reset SEMINAR 2026

OFFICIAL DOSSIER 2026

RETAIL BANKING PLAYBOOK

2026-2030



AN INITIATIVE OF

GREEN PEAK

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Strategic *Insights*

Takeaways from Reset Seminar, held on February 2, 2026

» **Shift from Digital Access to Credit Intelligence**
Digital scale has been achieved. Financial depth has not. The next growth cycle will be defined by disciplined, data-led, cash-flow-based credit expansion into SMEs, agriculture and underserved segments - enabled by interoperability and alternative data integration.

» **Customer-Centricity Requires Operating Model Redesign**
Customer-centricity cannot coexist with product silos. Sustainable growth through 2030 requires lifecycle engagement, enterprise-wide personalization and coordinated orchestration. Without operating model redesign, digital investments will not translate into long-term customer value.

» **AI Must Drive Revenue, Risk Precision and Enterprise Decisioning**
AI must transition from experimentation to enterprise infrastructure. Its value lies in measurable revenue expansion, underwriting precision and personalization at scale - supported by strong data governance and institutional discipline.

» **Merchant Acquiring & Ecosystem Infrastructure Are the Cashless Growth Bottlenecks**
Issuance has scaled; acceptance has not. Expanding active merchant density and digitizing B2B, B2G and remittance flows are the structural unlocks required to accelerate cashless growth.

» **Structural Constraints, Not Liquidity, Limit Credit**
Credit expansion is constrained by documentation gaps, enforcement inefficiencies and informality - not capital availability. Secure data-sharing systems and ecosystem reform are essential to unlock lending appetite.

» **Talent, Cyber Resilience & Infrastructure Are Strategic Imperatives**
Digital transformation requires parallel investment in human capability, AI readiness, breach preparedness and domestic infrastructure. Technology alone will not secure sustainable advantage.

Executive *Summary*

Pakistan's banking sector has achieved rapid progress in digital access, yet financial depth remains limited. The next phase of industry transformation will be defined not by expanding digital channels, but by expanding productive credit through data-driven decisioning, interoperable ecosystems and intelligence-led lending.

The Reset Seminar 2026 convened senior leaders from across Pakistan's banking and financial sectors at a structural inflection point. As digital adoption accelerates and competitive intensity increases, the seminar examined the reset required through 2026–2030, spanning intelligence-led lending, operating model redesign, AI governance, interoperability and sustainable inclusion.

The defining message was clear: the next phase of banking transformation will be determined by disciplined, enterprise-wide execution, not digital access alone.

The Structural Reset
From Distribution Banking to Intelligence Banking

Retail banking has achieved digital scale, yet financial deepening remains limited. SME and consumer credit penetration continue to lag economic contribution. The reset requires a shift from collateral-heavy underwriting to cash-flow and behavioural intelligence; from product distribution to ecosystem-enabled financing; and from volume-driven expansion to risk-calibrated growth. Payments infrastructure has matured. The next frontier is credit intelligence built on real-time data and interoperable systems.

Winning Customers
Beyond Products Toward Lifecycle Relationships

Despite digital progress, operating models remain product-centric. Short-term targets and balance sheet optics continue to shape behaviour. Sustainable customer growth requires lifecycle-based engagement, enterprise personalization and advisory-led value creation. Customer-centricity must evolve from narrative to operating architecture.

AI as a Revenue Engine and Decision Architecture

AI's strategic value lies in revenue expansion, underwriting precision and hyper-personalization - not cost reduction alone. Institutions must move from isolated pilots to governed, enterprise-scale decision infrastructure. Scalable impact requires strong data foundations, explainability and disciplined execution embedded across the value chain.

Financial Inclusion from Accounts to Access to Capital

Account penetration has expanded meaningfully, yet credit inclusion remains constrained. MSMEs, women and informal-sector participants remain underrepresented in formal lending portfolios. The shift must move from access toward capital deployment, enabled by value-chain financing, behavioural underwriting and digitized remittance flows. Merchant acceptance density remains the structural bottleneck; without scaled digital acceptance, cash dominance will persist.

Interoperability, Open Banking & Shared Infrastructure

No institution can scale sustainably in isolation. Interoperability, Financial Data Exchange frameworks, B2B and B2G digitization and shared AI infrastructure are foundational to the next phase of growth. Pakistan's payment backbone has reached scale; collaborative infrastructure is now required to unlock full economic potential.

Human Capital & Cultural Reset

Technology transformation without talent transformation will fail. AI fluency, structured industry training and incentive alignment toward long-term value creation are essential. Digital capability must be embedded within core operations and treated as a primary competitive asset.

Cybersecurity, Resilience & Sovereign Infrastructure

As digital transaction volumes scale, systemic exposure increases. Institutions must move from breach prevention to breach readiness and coordinated resilience. AI-enabled fraud monitoring, incident preparedness and expansion of domestic data centre capacity are now strategic priorities.

Conclusion

Pakistan's banking sector has achieved digital momentum but not structural transformation. The coming five years will determine whether institutions move decisively from payments to productive credit, from product silos to ecosystem models and from experimentation to enterprise-scale AI execution. The reset is operational, not conceptual. Institutions that integrate intelligence, interoperability, inclusion and resilience into a unified strategic agenda will define retail banking through 2030.

The Retail Banking *Reset Framework*

Structural shifts shaping banking through 2030

CREDIT INTELLIGENCE

- Cash-flow-based lending
- Alternative data integration
- SME and agriculture financing

CUSTOMER LIFECYCLE BANKING

- Lifecycle engagement
- Enterprise personalization
- Advisory-led value creation

AI DECISION INFRASTRUCTURE

- Enterprise AI deployment
- Underwriting precision
- Revenue expansion

ECOSYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

- Merchant acquiring expansion
- Interoperability
- Data-sharing frameworks

FOUNDATION LAYER

Talent • Cyber Resilience • Domestic Infrastructure



Audience *Profile*

Firms Represented

The Retail Banking Playbook Seminar 2026–2030 convened 203 senior leaders from 39 organizations across banking, financial services, insurance and fintech. The objective was to align global best practices with local realities and translate strategy into execution through cross-sector collaboration.

The audience reflected the full retail and SME banking value chain. Commercial and Islamic banks formed the core representation, complemented by digital banks, fintech providers and microfinance institutions contributing innovation and inclusion perspectives.

Importantly, the majority of attendees were CEOs, Presidents, CXOs and senior executives. This ensured discussions centred on institutional priorities, capital allocation and execution readiness rather than conceptual debate.



Commercial & Islamic Banks	60%
Tech & Others	10%
Digital Banks	10%
Insurance Companies	8%
Financial Inst. & Funds	7%
Microfinance Banks	5%
Industry Bodies	<1%

Opening Address
Salman Sarwar Butt

CEO, Green Peak

Salman Sarwar Butt positioned the seminar as a progression from diagnosis to execution following the earlier Reset Conference. Retail banking, he emphasized, is the "beating heart" of the industry and therefore requires continuous, candid reassessment of whether institutions are truly meeting customer needs.



"Retail banking is the beating heart of banking. It is 99% of every bank's customer base"

He highlighted a structural tension: banks continue to operate in product silos, while customers benchmark their expectations against seamless digital experiences across industries. Service standards are no longer defined by banks alone.

The seminar's focus on winning customers and adapting to technological change was deliberate. It reflected the need to move beyond discussion toward practical transformation over the next five years. Looking ahead, he expressed the ambition that future Reset conferences measure tangible progress through industry-wide KPIs, potentially in collaboration with the Pakistan Banks' Association.

Strategic Framing

RESET Seminar 2026 was positioned as a practical leadership playbook. The emphasis was clear: execution, collaboration and measurable customer impact through 2026–2030.

Chief Guest Address
Zafar Masud

President & CEO, Bank of Punjab

Zafar Masud framed the seminar around a structural reset for banking - shifting from digital access to credit intelligence.

He opened by referencing coordinated policy action supporting exporters, describing it as evidence of institutional maturity and collective commitment to long-term economic stability. The central thesis was clear: payments and account penetration have improved, but meaningful transformation lies in digital lending.

"Digital lending, to my mind, is the next big frontier that we need to achieve."





He highlighted the structural underrepresentation of SME lending relative to its economic contribution and noted that global banking is transitioning from collateral-based frameworks to data-driven, mobile-first underwriting. Pakistan must accelerate this shift.

A second reset concerns preparedness for CBDCs and crypto-related assets. Distinguishing between CBDCs, stablecoins and speculative cryptocurrencies, he emphasized the urgency of regulatory engagement amid rapid global experimentation. Demographics reinforce this transition. Gen Z and digitally fluent customers will dominate future banking behaviour, making digital-first models inevitable.

On lending constraints, he identified weak documentation, informality and fiscal distortions as core barriers. Through his “Fountainhead and Leaking Pond” analogy, he explained that insufficient documentation limits credit assessment and encourages conservative lending behaviour. He advocated for cash-flow-based lending supported by interoperable ecosystems rather than isolated institutional solutions.

Two PBA-led initiatives were outlined:

- Financial Data Exchange to enable secure multi-sector data access for improved underwriting
- SME Environmental and Performance Index to support productivity-based SME lending, targeted for rollout around the PBA Summit 2026

Conclusion: The Structural Reset

Distribution-led banking is giving way to behavioural intelligence. Product-centric models are shifting toward ecosystem frameworks. Volume-driven growth is being replaced by risk-calibrated expansion. These transitions define the reset required for a resilient and inclusive banking system.

Opening Keynote
Atif Bajwa
President & CEO, Bank Alfalah

"We are not putting the customer first when we chase end-of-period deposits; we are just putting our ego first."

Reframing the Meaning of "Reset"

Mr. Bajwa asserted that 'reset' does not mean returning to the past. It means reassessing current realities in light of evolving customer expectations and technological change. While acknowledging progress over three decades, he called for disciplined recalibration.

Customer-Centricity Beyond Current Accounts

Despite industry rhetoric, overreliance on profitable current accounts continues to distort decision-making and prioritize short-term gains over lifecycle engagement.

He advocated a model spanning transactions, borrowing, savings, protection and wealth creation, highlighting underinvestment in advisory capability and customer education. He also criticized end-of-period deposit practices as artificial and misaligned with sustainable value.





Human Capital as a Strategic Lever

Mr. Bajwa emphasized that attitude and professionalism outweigh technical skills.

"Banking is not rocket science. Everything can be taught, but attitude has to be brought in and nurtured."

He warned that the sector has underinvested in structured training and called for rebuilding professional development ecosystems.

Rethinking Cost Structures & Branch-Led Growth

Margin compression driven by inflation and rate cycles requires reassessment of branch-heavy, people-intensive growth models. Digital enablement must complement disciplined cost structures.



AI at Scale Requires Industry Collaboration

He cautioned that AI capabilities remain below global benchmarks and require substantial data infrastructure.

"When it comes to AI, we are nowhere close to what is required, and we cannot do this individually as banks."

AI development demands shared infrastructure and industry-wide collaboration.

Transitioning to a Cashless Economy

Reducing cash dominance requires expanded digital acceptance, lower transaction friction and customer education. Cashless transformation was positioned as a national economic multiplier.

Strategic Imperatives

- Shift from short-term profitability to long-term customer value
- Strengthen human capital and professional standards
- Recalibrate cost models toward sustainable efficiency
- Build shared AI infrastructure
- Collaborate to enable inclusive national growth

Keynote I
Jim Brown

Non-Executive Chairman, Secure Trust Bank



A Decade of Disruption

Jim Brown described the past decade as the most disruptive period of his 40-year career, shaped by financial crises, COVID-19, rate volatility, regulatory reform and geopolitical instability. These forces reshaped balance sheets, risk management and profitability across global banking.

Regulatory tightening increased capital requirements and operational resilience standards, while fintechs and challengers intensified competition. Large incumbents regained ground through digital investment and partnerships. Mid-sized banks without scale struggled, while niche specialists remained competitive. Fintechs gained deposits but struggled to scale lending.

Branch Transformation & Financial Outcomes

Branch networks contracted by over 60% in some markets, driven by digital adoption and cost pressure. Surviving branches evolved into advisory-led centres supported by shared infrastructure.

These structural changes improved cost-to-income ratios, returns on equity and customer satisfaction. Customer experience, not scale alone, has emerged as the defining competitive advantage.



Data as the Strategic Asset

With fewer in-person interactions, data now anchors customer understanding. High-quality, governed data combined with real-time analytics enables hyper-personalization and seamless journeys. Technology need not be cutting-edge - but it must be stable and resilient.

"Data is everything going forward."

—

Core Business Priorities

Brown outlined five priorities for 2026–2030:

- High-quality, well-governed data
- Advanced real-time analytics
- Hyper-personalized engagement
- Simple digital journeys
- Stable, resilient technology platforms

These must be supported by a customer-centric culture and an agile operating model.

AI in Practice

AI-driven behavioural analytics can materially increase investment engagement, while AI-enabled monitoring improves compliance and regulatory trust.

"To win in the next era, it requires exceptional digital-first customer experiences delivered through hyper-personalization."

—

Strategic Implication

Sustainable advantage will belong to banks that integrate data, AI, security and agility into a unified customer experience strategy.

PANEL 1

WINNING CUSTOMERS IN 2026–2030



MODERATED BY
ATIF SALIM MALIK
COO, JS Bank



MUHAMMAD NASSIR SALIM
President & CEO of HBL



BASIR SHAMSIE
President & CEO, JS Bank



SAADYA RIAZ
Head Wealth & Retail Banking, SCB



AMIR KHAN
President & CEO, HBL Microfinance Bank



MUHAMMAD ALI GULFARAZ
CEO, Dubai Islamic Bank

Overview
Winning Customers 2026-2030

The Central Question

How can banks sustainably win customers while deepening inclusion in a structurally constrained economy?

Digital transactions have accelerated, yet credit-to-GDP has declined. Financial deepening lags digital adoption.

"We have just scratched the surface."

—

Amir Masood Khan,
President & CEO, HBL Microfinance Bank



Credit Expansion: Enforceability, Not Liquidity

Panelists agreed that lending appetite is constrained by documentation gaps, recovery inefficiencies, capital requirements and macro volatility - not liquidity.

SME lending is commercially attractive but operationally complex. Until enforcement improves, credit growth will remain measured.

Product-Led Banking vs Real Customer-Centricity

Despite digital onboarding, operating models remain product-driven.

True transformation requires lifecycle engagement and contextual personalization - not annual product targets.

"I call it the sea of sameness."

—

Basir Shamsie,
President & CEO, JS Bank

Digital Transactions vs Deposit Reality

Transactions have migrated digital. Deposits, especially high-value balances, remain branch-dependent. The transition is structural but incomplete.

Islamic Banking: Execution Over Structure

Service quality and innovation now outweigh structural distinctions.

"Customer service is not commodity. Convenience is not commodity. Innovation is not commodity."

—

Muhammad Ali Gulfaraz,
CEO, Dubai Islamic Bank

Differentiation will come from execution, not labels.

"Which institution cracks the service code first is going to leapfrog ahead."

—

Muhammad Nassir Salim,
President & CEO, HBL



Microfinance & Capital Constraints

Microfinance institutions operate digitally and apply cash-flow underwriting.

"Every loan that we give is cash flow analysed."

—

Amir Masood Khan,
President & CEO, HBL Microfinance Bank

However, higher capital adequacy requirements constrain expansion.







Cyber Resilience

The shift must move from breach prevention to breach readiness with coordinated resilience.

"The modern guidance... is one day you will get hacked."

—

Muhammad Nassir Salim,
President & CEO, HBL

AI: Embedded Decision Intelligence

AI's real value lies in embedded decision engines across underwriting, fraud and personalization - not chatbots alone.

"Observe, decide and act."

—

Basir Shamsie,
President & CEO, JS Bank



Youth & Long-Term Profit Pools

Gen Z represents a structural opportunity, but pricing discipline must remain intact.

"Free is a dangerous proposition."

—

Muhammad Nassir Salim,
President & CEO, HBL



Human Capital

Technology without talent will not scale.

"We need to invest a lot more in people."

—

Saadya Riaz,
Head of Wealth & Retail Banking, SCB



Consolidated Implication

Winning customers through 2030 requires enforceability reform, operating model redesign, embedded AI and sustained investment in people.

PRESENTATION

Change is Inevitable

Interoperability is the Only Sustainable Response

Najeeb Agrawalla

CEO, 1LINK

Interoperability as Structural Infrastructure

Interoperability is not optional - it is foundational. No institution can scale in isolation.

"What's the next frontier? It's obviously open banking."

—

He structured his case around logic, ethics and empathy, drawing from 1LINK's operational experience.



Security & System Strength

Following a major breach, interoperability channels were strengthened rather than dismantled. Today all four international schemes use 1LINK infrastructure.

Security must improve governance - not justify fragmentation.

Scale & Untapped Potential

1LINK transaction growth:

- PKR 3.9 trillion (2018) → PKR 75 trillion
- 10 billion + transactions (2025)
- 900 government entities integrated
- 100% federal & provincial tax payments digitized

However, approximately PKR 430 trillion in paper-based transactions remains undigitized, representing structural upside.

Industry Gaps

Mobile banking (22% CAGR) and internet banking (30% CAGR) are growing, but transformation remains incremental.

Banks must:

- Digitize B2B payments
- Serve Gen Z and freelancers
- Shift from float-based to fee-based models

International benchmarks (UPI, SEPA, UK Faster Payments) demonstrate what scale can look like.

Strategic Implication

Interoperability and shared infrastructure must anchor the next phase of digital growth.

PRESENTATION

The AI Paradox

Why Revenue Generation Outperforms Cost Reduction in Emerging Markets

Abu Abdullah Ashar Naeem

CO-FOUNDER & CEO, WAI INDUSTRIES

AI as a Revenue Engine

In emerging markets, AI's strategic value lies in revenue growth - not cost cutting.

"Every dollar that is spent on generating growth has much higher returns than spending the same dollar for reducing your cost."

—

Labour arbitrage offers limited advantage; revenue expansion offers structural impact.



Global AI Execution Failure

Many AI pilots fail to scale.

Global implementation faces “complete carnage” when transitioning from experimentation to enterprise value.

The failure stems from infrastructure-heavy investment without clear revenue use cases.

Pakistan as an Unexpected Surprise

Local banks are applying AI for:

- Customer experience enhancement
- Cross-sell optimization
- Holistic profiling

Rather than competing in foundational model development, Pakistan should focus on application-layer innovation and agentic frameworks.

Leapfrogging Legacy Constraints

Emerging economies can adopt modern AI faster due to lower legacy burdens.

LLMs reduce rigid ETL dependencies, allowing more flexible reasoning across datasets.

Strategic Implication

Prioritize revenue-generating, agentic AI applications over infrastructure-heavy experimentation.



Keynote II
Xi Liang
Head of AI, Mashreq Bank

AI at Enterprise Scale in Banking: From Pilots to Impact

AI in Banking: From Pilots to Enterprise Impact

Xi Liang observed that most banks, globally and in Pakistan, remain in early AI maturity. AI is often deployed as fragmented productivity tools rather than embedded decision infrastructure. True impact requires trusted AI decisioning at scale.

Incremental automation does not materially shift cost structures unless processes are eliminated end-to-end. ROI depends on faster implementation, scalable foundations and disciplined governance.



The Three-Stage AI Evolution

Xi outlined a structured maturity path:

1. **Productivity & Efficiency** – experimentation and knowledge discovery
2. **Decision AI** – trusted, governed decision frameworks
3. **Growth Enablement** – AI-driven revenue expansion

Revenue generation through generative AI remains a global challenge.

Scaling Requires Foundation + Use Cases in Parallel

Isolated use cases cannot deliver sustainable ROI.

"By the time you have finished 20 use cases, you should have built 50% of the foundation."

—

"By the time you have finished 20 use cases, you should have built 50% of the foundation."

Scaling requires:

- Clear governance architecture
- Value tracking and ROI discipline
- Data readiness
- End-to-end automation in prioritized domains

Foundations must be built alongside execution.

Personalization Orchestration

A central recommendation was enterprise-wide personalization orchestration rather than fragmented cross-selling models.

This approach leverages machine learning to coordinate what to offer, when and through which channel — creating unified customer visibility.

"It's not generative AI... a more strategic way to have a personalization orchestration engine will get us there very fast."

—

Mashreq's AI Vision

Mashreq aims to become an "AI-infused, trustworthy bank" within five years.

The strategy includes:

- Strong governance
- Hybrid scalable infrastructure
- AI-ready data
- Structured talent development
- Standardized AI accelerators
- Strategic partnerships

Strategic Implication

AI must transition from experimentation to enterprise architecture - governed, scalable and revenue-aligned.

PANEL 2

DIGITAL SOLUTIONS & AI IN RETAIL BANKING



MODERATED BY
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Co-Founder & CPO, Brandneu



HASSAN ABBAS
CEO, Sky47

Overview
AI, Digital Banking & Financial Inclusion: The Reset of Pakistan's Banking Sector

Structural Scale vs Structural Gaps

Pakistan's banking system has scale - 100M customers, 144M accounts, PKR 34T deposits and PKR 14T lending, yet structural gaps persist. PKR 11T remains in circulation and credit access lags for SMEs, women and informal sectors.

The panel examined whether AI can become a structural enabler rather than an efficiency tool.

Redefining Inclusion

Inclusion must move from accounts to economic participation.

"Value chain financing will become a very important driver of financial inclusivity."

—

Nofel Daud,
CDO, Bank of Punjab

AI-supported value-chain financing reduces risk through embedded transparency.



"Innovation of trust is not a byproduct - it is a prerequisite."

—

Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary,
President & CEO, Mobilink Bank

Trust must be engineered into digital credit design.



AI Governance & Human Oversight

Regulatory guidance requires human judgment above AI in lending decisions.

"Generative AI is still a black box with hallucination."

—

Muhammad Hamayun Sajjad,
Mashreq Pakistan

Machine learning models are suitable for auditable underwriting, while generative AI remains constrained for final decision-making.

Alternative Data & SME Inclusion

Traditional documentation excludes viable borrowers.

"We have replaced financial identity as a basis of credit decisioning and moved toward behavioural transactional data."

—

Nofel Daud,
CDO, Bank of Punjab



Behavioural data, telco records, utilities and psychometrics expand responsible access.

Merchant Acquiring: The Real Bottleneck

Issuance is not the constraint - acceptance is.

"The problem doesn't lie on the issuing side... on the acquiring side, however, the situation is pretty grim."

—

Yahya Khan,
CDO, Bank Alfalah



Merchant economics must achieve parity with cash. Credit-linked incentives can drive adoption.







Remittances as a Structural Lever

Routing remittances into accounts before withdrawal (target: June 2026) could materially shift digital throughput.

Operational AI

AI supports:

- Digitized onboarding
- Document validation
- Fraud anomaly detection
- Voice-based authentication

"We cannot be a good digital front office unless our back-office operations are also digitized."

—

Yahya Khan,
CDO, Bank Alfalah





Digital Experience

Reliability, speed and intuitive design are non-negotiable.

"What people need to do is understand motivation."

—

Habibullah Khan,
Co-Founder & CPO, Brandneu

Understanding intent must guide product design.

Infrastructure & Sovereignty

"We are falling behind the global average number of data centres by a factor of 10."

—

Hassan Abbas,
CEO, Sky47

Domestic infrastructure is both cost strategy and sovereignty imperative.

Strategic Implication

AI's structural impact depends on governance, merchant economics, infrastructure and coordinated ecosystem reform.

PRESENTATION

The New Customer

Redefining Trust and Client Experience

Ajanthan Sivathas

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, STANDARD CHARTERED BANK

The New Benchmark for Trust

Customer expectations are now shaped by global technology platforms, not banks.

"Long-term experiences, not short-term transactions - that is the only way that we build loyalty."

—

Banks must evolve from transactional providers to lifecycle partners.



Legacy Models in a 24/7 Economy

Batch-era operational models persist despite always-on digital reality. Real-time insight and personalization remain underutilized because traditional commercial models still function.

AI in the Loop

Sivathas reframed AI risk management:

Move from “human in the loop” to “AI in the loop.”

AI should extend human capability, not replace it.

Trust by Design

Trust and transparency must be embedded from inception. Opacity reduces adoption.

Talent & Operating Model

Transformation requires embedding future-ready talent within core operations - not isolating innovation in side units.

Banking as Engineering

Modern banking demands modular, observable systems capable of integration. Without modular architecture, innovation slows.

“Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable to magic.”

—

Strategic Implication

Technology creates opportunity only when supported by modular systems, embedded talent and trust-driven design.

PRESENTATION

Scaling AI responsibly in Banking

Operationalizing Inclusive Digital Lending

Dr. Waqas Javed

DIVISIONAL HEAD OF DATA ANALYTICS AND AI, BANK OF PUNJAB

AI's Promise vs Execution Risk

AI could generate $1T annually in banking value; 9% of profits may link to AI by 2028. Yet maturity in Pakistan averages 42.3/100.

"67% of the time, AI projects do not mature from proof of concept to enterprise-level value."

—

Infrastructure gaps, ROI timelines and execution complexity constrain scaling.



Structural Financial Exclusion

Only 4% of the population has access to formal credit. 85% rely on informal lending. MSMEs contribute 40% to GDP but receive only 8% of formal credit.

The solution: frictionless onboarding, minimal documentation, alternative data and AI-based decisioning.

Asan Karobar Card: AI at Scale

- 1M applications in 2.5 months
- 100K approvals
- PKR 43.5B disbursed
- Avg loan: PKR 422K
- 25% new-to-credit
- 45% first-time founders
- 55% SME borrower growth

Psychometric + ML underwriting enabled scalable inclusion.

Lessons in Scaling AI

- Align investment with ROI
- Build governance before deployment
- Institutionalize AI roles
- Monitor drift and bias
- Maintain strong vendor partnerships

"Tech is only one piece of the big puzzle."

Strategic Implication

AI delivers impact only when integrated with governance, business alignment and measurable financial outcomes.

Closing Perspective
The Reset Agenda for Pakistan's Banking Sector

Pakistan's banking industry stands at a decisive moment of transition. Over the past decade, mobile banking, real-time payments infrastructure and widespread account penetration have significantly expanded digital access. These advances have laid the foundation for a more connected financial system, but the next phase of transformation will be defined not by access alone, but by depth.

Retail banking must now move from distribution scale toward intelligence-driven financial intermediation. While payments infrastructure has matured, productive credit expansion, particularly for SMEs, agriculture and underserved segments, remains limited. Converting digital connectivity into economic participation will require data-led lending, behavioural underwriting and interoperable financial ecosystems.

Customer expectations are also reshaping competition. Product-led strategies and siloed operating models are increasingly incompatible with digital-first behaviour. Sustainable growth will depend on lifecycle engagement, enterprise-wide personalization and operating models capable of delivering coordinated experiences across channels.

Artificial intelligence will be a critical enabler of this shift. Its greatest value lies in enterprise decision architecture, strengthening underwriting precision, fraud detection and personalization at scale. Realizing this potential requires strong data foundations, disciplined governance and institutional capability development.

At the same time, structural constraints across the ecosystem must be addressed. Documentation gaps, enforcement inefficiencies and economic informality continue to suppress lending despite ample liquidity. Unlocking sustainable credit growth will require secure data-sharing frameworks, interoperable infrastructure and closer collaboration between financial institutions, regulators and ecosystem partners.

Technology transformation must also be matched by investment in people. Strengthening digital capability, professional training, cyber resilience and domestic digital infrastructure will be essential to sustaining long-term advantage.

The Reset Seminar highlighted a clear direction for the sector: the institutions that align data, governance, talent and capital into disciplined execution will define the future of retail and SME banking in Pakistan.

The reset is no longer conceptual.
It is operational.

Our partners *make this possible*

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