cleaning and preparation. This allows analysts to focus on higher-value activities such as interpretation and decision-making. AI also enhances predictive capabilities, enabling organizations to forecast trends, anticipate customer behavior, and make proactive decisions. Natural Language Processing (NLP) and other similar techniques facilitate the analysis of unstructured data, providing valuable insights into customer sentiment and preferences. Overall, AI will empower data analysts to deliver deeper insights, automate processes, and provide more value to organizations. From technical and operational to strategic is the trajectory that the data analysts are taking.

## How will the role of data analysts change with advancing AI technologies, and what new skills will be critical for success in the field?

As AI continues to advance, the role of data analysts will undergo a significant transformation. As I mentioned earlier, while technical skills will remain essential, the focus will shift from purely operational tasks to more strategic and business-oriented responsibilities. Here are some key changes I anticipate in the role of data analysts and the new skills that will be critical for success:

First, data analysts will need to develop a deep understanding of AI and machine learning techniques. They will need to be proficient in programming languages like Python and R and have hands-on experience with popular AI frameworks and libraries.



This technical expertise will enable them to effectively collaborate with data scientists and AI engineers to build and deploy AI models.

However, beyond technical skills, data analysts will need to cultivate a strong business acumen. They will need to translate complex AI insights into actionable business strategies. This will require a thorough understanding of the organization's goals, industry dynamics, and customer needs. Data analysts will need to communicate effectively with stakeholders from various departments, explaining the implications of AI-driven insights in a clear and persuasive manner. So, they need to learn the art of communicating and storytelling and develop engaging presentation skills.

Furthermore, as I mentioned earlier, AI will automate many routine tasks, data analysts will need to focus on higher-level strategic thinking. They will be responsible for identifying business problems that can be solved with AI, defining project scope, and selecting the appropriate AI techniques. This requires strong problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and creativity.

Finally, this is something that literally everyone needs to develop to be in a white collar profession, and data analysts are no exception. They need to develop continuous learning and adaptability. The AI landscape is rapidly evolving, with new technologies and techniques emerging regularly and so data analysts will need to have a growth mindset, actively seeking opportunities to upskill and stay ahead of the curve

## What opportunities does AI present for data analysts to focus more on strategic analysis and decision-making, rather than routine tasks?

By automating repetitive and time-consuming tasks, AI enables data analysts to dedicate more time and energy to higher-value activities that drive business growth. For example, one key opportunity is the ability to leverage AI for data preparation and cleaning. Traditionally, data analysts spend a substantial amount of time collecting, cleaning, and preprocessing data before analysis can begin. AI-powered tools can automate these tasks, handling data quality issues, inconsistencies, and missing values. This frees up data analysts to focus on more complex and strategic aspects of their role, such as identifying business problems, defining project scope, and selecting appropriate analytical techniques.

I believe that yet another major opportunity lies in predictive analytics and forecasting. AI algorithms can process vast amounts of historical data to identify patterns, correlations, and trends. By leveraging these AI-driven insights, data analysts can develop more accurate predictive models and forecast future outcomes. This allows organizations to make proactive, data-driven decisions, such as optimizing inventory levels, predicting customer churn, or identifying potential market opportunities. Greater processing powers and superior Large Language Models (LLMs) can make a difference between being a market leader or laggard.

Collaborating with Generative AI and Large Language Models (LLMs) also helps data analysts to engage in more exploratory and open-ended analysis. Data analysts can now dive deeper into the data, asking more complex and strategic questions. They can explore “what-if” scenarios, simulate different business strategies, and identify hidden opportunities or risks. This level of strategic analysis empowers data analysts to provide valuable recommendations to stakeholders and influence key business decisions. That can be invaluable and propel businesses towards horizons not yet achieved.

Furthermore, Generative AI can enhance data visualization and storytelling. AI-powered tools can automatically generate interactive dashboards, charts, and graphs, making it easier for data analysts to communicate insights to non-technical stakeholders. By leveraging AI’s natural language generation capabilities, data analysts can create compelling narratives and reports that translate complex data into actionable business language. It optimizes processes and it allows for smoother communication with adequate human in the loop processing.



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# In the News...

## ▶ BEHAVIORAL AI LAB

USF expands artificial intelligence research with new business lab

## ▶ FOX 13

USF College of Business unveils state-of-the-art A.I. lab (fox13news.com)

## ▶ SPECTRUM NEWS BN9

USF studies lifelike avatars as communicators (baynews9.com)

## ▶ WTSP

USF expands AI program with new business lab | wtsp.com

## ▶ WFTS TAMPA BAY

USF expands research lab to study artificial intelligence and impact on business (abcactionnews.com)



## ▶ THE BUSINESS JOURNALS

Tampa Bay Inno - USF finalizes seven-figure investment in behavioral AI lab (bizjournals.com)business (abcactionnews.com)

## ▶ MIRAGE NEWS

<https://www.miragenews.com/usf-launches-new-business-lab-for-ai-research-1159866/>

## ▶ CATALYST

USF business lab embracing AI as a learning platform • St Pete Catalyst

## ▶ Practice Center

USF students helping drive marketing efforts for Tampa Bay businesses

# Future EVENTS 2024 - 2025

- ▶ Sales Classes and BD Club Networking  
9/24 -9/25
- ▶ USF All Campus Selling with the Bulls  
10/25
- ▶ Fall Semester Dinner and Discovery  
11/20
- ▶ Sales Classes and BD Club Networking  
2/11 - 2/12
- ▶ Intercollegiate Selling with the Bulls  
2/20-2/21
- ▶ Affective(ly) Research Conference  
2/27-2/28
- ▶ Spring Semester Dinner and Discovery  
4/2

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