



THE STRATEGIC PLAYBOOK

Decision Intelligence: Closing the Last-Mile Gap

From Data-Rich Reporting to Decision-Ready Action in
Beverage Alcohol



INTRODUCTION

The Velocity of Intention

For a long time, the beverage industry was a business of broad strokes. We moved in seasonal cycles, measured success in monthly increments, and relied on a comfortable, mechanical rhythm: market signals emerged in week one, we debated them in week two, and we "vetted" the data by week three. In a market where a rising tide lifted every brand, it was enough.

But that tide has gone out.

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The **NIQ 2025 Year-in-Review** confirms the shift: 2025 was a year of "sustained volume softness." The broad promise of "premiumization" has fractured. Consumers haven't stopped spending, but they have become profoundly intentional. They are hunting for specific social rituals—the right non-alcoholic option for a Tuesday social, the exact pack size for a tightening budget.

When growth is this hyper-local, the "Monthly Ritual" becomes a liability.

1 NIQ, *2025 Beverage Alcohol Year in Review* (15 January 2026), found at <https://nielseniq.com/global/en/insights/analysis/2026/2025-beverage-alcohol-year-in-review/>

The "Last-Mile Gap"

If a core brand loses velocity in a major chain on a Monday morning, it is a signal. In the traditional model, that signal travels slowly through distributor depletions and analyst queues, finally landing on your desk weeks later as a post-mortem. By then, the opportunity has vanished. Your competitor has already seen the dip, adjusted their spend, and secured the floor display that used to be yours.

This is the "Last-Mile Gap"—the agonizing distance between seeing a signal and making a move that actually protects your P&L

In a market defined by SKU rationalization, the winners aren't those with the most data. They are the leaders who have traded the "Monthly Ritual" for a system that diagnoses a problem the moment it breathes. Because today, the cost of being right but late is exactly the same as the cost of being wrong.



The Structural Blind Spot

The natural response to volatility has been to build more dashboards. We have spent a decade piling chart upon chart, hoping that better visualization would lead to better answers. But the result isn't clarity; it's just a higher-resolution view of our own silos.

In a three-tier system, a dashboard is often just a wall of glass between fragmented truths. Your depletion data tells one story, retail scans tell another, and your CRM tells a third. None of them tell you why your velocity just stalled, or how to win back the floor display you lost yesterday.

This is no longer just an efficiency problem; it is a commercial survival problem. Retailers are cutting brands, not adding them. As the market rationalizes, the "burden of proof" has shifted to the supplier. You can no longer walk into a category review with generic slides about brand equity. You need store-level proof of velocity to justify your specific inch of shelf space.

Traditional Business Intelligence (BI) fails here because it was built as a rearview mirror. It reports on the past, but it cannot bridge the "Last-Mile Gap" between seeing a problem and fixing it.

To compete in 2026, you don't need a more beautiful chart of yesterday's failures. You need infrastructure that doesn't just display data, but understands the unique mechanics of the beverage trade. You need a system that can reconcile three-tier chaos into a single truth—allowing you to move from observation to execution in the same afternoon.

We are moving past the era of the dashboard and into the era of **Decision Intelligence**.

Systems of Reasoning

The fundamental shift in the modern enterprise is the transition from simply storing data to actively reasoning through it. We are moving away from digital filing cabinets designed to hold history and toward what are now known as **Systems of Reasoning**.

When this reasoning is applied to your commercial outcomes, it forms a Decision Intelligence System. Gartner defines this category as the composition of data, analytics, and **knowledge**.

In our world, "knowledge" means really knowing the domain—the specialized ontologies and trade-specific logic that give data its meaning. A general-purpose AI is not enough because a model trained on the open internet cannot navigate the nuances of the three-tier system or the specific pulse of your depletion cycles.

Generic AI is a commodity: High-speed search without a point of view.

Decision Intelligence in BevAlc needs the institutional wisdom of the three-tier system moving beyond search and into diagnosis.



CHAPTER 03

The true power of Decision Intelligence lies in this **Knowledge Component**. In our world, knowledge is the digital architecture of the "unwritten rules" of the trade. It is the understanding that a velocity dip in one zip code might be a pricing error, while in another, it is a competitor's new line extension.

A true Decision Intelligence system acts more like a senior analyst who has been in the industry for twenty years. It does not just search your data; it reasons through it using the specific logic of the beverage business.

By architecting this institutional wisdom directly into the software, the distance between seeing a problem and fixing it begins to disappear. You are no longer asking your team to go find the data; you are asking the system to provide the diagnosis. This is how we move past being data-driven and become truly decision-ready.



The Speed of Certainty

When teams operate with Decision Intelligence, the Monthly Ritual is replaced by a series of high-velocity moves. Based on the friction points of the modern trade, here are examples of how that certainty manifests in the P&L.

Innovation Strike From Hunch to Launch

Brand Managers are often forced to choose between waiting weeks for expensive agency reports or making “gut-feel” bets on new line extensions. Decision Intelligence collapses this timeline by reasoning through real-time digital menu data and social sentiment.

The Example: Identifying that “Stone Fruit” combinations are up 40% while “Spicy” profiles are saturating. This allows a team to move from a flavor hypothesis to a validated product profile—complete with a “Mass-tige” pricing strategy—in a single morning.

Partner Health Check Trading Value for Volume

The most painful “Day in the Life” moment is the distributor meeting where the supplier is outgunned, spending hours digging through files just to see if they hit their numbers. Decision Intelligence provides a “Green Flag/Red Flag” audit in seconds.

The Example: Identifying that a distributor is sitting on 60 days of inventory for a specific SKU before they even bring it up. By leading with a solution—like a targeted display incentive to clear their warehouse—you use the data as a bargaining chip to get new innovations authorized.



Precision Expansion Eliminating the “Spray and Pray”

Expansion often relies on broad territory potential or distributor “hunches,” which is a high-risk strategy in a soft market. Decision Intelligence replaces the hunch with a “Look-Alike” model that matches the DNA of winning neighborhoods against new markets.

The Example: *Instead of asking a distributor to “put it everywhere,” a leader can provide a “Hit List” of the top 50 accounts that match their successful consumer profile but have a void in that specific category. You aren’t asking for a favor, you are providing a roadmap for their reps to follow.*



Institutional Unlock Ending the “Data Janitor” Role

For many teams, the greatest hidden cost is the time spent manually reconciling mismatched distributor reports into a single source of truth. This process can consume an entire day every month, leaving no time for actual strategy.

The Example: *Automating unit conversions and format reconciliation so the team moves immediately to identifying “Bright Spots.” You go from asking “how many cases did we sell?” to “which new accounts in Chicago are driving our growth?” in minutes, not days.*

From Architecture to Action

Transitioning to Decision Intelligence is a commercial discipline, not a technical one. To move from static reporting to genuine answers, the goal is to shift your internal experts from being "data collectors" to being stewards of context. Instead of living in a data-request queue, they begin to teach the system how your specific business logic and "secret sauce" work.

The organizations that successfully close the Last-Mile Gap follow a three-stage roadmap to ensure the system scales with their unique institutional wisdom.

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PHASE 1

THE USE CASE AUDIT

Do not try to solve every problem at once. Identify a single, high-stakes commercial moment where the "old way" is currently costing you margin or market share.

- **Identify the Friction:** Is it a Brand Manager waiting weeks for flavor validation? Is it a Sales Director guessing which accounts to target for a launch? Or is it a Founder losing an entire day every month to manual report reconciliation?
- **Map the Workflow:** Document the current steps required to reach a decision. By mapping the existing bottleneck—who has to email whom and where the data sits—you define exactly where the system needs to "reason" through the noise to accelerate the outcome.

THE ROLE SHIFT THAT MAKES IT POSSIBLE	
BEFORE - DATA JANITOR	AFTER - CONTEXT ARCHITECT
• Data collector	Competitive set curator
• Request queue manager	Business logic architect
• Spreadsheet reconciler	Insight author
• Dashboard builder	Strategic decision driver

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PHASE 2

THE TARGETED PILOT

A pilot should be a clinical trial for a specific business result, using a system designed for the complexities of the trade.

- **The System:** Choose an industry-specific decision intelligence system like BevGenie. Unlike generic AI, it is purpose-built for the beverage sector and already architected to ingest the fragmented "Three-Tier" data—shipments, depletions, and retail scans—that traditional tools struggle to reconcile. It understands the nuances of the trade, such as case-equivalent conversions, depletion velocity, and distributor-specific reporting formats.
- **The Team:** Select 3–5 "in-the-trenches" users. This might be a Regional Sales Director with a critical distributor review on the horizon or a Brand Manager facing an innovation deadline.
- **The Governance:** Have your senior analysts act as the "Architects." Their role is to feed the system your specific competitive sets (e.g., Masstige vs. Value), pricing elasticities, and "Super-User" profiles to ensure every output is governed by your specific version of the industry.

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PHASE 3

THE ITERATIVE LOOP

The goal of the pilot is to move from a "generic" answer to a "precision diagnosis."

- **Refine the Logic:** If the system generates an expansion list, have your sales lead audit the "fit" based on their territory knowledge. Use those insights to teach the system why certain accounts are "Bright Spots" and others are distractions.
- **Measure the Compression:** The primary KPI is the collapse of the decision timeline. Success is defined by moving from a multi-week research cycle to a ten-minute "Decision-Ready" briefing.

By the time you complete this first loop, you aren't just looking at a better dashboard. You have transformed the institutional wisdom of your best people into a scalable commercial advantage.



Decision Intelligence for a Demanding BevAlc Market

Volume softness, SKU expansion, pricing pressure, and shifting distributor performance have raised the stakes on every commercial decision. Teams need to respond faster, with precision, across a system that spans suppliers, distributors, and retailers.

BevGenie is the AI platform for BevAlc decision intelligence. It continuously synthesizes fragmented shipment, depletion, and retail data into a single source of truth to diagnose performance and determine the optimal move across pricing, distribution, and portfolio strategy. We invert the ratio of data preparation to decision execution by providing the verified intelligence and last-mile artifacts required for commercial teams to win at the shelf.

Stronger decision quality and faster execution across the moments that drive revenue.

WWW.BEVGENIE.AI



WHAT BEVGENIE DELIVERS



Trusted Commercial View

Shipment, depletion, retail, and external signals aligned across sources, entities, and hierarchies so teams work from the same numbers



Purpose-Built for BevAlc

Results reflect your portfolio structure, market definitions, and commercial relationships, not generic views of the data



Decision-Ready Answers

Link changes in performance to the underlying commercial drivers across pricing, promotion, distribution, and more without manual analysis



Outputs That Drive Execution

Generate the artifacts teams use to run the business, including execution briefs, retailer decks, and diagnostic reports