

WHY MARKETING INTELLIGENCE STILL FAILS TO DRIVE REVENUE: A MISSING ONTOLOGY LAYER





Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence is now widely used in marketing, but many organizations still struggle to connect campaigns and customer engagement to business outcomes such as pipeline creation, Annual Recurring Revenue (ARR), retention, and expansion. The challenge is not a lack of data or AI. It is the absence of a shared business context that helps systems interpret how customers, campaigns, products, and outcomes are related. Ontology provides this context, enabling AI and analytics to generate more reliable insights, improve attribution, and align marketing decisions more closely with business growth.



You cannot connect marketing to revenue without redefining data relationships.

The Era of Data Abundance

Marketing organizations operate in an environment defined by abundant information and increasingly capable tools. Every customer interaction produces signals. Website visits, content downloads, product usage, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) updates, service interactions, and purchasing behavior all contribute to a detailed view of how prospects and customers engage with the business. At the same time, AI has become embedded in many parts of the marketing function. Teams use it to generate content, score leads, forecast performance, optimize spending, and recommend next-best actions.

Yet for many CMOs, the most important question remains difficult to answer. Which marketing actions drive revenue outcomes and why? Without context, marketing intelligence often stays trapped at the level of activity signals rather than decision-grade insight.





The Engagement Trap - An Illustrative Example

A LinkedIn campaign delivers positive engagement signals: higher click-through rates, stronger reach, and improved spend efficiency. The challenge is determining whether these signals translate into pipeline growth or revenue impact. Did it reach the right buying personas? Were these individuals already in the pipeline, or are they net-new to the funnel? Did the increase in engagement correspond to downstream movement in pipeline creation or ARR? Without context, the spike shows that something happened, but not why it happened, whether it matters, or what action should follow.

Drowning in Data, Starving for Context

Despite significant investment in data platforms, automation systems, and AI tools, many marketing organizations continue to face persistent challenges. They often struggle to connect the campaigns they are running to business outcomes such as pipeline creation and Annual Recurring Revenue (ARR). Attribution remains difficult across long and complex customer journeys, making it harder to determine which marketing investments are contributing to growth.

Three root causes show up repeatedly:

- **Fragmented systems:** customer, product, campaign, and revenue data typically reside in separate platforms.
- **Inconsistent definitions:** marketing may segment accounts one way, sales may classify them another way, and product usage data may be stored independently from renewal outcomes.
- **Unclear relationships:** AI can process information quickly, but its output depends on how well these relationships are defined. When the underlying business context is unclear, insights become less reliable, and decisions require greater manual interpretation.



The challenge is not data or AI. It is the absence of shared business meaning: a common understanding of how customers, campaigns, products, and outcomes are related. Consistent interpretation of data in a business context turns information into insight.

Ontology Provides Shared Business Meaning



What is Ontology

Ontology establishes a common model of how the business operates by defining the relationships between the entities that matter to marketing and revenue, like customers and buying groups, products and services, campaigns and channels, behavioral signals, opportunities, and retention outcomes. This shared model enables data, analytics, and AI systems to interpret information using the same business definitions.

The impact is significant for marketing leaders. Customer interactions that appear unrelated in different systems can be connected into a more complete view of commercial activity. A content download, product trial, support interaction, and renewal event can be analyzed as part of the same customer journey rather than isolated records.

This improves the quality of both analytics and AI outputs. Marketing teams can examine how combinations of behaviors relate to conversion, expansion, and retention, and they can make decisions with greater confidence.

From Vanity Metrics to ARR-linked Intelligence

When AI and analytics operate within a consistent business context, marketing performance becomes easier to connect to financial outcomes. This is the shift from vanity metrics to ARR-linked intelligence, where marketing decisions are evaluated based on their contribution to commercial performance rather than activity alone.



Signals (what happened)

Clicks, impressions, engagement, product usage, CRM updates



Meaning (why it happened)

Mapped to persona, buying stage, intent signals, buying group role; linked across systems into one journey



Outcomes (what it delivers)

Pipeline contribution, ARR influence, retention and expansion signals; revenue-driven optimization and budget decisions



The Transformation Journey

Before ontology: Campaigns are optimized on engagement metrics, attribution is brittle across long journeys, and high-performing activity does not consistently translate into pipeline or ARR.

After ontology: Campaigns are optimized based on pipeline contribution and conversion likelihood, buying-group progression is visible across touchpoints, and budgets can be shifted toward actions that measurably improve ARR, retention, and expansion.

Empowering the Campaign Team, Not Just the Data Team

Ontology-backed AI can empower marketing campaign teams with intelligence and insights in both strategic and tactical ways. It is designed to answer the questions that campaign activation marketers and field marketing analysts face daily from senior management, such as:

- Which campaign is providing better conversions, and why?
- Are my campaigns helping me build the right funnel, with the right persona?
- Which content assets are providing better ROI?

The practical users of these tools gain explainability and confidence in AI-generated recommendations.

Business Meaning as a Source of Competitive Advantage

Marketing leaders have access to more data and more AI than at any point in the past. To generate the greatest value from these investments, organizations must ensure their systems interpret information within a consistent business context.

Operationalizing ontology at enterprise scale requires more than defining terms. It requires governance, integration across platforms, and the ability for analytics and AI to consume the same shared meaning reliably across the marketing and revenue ecosystem.

Infosys Aster helps enterprises operationalize this capability by combining pre-built industry knowledge, AI integration, and enterprise-scale data orchestration



to establish a common understanding of customers, journeys, and revenue outcomes.



How Infosys Aster Does It

In one Infosys Aster engagement with a large performance marketing agency, reported outcomes included 100% campaign setup accuracy, 99% SLA adherence, a 50% reduction in go-to-market timelines, and a 30% productivity improvement.

In an environment where AI is becoming widely accessible, competitive advantage increasingly comes from the quality of business meaning behind marketing data and decisions. Ontology provides that meaning, and Infosys Aster is equipped to put it to work at enterprise scale.



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