

Ignite X Wins 'AEO Innovation Award' in 2026 MarTech Breakthrough Awards

Boutique Silicon Valley agency recognized for its pioneering rubric, the Credibility Score, the first diagnostic that measures how AI engines perceive a brand

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[Ignite X](#), an award-winning San Francisco Bay Area marketing and communications agency helping tech companies earn visibility in the AI era, today announced it has won the AEO

Innovation Award in the 2026 MarTech Breakthrough Awards. Now in its ninth year, the program is one of the most competitive recognitions in marketing technology, and this year's edition drew more than 4,000 nominations from companies around the world.



IgniteX

Ignite X, winner of the AEO Innovation Award in the 2026 MarTech Breakthrough Awards

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Carmen Hughes, Founder & Principal, Ignite X

The MarTech Breakthrough Awards recognize the top companies, technologies, and products across the global marketing, sales, and advertising technology landscape. Winners were selected following a thorough review, scoring, and analysis process. Ignite X joins the 2026 class of MarTech Breakthrough winners, which includes leading companies and startups such as Zeta, Klaviyo, Adobe, Contentful, Cision, Similarweb, and Sprinklr.

The AEO Innovation Award recognizes Ignite X for its work in Answer Engine Optimization, the emerging discipline of

making sure that a brand surfaces and gets cited when buyers pose questions to AI engines such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude, and Gemini. Through its Machine Relations practice, Ignite X helps companies become AI visible to AI engines, then measures whether the company's messaging, narratives, and earned authority actually show up or are cited in the AI answers that buyers receive.

“Being named the AEO Innovation Award winner underscores the shift companies now have to

make to become AI visible,” said Carmen Hughes, Founder and Principal of Ignite X. “In this new AI era, PR isn’t about landing headlines, it’s about whether the AI engines cite your brand when a buyer starts their research. We built proprietary diagnostics, the [Credibility Score](#) and AI Visibility Audits, to show a company exactly where it stands with those AI engines, then deliver a roadmap to close the gaps that keep it from getting cited. We’re honored Ignite X’s Credibility Score earned this recognition. It’s the measurement that the AI era has been missing, and the front door to an emerging discipline that we call Machine Relations.”

As AI engines increasingly stand between brands and the buyers researching them, Ignite X continues to build the measurement and strategy layer that helps companies compete for AI visibility in machine-generated answers, not just traditional search results, content, and media coverage. Ignite X helps its clients earn trust with a machine the way PR earns trust with key influencers: through credible third parties, current messaging, consistent proof, and an accurate digital trail across the internet.

About Ignite X

Ignite X is an award-winning San Francisco Bay Area marketing and communications agency helping tech companies earn visibility in the AI era. Over 20+ years, Ignite X has launched or represented 200+ technology companies, 35+ of which have gone on to successful exits, and has been named a Top 20 San Francisco agency five years running. Working with AI startups beginning in 2016, the agency specializes in AI search visibility, Machine Relations, and its proprietary Credibility Score, the six-dimension diagnostic that measures how AI engines perceive a brand. Ignite X also publishes CITED, its weekly newsletter on the AI-era citation economy. For more information visit ignitepr.com.

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