

THE *Sophisticated*
MARKETER'S
CRASH COURSE *in*
Account-Based
Marketing



LinkedIn



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Introduction

If you're like most B2B marketers today, you likely recognize account-based marketing (ABM) has become as an important element of your effective go-to-market strategy.

ITSMA, a research-based membership organization, which first pioneered ABM more than 10 years ago, defines it as “more than a sales or marketing approach; it is a collaborative strategy that engages sales, marketing, subject matter experts and delivery professionals, as well as key executives in the chosen client account to determine where and how to best meet the client’s unique business challenges. With deep insight into the client’s business and key goals, this collaborative team creates a well-orchestrated marketing and sales campaign for a single account.”

SiriusDecisions, a global B2B research and advisory firm, defines ABM as “the strategic approach marketers use to support a defined universe of accounts, including strategic accounts and named accounts.”

Source: “State of Account-Based Marketing (ABM) Study” SiriusDecisions, 2015

“To break down walls between sales and marketing, ABM is pretty close to a silver bullet in that it aligns programs’ dollars and focus behind the accounts that the sales teams cares about. So there’s inherent buy-in.

That said, ABM is only as good as your visibility into your highest potential accounts and best-fit customer segments, which gets clearer over time.

It’s most effective when deployed as part of a comprehensive set of targeting strategies.”

DAVE KAREL

Head of B2B Marketing,
LinkedIn Marketing Solutions

Focus on landing the big fish

We think of ABM as a strategy and opportunity to focus on an account to bear fruit. In a nutshell, ABM is about marketing to accounts rather than to contacts. The fact is, sales has always sold to accounts. With ABM, marketing is embracing that same approach.

While definitions may vary, one thing is clear: ABM is truly where marketing and sales can align around quality over quantity when it comes to leads. Jon Miller, co-founder of Marketo and more recently of Engagio, is fond of comparing typical demand generation to fishing with a net, whereas ABM is fishing with a spear. In other words, you cast a wide net with demand-generation programs and then whittle down the catch until you're focusing on just the right "fish." With ABM, you focus from the get-go on bringing in only the right "fish," and that usually translates to the most strategic accounts for your business. And considering there are so few big watering holes to fish from, this targeted approach makes good business sense.

Reap the rewards of a laser focus

Marketers across industries are recognizing the value of ABM. Consider what some of SiriusDecisions' ABM clients are seeing for results:

- More than 20 percent increase in deal size
- 30 percent improvement in customer health scores
- More than 200 percent increase in contribution to sales pipeline
- More than 10X increase in trial acceptance rates
- \$75 million in incremental marketing-sourced or -influenced pipeline

92%

Analyst firm SiriusDecisions has found that 92 percent of B2B marketers recognize the value of ABM and see it as a "must have" business strategy.

"Account-based marketing is a strategic approach that coordinates personalized marketing and sales efforts to open doors and deepen engagement at specific accounts."

JON MILLER

CEO & Co-Founder,
Engagio

Ask the Experts

JUSTIN GRAY

CEO,
LeadMD



Q: How do you define ABM?

Gray: It's just good marketing. Whether you call it *flipping the funnel* or *flattening the funnel*, it's about aiming at a more well-defined area of that funnel (i.e., your best buyers) and treating those best buyers in a much more personal way while focusing on the account as a whole.

DAVE KAREL

Head of B2B Marketing,
LinkedIn



Q: To what extent should marketers be using ABM? Is it the kind of thing where they should be all in?

Karel: Account-based marketing is only as strong as your understanding of who the right accounts are. And I would bet a majority of marketers don't have a really great sense of who their customers are.

MATT HEINZ

President,
Heinz Marketing



Competitive dynamics keep changing, customer needs keep changing, your offering keeps expanding. So, I think that's where people put too many eggs in the ABM basket. It's very tempting.

There are some marketers that go to the extreme and say *I want all in on ABM*. They'll say, *I have **\$100** dollars, and I'm going to put **\$100** dollars against these top **100** accounts*. That's where things go wrong. With all these great things like predictive analytics and lead scoring, with all that data, you can get a really good sense over time of who are my best customers.

Q: How are account-based marketing and inbound marketing related?

Heinz: I think we've become so enamored with the idea of inbound and having natural leads and getting a lot of traffic. That's all fine and good, but, with email marketing, you have very little if any control over quantity and quality. So if there is a precise set of customers that you really want to do business with, I highly recommend not waiting for them to show up on your blog, as there are more direct ways to market to them that still provide value to them at the early stages of engagement.



Fueling Sales and Marketing Alignment

No wonder a growing number of B2B marketers are embracing ABM as part of their overall marketing efforts.

First, ABM helps marketers better align with the “purchase by committee” approach that is increasingly the mainstay of today’s B2B buying process. The B2B buying process is a collaborative one. In addition to consulting peers on social media, B2B buyers work with colleagues inside their companies when making purchase decisions.

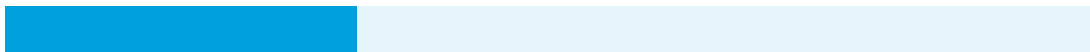
The B2B Buying Process Is a Team Game

According to IDC, the average deal today involves more than eight decision makers, a 43 percent increase from three years ago. Our own research at LinkedIn shows that anywhere from 3.1 to 4.6 additional departments—such as information technology or finance or human resources—influence a B2B buying decision.

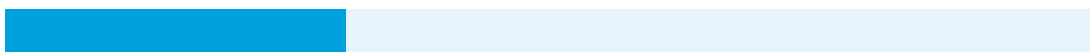
This chart shows the departments with the most influence on buying decisions across vertical industries. Information technology, finance, and business development are the three departments that wield the most influence on buying decisions.

Top Departments Included in the Typical Buying Decision

32% Information Technology



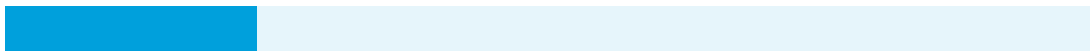
31% Finance



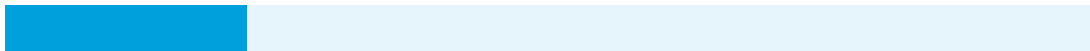
26% Business Development



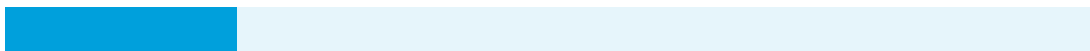
23% Accounting



22% Operations



21% Administration



Departments impacting the purchase decision vary by industry.

Automotive	3.5
Education	3.5
FinServ: Commercial Banking	4.0
FinServ: Other	3.2
Government	3.3
Healthcare	4.2
Manufacturing	4.6
Marketing and Advertising	4.1
Retail	4.0
Services: Consulting	3.4
Services: HR	3.6
Services: Info Services	3.9
Services: Other	3.1
Tech: Adtech	3.3
Tech: Cloud Comp	4.5
Tech: Computer and New	3.7
Tech: Computer Software	3.9
Tech: IT and Svs	3.8
Tech: Online Media Platforms	3.5
Tech: Telecomm	3.9
Tech: Other	3.4
Travel	3.4

The Takeaway

Marketers—and salespeople—cannot be satisfied with finding and directing messages, content, and offers only at the key decision makers. B2B marketers must reach the broader buying group, which means targeting their message at scale to every part of a company that can wield influence on the final buying decision.



Marketing Gets in Lockstep With Sales

An ABM initiative helps marketing better align with their sales counterparts who are already focused on accounts at the bottom of the funnel. Simply put, by embracing ABM, marketers become more aligned with what the sales team is already doing.

As Dave Karel, Head of B2B Marketing at LinkedIn, explains, ABM is pretty close to a silver bullet when it comes to breaking down the walls between sales and marketing. That's because it aligns program dollars and focus behind the accounts that the sales team cares about. With that comes inherent buy-in.

According to ITSMA, with ABM, marketing creates an account-specific marketing plan and integrates it with the sales plan. In other words, marketing becomes part of the account team. When marketing and sales are working from a similar mindset—how to target and land accounts—they can coalesce around a common goal.

ABM also helps marketing and sales each work more effectively and avoid the chance of mishandling an account. When all contacts are handled within the larger context of an account—usually managed by a single sales rep—there's less chance of marketing stepping on toes.

“We find that sales and marketing leaders who are successfully utilizing ABM focus on lead quality, discuss pipeline more frequently, and work together on lead scoring models.”

ANDREA AUSTIN

VP of Enterprise Sales,
InsideView

Ask the Experts

ANDREA AUSTIN

VP of Enterprise Sales,
InsideView



Q: How does good sales and marketing alignment contribute to ABM success?

Austin: We find that leading companies demonstrate strength in four key areas that are foundational to successful ABM initiative: communication skills, common pipeline measurement, adherence to lead quality, and data enrichment to drive successful prospecting.

TRACY EILER

CMO,
InsideView



Q: Can you click into that more? What defines leading companies, and what are they doing differently?

Eiler: In the recent market study we did, the leading companies were those that exceeded revenue goals, and they revealed patterns and a more sophisticated approach to sales and marketing alignment. Leaders have better processes in place and are using more advanced tools. Leaders are three times more likely to characterize lead quality as excellent, compared with laggards.

Q: How can sales and marketing teams solve communication gaps?

Austin: In our study, the leaders reported better relationships between their sales and marketing counterparts, which was aided by better communication as a higher percentage of sales leaders conduct weekly meetings with the marketing team. Here at InsideView, Tracy and I hold a weekly alignment meeting we call #smarketing.

Q: What role does data play in being successful with ABM?

Eiler: Thirty-nine percent of sales and marketing leaders in our study say that lack of data on target accounts is one of their biggest challenges. Companies that address this issue head-on and populate their accounts with accurate and complete data are more successful with account-based marketing.

9 Steps to an Effective ABM Program



Because ABM is just gaining ground within many organizations, there's a dearth of best practices to draw from. That's why we've pulled together solid guidance and recommendations based on input from numerous industry experts, thought leaders, and marketers who are already succeeding with ABM.

Step 1

Position ABM as a Strategic Initiative

ABM is about driving growth through high-visibility accounts. With so much riding on your ABM efforts, it's critical that the management team recognizes the strategic importance of this program and puts the necessary money behind it. To succeed at ABM, your organization will need to create, run, and analyze new programs. It may even need to hire new talent and bring on new tools. And that means you need the right resources in terms of money and people.

Marketing and sales leadership should collaborate to define this strategy and communicate the plan and larger initiative to the marketing and sales teams.

Key elements in an ABM strategy:

- **Accounts**
Which companies and individuals are we pursuing?
- **Goals**
What are the desired outcomes with each account?
- **Tactics**
What can marketing and sales do to achieve those goals?
- **Responsibilities**
Who is responsible for what?
- **Measurements**
How will marketing and sales be measured on their activities and impact?

ASK THE EXPERT

DOROTHEA GOSLING

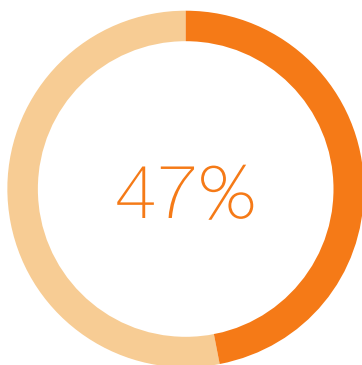
ABM & Pursuit Marketing CoE Leader,
CSC

Q: How can sales and marketing teams solve communication gaps?

"It's not a Band-Aid, and it's not a passing fad or tactic. Your approach to ABM needs to be strategic, and you need executive sponsorship. Otherwise, you'll struggle to roll out ABM because you'll be fighting too many battles."

Step 2

Staff Up for Success



47% of companies surveyed by SiriusDecisions say that they don't feel their ABM teams have the necessary skills to execute an ABM program and that marketing teams need more support to succeed at ABM.

The most successful ABM marketers are, in essence, their own CMOs. They are usually senior marketers with:

- An entrepreneurial spirit
- A range of experience in a variety of roles (e.g, field sales, product marketing, solution selling)
- An understanding of and appreciation for the complexities of selling to a committee
- Multi-discipline marketing experience (e.g., personalization, targeting, social media)
- Leadership skills to engage and command the time of executives
- Experience developing compelling messaging and content that inspires trust and motivates action
- Strong storytelling and project management skills
- The confidence and composure to hold their own when interacting with sales and in meetings with customer

ASK THE EXPERT

NICK PANAYI

Head of Global Brand &
Digital Marketing,
CSC

Q: What skills do you need to be an account-based marketer at CSC?

“Because marketers involved in ABM are acting as mini CMOs, they need a certain level of experience and comfort with the various disciplines of marketing.

That includes personalization, targeting, and fine-tuning, which are enabled by digital.

Marketers also need to coach sales to effectively use social media as an avenue for reaching particular companies and their executives, decision makers and influencers.”

Step 3

Agree on Goals with Sales

Because marketing and sales will work together so closely on accounts, it's vital that they agree on the overall goals. As SiriusDecisions says, being in agreement on goals makes it easier to:

- Select tactics
- Show how each tactic contributed to achieving the goals
- Justify further investment
- Evaluate ad hoc requests in light of whether it will help advance the agreed-upon goals

While the overall goal is to land new accounts or expand business with existing ones, marketing and sales should define discrete goals that align to these big ones. These can include:

- Identifying a higher number of individuals within each account
- Securing a greater number of senior-level appointments/meetings
- Driving faster sales cycle time
- Promoting higher customer loyalty
- Closing a higher percentage of major deals
- Growing revenues within existing accounts

ASK THE EXPERT

TRACY EILER

CMO,
InsideView

Q: What's a common challenge for marketing and sales to align?

"We surveyed 1,000 business leaders, and 40 percent identified disconnected metrics as a challenge to sales and marketing alignment.

The good news is that more and more marketers are being measured by pipeline attainment vs. traditional lead quantity goals."

Step 4

Identify Target Accounts

The overall goal of ABM is to focus on a select number of accounts. Considering the needs of your business, this list can be anywhere from 300 to 30,000. Regardless, it's critical to get the list right. Otherwise, you might miss big revenue opportunities and waste valuable time and resources.

Dave Cain, GVP of Global Marketing at Marketo asserts, “with ABM, your marketing message is based on the account you’re targeting.”

Engagio—co-founded by Jon Miller, who also co-founded Marketo—recommends answering these questions when coming up with an ideal customer profile:

- Where have we sold most effectively in the past?
- Which kinds of accounts have proven most profitable over time?
- Which sub-industries do we work with today?
- What characteristics are most predictive of sales success?
- What attributes make for the best fit with our product?
- What traits should rule out an account?
- What kinds of accounts play best to our unique strengths?
- In which accounts do we already have an advantage?
- What accounts deliver the most value (including strategic value)?

You should call upon all the data at your disposal to answer these questions, including firmographics and intent and engagement data that you can discover on LinkedIn, along with other sources. Account-based scoring can also help here, making the list-building process more scientific and efficient.

Step 4

Remember: Because of today's technologies, organizations don't have to relegate the use of ABM just to large, enterprise accounts.

Here are some attributes to consider when developing a target account list:

- Industry
- Revenue
- Location
- Technology use
- Number of employees
- Competitive product usage
- Current customers

Types of ABM Deployed Today

77% named account



58% large account



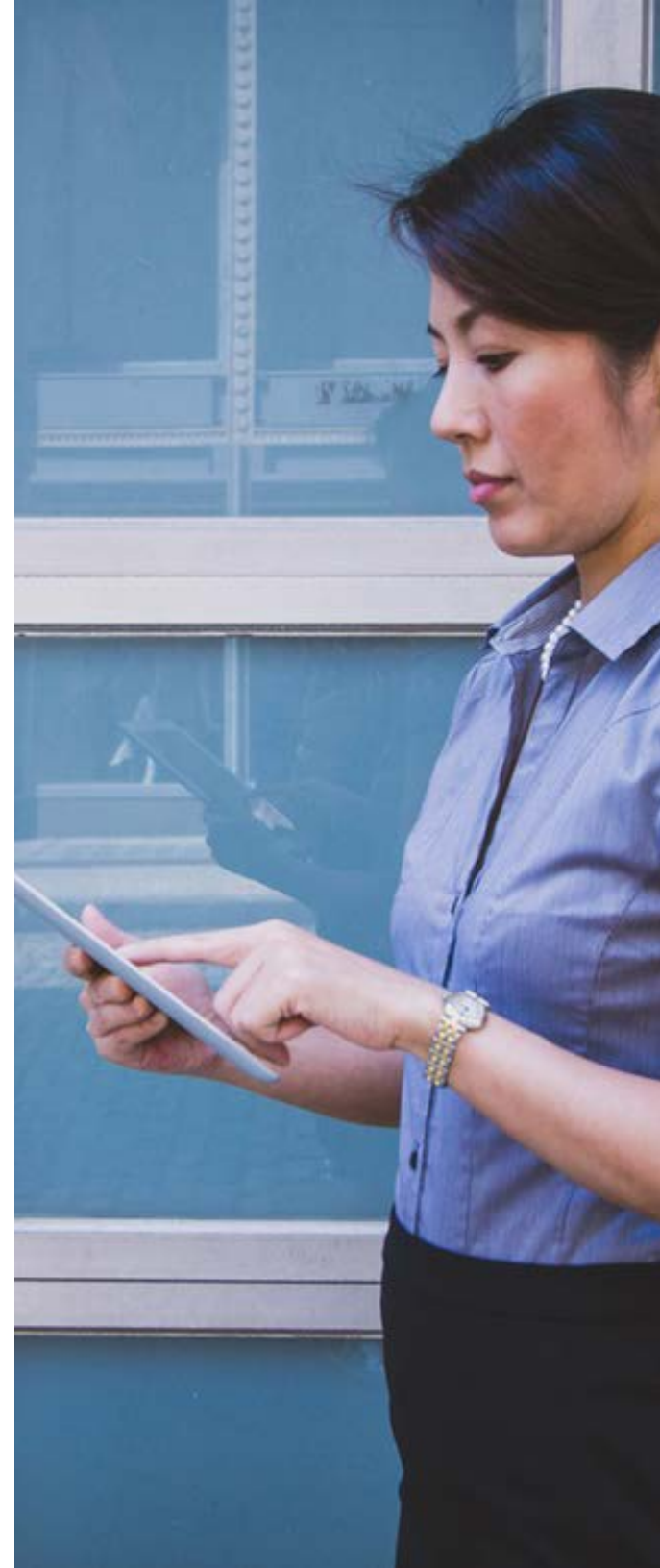
48% vertical (industry)-based account



39% segment (e.g., role)-based account



17% customer lifecycle



“ABM to me and to CSC is treating a single account as a market of one. And within that marketing of one we’re looking to customize our marketing activities and message in close collaboration with our sales team—and not just down to a buying center or persona, but right down to the individual.”

DOROTHEA GOSLING

ABM & Pursuit Marketing
CoE Leader,
CSC

Step 5

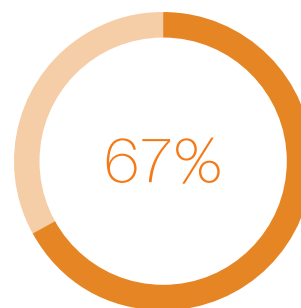
Identify Roles or Departments that Influence Buying Decisions

While the focus of account-based marketing is to land or expand an account, don’t forget that you’re selling to a set of people within each account. And getting a firm grasp on each person’s role and responsibilities is critical to effectively engaging them.

As Dave Rigotti of Bizible underscores, “account-based marketing is not about the companies that you’re going after. It’s the personas involved. After defining your target companies, you need to define people at those companies that you care about.” In other words, you want to understand who are the decision makers and influencers. You need to understand as much as you can about each of these people on the buying committee. Think of it as developing an extensive buyer persona.

Using LinkedIn makes it possible to surface vital information about people in a select account, such as their recent activities, likes, and experiences. You can also get a sense of relationships between the various stakeholders.

Then pair this with insights supplied by your sales team, such as the priorities, preferences, dislikes, and personalities of each.



67% of marketers surveyed by SiriusDecisions turn to sales for account insights. After all, if your goal is to expand an existing relationship, your sales team knows what’s happened with the account and who has been involved from the customer’s end to date.

Step 6

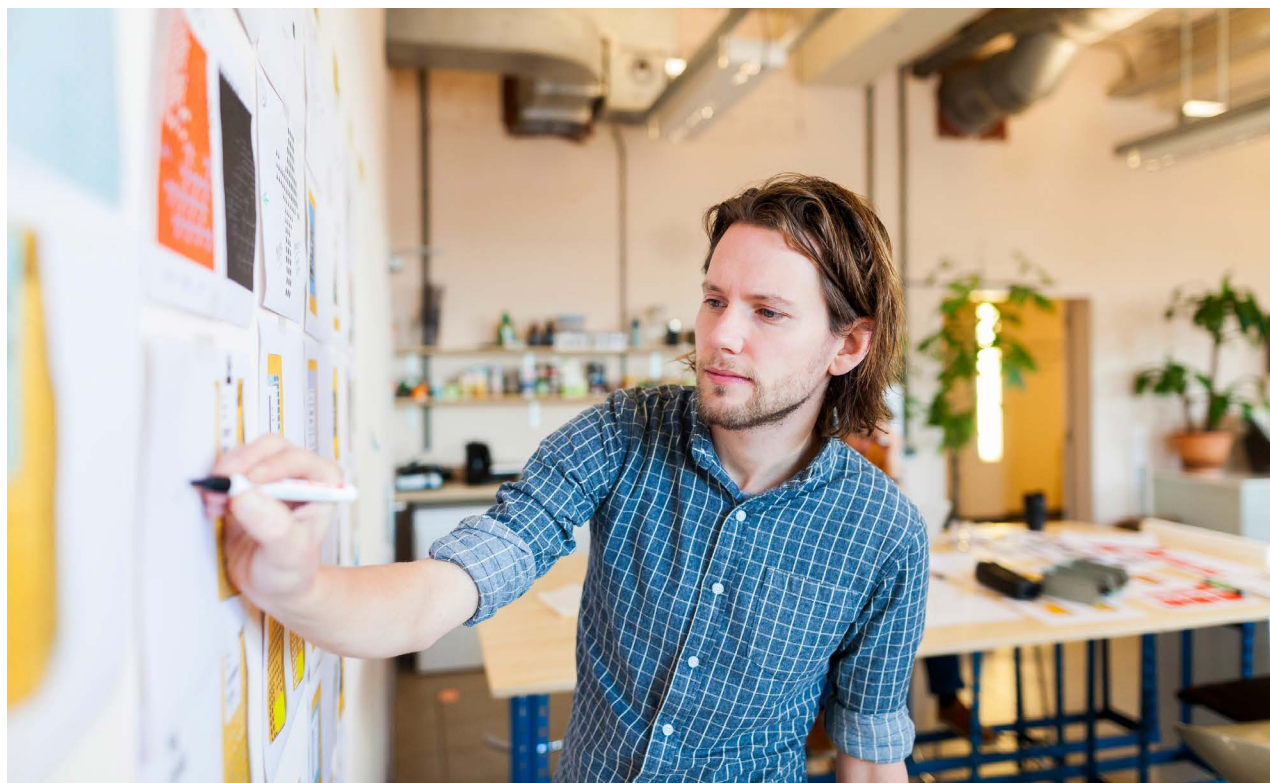
Create Content to Drive Engagement Across Target Accounts

The next step is to put all those insights to work. You do that by developing compelling, engaging content that delivers value to each person on the account's buying committee while also addressing the key strategic business initiative that binds these stakeholders.

In most cases, you and your sales colleagues are trying to engage senior-level people. If your organization has no relationship with the company you're targeting, marketing will need to first build awareness and encourage ongoing engagement.

Once people within the account are engaged and ready to be in discussions with sales, marketing needs to help the sales team continue the conversation, so to speak. This end-to-end engagement requires a carefully orchestrated set of value propositions delivered via a variety of messages and content.

In developing and distributing a variety of content, don't overlook the power of social media. According to LinkedIn's research, social media factors in every stage of the purchase process, from awareness to selection to implementation.



Step 6

You can deliver that content in a range of formats, just as you do for your “everyday” marketing, including:

- Articles
- Reports
- Blog posts
- SlideShare
- E-books
- Videos
- Infographics
- Webinars
- Presentations
- White papers

As with all good marketing, the key is to understand and deliver the content formats your audience prefers. No matter how you deliver the content, focus on showing that you understand the account’s biggest challenges and goals. That said, you don’t necessarily need to reinvent the wheel, so to speak. Whenever possible, repurpose existing content by tweaking it to address the specific account you’re targeting.





Step 6

Your Marketing Message Must Reach Vertically *and* Horizontally Across Target Accounts

ABM challenges marketers to think differently about their messages and content because it must reach both far and wide within a single account. Our research shows, depending on the industry, 3.1 to 4.6 additional groups beyond the main purchaser inside a company influence the purchase process.

In other words, marketers and salespeople must educate more than the primary decision maker. You can reach all influencers throughout the buying cycle by using a combination of broad, early-stage tactics and more focused, later-stage tactics.

At first you want to create broad awareness across the company since you don't know exactly who's going to influence a deal. Then you put more resources behind tactics to more specifically zero in on the key people within the account.

Step 6

Once you have identified the key players within an account, map the ecosystem to show who is engaged and what problem(s) they care about. Be clear about the differences and the messages you will share with each of them. For example, while the CIO, CFO, and CMO may all care about driving higher revenues for their company, the CMO wants to do that using easy-to-use software, the CIO wants that software to require little in the way of installation and maintenance, and the CFO wants that software to be affordable.

The following are potential tactics to use at every stage:



Display
advertising



Social media



Blog posts



PR



Email
marketing



Newsletters

Develop Trust and Share Knowledge

It's a complex world, and buyers thirst for knowledge. In LinkedIn research, we found that “subject matter expert” and “valuable consulting, education, and tools” rank high in what buyers want from vendors. And it just so happens that content is the perfect vehicle for delivering that knowledge.

Remember: Getting someone in an account to engage with one of your sales reps largely hinges on how well your content does its job. Simply put, your content is standing in for your sales team until buyers in the target account are ready to speak to a salesperson.

Here are three steps to develop thought-leadership content:

- 1 Understand what stakeholders in target accounts believe.
- 2 Develop and articulate a well-informed point of view.
- 3 Frame a story in terms of the value delivered to help buyers see new possibilities.

ASK THE EXPERT

JASON SEEBA

Chief Marketing Technologist,
BloomReach

Q: How do you define ABM?

“ABM is a targeted effort and targeted outreach to a set list of accounts that you define as a good fit for your business.”

Step 7

Partner with the Sales Team

When the sales department is handling interactions with members of the buying committee, it's vital that they are equipped with the right tools and content to deepen relationships and win the deal. To that end, package up all the insights and information you can about each account, covering the following:

- Account overview and personas on each member of the buying committee
- Up-to-date interactions between the account and your company
- Unique value propositions and relevant content, including when to use it and with which persona

Don't forget that interactions might occur via social networks such as LinkedIn, so be sure to craft relevant copy for effective use in that channel.

The four most important factors for buyers' willingness to engage with a vendor are:

26% understands my company's business model



25% is a subject matter expert/thought leader



25% provides valuable consultation, education, or tools



25% knows my company's products/services



ASK THE EXPERT

DAVE RIGOTTI

Head of Marketing,
Bizible

Q: How does Bizible's marketing team partner with sales on an ABM strategy?

"After working with sales on target account definitions, we're responsible for warming up prospects but also to converting accounts to opportunities. We use LinkedIn to support both pieces: identifying the right people within account, generating awareness through branded advertising, and driving marketing generate demand."

“We built a targeted list and hired a sales development team. We brought in technology that facilitated the understanding of accounts and buyers, and then we ran high-touch, highly personalized campaigns for top targets.

The sales development team reports to marketing, but what we’re delivering to reps is meetings and opportunities—not a list of leads.

Using this approach, we’ve built a consistent pipeline for the last four years. “

JASON SEEBÄ

Chief Marketing Technologist,
BloomReach

Step 8

Put ABM into Action

Make Use of the Tools and Technologies at Your Disposal

In step 1, you defined responsibilities. For marketing, this likely included:

- Serving content and messages
- Generating leads
- Tracking accounts
- Keeping sales posted on interactions

The good news is that you—and your sales colleagues—can call upon plenty of tools to help. In fact, according to the SiriusDecisions survey, 61 percent of B2B companies said they’re planning to invest in technology to help with account-based marketing this year.

Possible technologies and tools to call upon include:

- Analytics
- Marketing automation
- Ad serving
- Personalization
- Account planning
- Progressive profiling
- Customer advocacy marketing
- Salesforce automation
- Customer intelligence
- Social media

In fact, LinkedIn research shows that certain technologies can drive deeper relationships within accounts and better alignment between marketing and sales. One reason is that they make it easier for marketing and sales to work together, get a common view of the buyer’s journey, and agree on how to sharpen their focus on the customer.

Whatever tools you use, be sure to work closely with sales to ensure a coordinated approach and consistent message across each account.

Step 9

Measure Impact

What's different in measuring the effectiveness of ABM is how you will analyze it against your standard campaigns. That's because you'll be reviewing data across a subset of accounts rather than across your entire database.

You should A/B test and optimize your ABM program and campaigns just as you do your other marketing initiatives. For example, you'll need to test different content that resonates with different personas within the buying committee.

“Digital empowers us to be really targeted, resulting in hyper-relevant content. So, the objective is to not to get as many downloads as possible. Break yourself of that fixation. Focus instead on a percentage of yours that match your target account profile.”

JOE CHERNOV

VP of Marketing,
InsightSquared

Here are the five metrics that Jon Miller of Engagio recommends:

1 Impact

What is the value of marketing's programs (typically measured by pipeline creation using a multi-touch attribution methodology)? What is the aggregate impact on new pipeline and revenue, as measured by movement through a **revenue cycle waterfall**?

2 Coverage

Do we know the right people to target within the account?

3 Awareness

Of all the accounts we're targeting, how many are aware of our company and brand? This can be determined by traffic to your website and LinkedIn company page, for example.

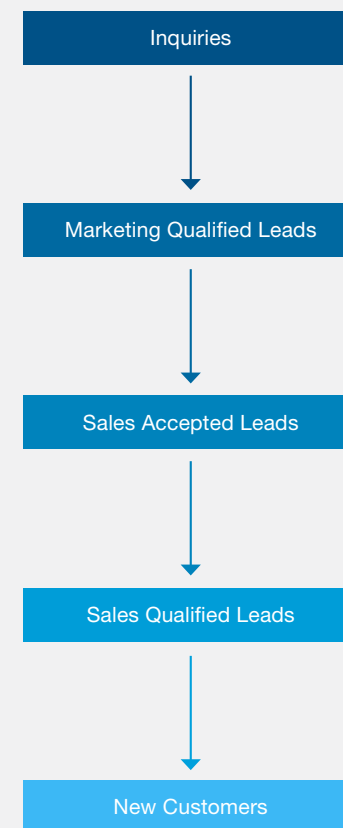
4 Reach

If you hold an event, for example, how many of the people who show up at that event are the right people from the right accounts?

5 Engagement

How much time is the prospect spending with us, whether on our website, attending a webinar, or at events, etc.? What is the aggregate level of engagement for the account (e.g., web traffic, online interaction, attendance at events, and so on)?

Revenue Cycle Waterfall



Step 9

That said, here's the time to go big or go home. This might seem counterintuitive, but it's better to start with a big list rather than a small one. If you start small, you can't run A/B tests and fine-tune your focus. But if you start with a large list of target accounts and apply ABM best practices, you can measure the impact of your campaigns and then segment that big list.

From there, you can run A/B tests to see how your campaigns perform against a more targeted list and then narrow in on even smaller lists. This approach lets you figure out the most effective way to reach, engage, and convert key stakeholders at each account — the true measure of ABM success.

Climbing the ABM Maturity Scale

ITSMA outlines three tiers of account based marketing:

- 1 **Lowest level:** Programmatic ABM: This software-centric approach automates ABM-inspired tactics across hundreds or even thousands of identified accounts. Programmatic ABM is much less resource intensive for the marketing organization and can provide coverage far beyond Strategic ABM or ABM Lite.
- 2 **Mid level:** ABM Lite: This one-to-few model is often focused on a wider group of strategic accounts or the next tier down of accounts that share similar business attributes, challenges, and initiatives. This level is less resource intensive and calls upon technology even more to help automate the account insight process, campaign execution, and measurement.
- 3 **Top level:** Strategic ABM: This is usually reserved for strategic accounts and executed on a one-to-one basis. Strategic ABM is spearheaded by a dedicated — often senior-level — marketer who works with one or a few key account teams on the sales side and creates customized marketing plans and programs as an integral part of the overall account plan. This approach requires a combination of technology and human involvement.

ASK THE EXPERT

JON MILLER

CEO & Co-Founder,
Engagio

Q: What should marketers avoid when it comes to measuring the impact of their ABM initiative?

“Don't use vanity or activity metrics such as number of impressions and number of people who registered for an event. Don't use volume-based metrics, such as 'We ran five campaigns' or 'We pushed our three press releases.' You need to measure ABM by focusing on quality, not quantity. And avoid 'cost-per' metrics; when you frame marketing in terms of cost you're telling the world you're a cost center.”

Ask the Experts

JUSTIN GRAY

CEO,
LeadMD



Q: Does practicing ABM make marketing more like sales, and sales more like marketing?

Gray: I really do think it's the happy medium between the two, which is why it can be hard, especially for marketers. Most of the time, marketing is not customer facing frankly -- unless they're field or event marketing.

But that has to change under an ABM model. You have to walk into a marketing department and be able to ask, What's going on right now over at Pepsi that we need to be responding to? And then you have a good answer to that question.

Likewise in sales, they have to be able to answer traditional marketing questions, like what content are we going to use? What's our next event? What's our next offer? How are we engaging this brand on multiple different levels? So, I think it really does challenge both groups to think like the other and to get rid of all of the bad habits they have.

Q: How does your company approach ABM?

Gosling: We operate at a fairly narrow end of account-based marketing. If you look at it as a pyramid, at the top are large accounts and strategic pursuits and they're very high touch and very customized. The second layer is usually served by field marketing or by regions with vertical-driven, named account marketing that is mass customized. For highly customized accounts, we run bespoke programs that range from an awareness campaigns, social media campaigns, and digital advertising to in-person events, billboards, and anything that helps us get the right message to the right individuals. Here we use LinkedIn Sponsored Content quite extensively.

DOROTHEA GOSLING

ABM & Pursuit Marketing
CoE Leader,
CSC



A man with a beard, wearing a light blue sweater, is sitting at a white desk, typing on a laptop. The desk also has a dark red mug, a notebook, and a pen. In the background, there is a window with a plant and some framed pictures.

How LinkedIn Can Help Marketers: LinkedIn Account Targeting

With **LinkedIn Account Targeting**, you can engage the accounts that matter most to your business by accurately targeting influencers and delivering relevant content that translates into meaningful results.

Run Effective Account-Based Marketing Campaigns on the LinkedIn Platform

Here's how it works. The LinkedIn platform cross-references your target list of accounts against the more than 8 million Company Pages in the LinkedIn ecosystem and creates an account target segment based on the match. You tailor your LinkedIn Sponsored Updates and LinkedIn Sponsored InMail campaigns to a list of top-priority accounts. Then you layer in profile-based targeting, such as job function or seniority, to put your content in front of the right people in a particular organization.

Essentially, you can run targeted campaigns on a large scale, focusing on people at up to 30,000 companies at once. The result? You can seamlessly engage influencers and decision makers across your key accounts.



How LinkedIn Account Targeting Works

1 Request a consultation with a LinkedIn account team.

A dedicated account team will walk you through account-based marketing best practices and recommend how to use LinkedIn to best fit your needs.

2 Prepare your account list and identify your target audience.

Your LinkedIn account team will run the audience match and provide an estimate of audience reach.

3 Launch your campaign.

After you provide content and creative materials, your account team will set up, test, and launch your Sponsored Updates and Sponsored InMail campaigns.

4 Review your results and optimize.

Work with your account team to optimize your campaign strategy and measure the impact of your campaigns.

Once you understand the results of your campaign, you can optimize your overall campaign strategy.

“The pilot [of LinkedIn Account Targeting] has enabled us to increase the scale of how many accounts we can target, giving us increased exposure to our most important customers. The fact that we can target in this way, at scale, increases our chances of getting the right people in the right accounts at the top of our funnel.”

SUZANNE MCVEY

Head of Global Demand Generation,
Swrve

Combine Data-Driven Targeting with Native Advertising

Native advertising such as a LinkedIn **Sponsored Content** is unobtrusive in nature: It appears in the content stream that your prospects are already consuming. In other words, it's focused on attracting attention by providing content in the context of the user's experience.

Sponsored Content, LinkedIn's core native advertising solution is different from other companies' native ads because it is:

- Directly integrated in the LinkedIn members' feed, allowing you to target content based on specific job titles, LinkedIn group membership, professional connections, and more
 - Clearly identified as Sponsored within a user's LinkedIn feed
 - Supported by campaign reporting that allows you to track and optimize the performance of each update
- Sponsored InMails are delivered in real-time to your target audience only when they are engaged on LinkedIn, which means your message is timely.
 - Account Targeting in combination with other profile-based targeting facets ensures your message is relevant.
 - A strict frequency cap is set to provide a positive uncluttered experience for the member while giving your message high visibility within the LinkedIn inbox across desktop, LinkedIn flagship mobile app and mobile web.

Sponsored InMail has evolved into an impactful, timely and highly personalized product. For ABM it's a silver bullet to drive awareness among audiences that are otherwise hard or impossible to reach.

To learn more about LinkedIn Account Targeting, check out our [website](#), contact your Marketing Solutions Account executive, or fill out the form [here](#).

Ask the Experts

MATT HEINZ

President,
Heinz Marketing



Q: Why do you think LinkedIn works well for account-based marketers?

Heinz: There is no fresher source of lists than LinkedIn. If you go to a typical list vendor, they've built those lists x days, x weeks, x months, x years ago. Your best prospects are updating their LinkedIn profiles in real time.

They're telling you what their job is, they're describing their job in their profile. If you're saying I want to go after these companies, and I want people with these roles and these levels, there's no better source than LinkedIn. And I don't mean this to be a commercial, but Sales Navigator has become so valuable for target account marketers and target account sellers. It's foundational.

JOE CHERNOV

VP Marketing,
InsightSquared



Q: How is ABM different from traditional marketing?

Chernov: I look at account-based marketing as zero waste marketing. The idea of inbound or contact marketing—the notion that the larger your total addressable market is the more valuable that approach—is, by definition, inefficient.

You get a lot of false positives, you get a lot of forms filled, and there are people that are totally the wrong buyer, right? You write an e-book on how sales is like *Game of Thrones* and you get the fans and they are never going to buy your product.

How LinkedIn Can Help Sales: LinkedIn Sales Navigator



With LinkedIn Sales Navigator, your sales colleagues are empowered to be effective at account-based selling.

Target, understand, and interact with your top accounts to build stronger relationships

Through LinkedIn Sales Navigator, the sales team can unlock access to LinkedIn's entire 400+ million-member network. Here are the various ways sales reps can take advantage of this access and additional functionality within the tool:

- Sales Navigator enables you to save leads and track the updates, mentions, insights, and news within targeted accounts.
- Your sales team can add your accounts and leads from Salesforce with a single click, and data will sync in Sales Navigator daily.
- Through the TeamLink feature, reps can identify colleagues and others in their network who are connected to targeted accounts, paving the way for a warm introduction.
- Modern sales reps use Sales Navigator to access relevant insights on their accounts and leads, including job changes, news mentions, and new potential leads.

To learn more about LinkedIn Sales Navigator, check out our [website](#), contact your Sales Solutions Account executive, or fill out the form [here](#).

When sales reps have the right context, information, relevance, and timing, their engagement is more genuine and their pitches stronger. As a result, prospects view them as trusted advisors rather than follow-up machines.

"We train all of our reps on the tactics of social selling. LinkedIn is definitely a go-to to understand the account, understand the person's role, how long have they been there, or even to get notified of a new person in a role."

MEAGAN EISENBERG

CMO,
MongoDB

Ask the Experts

JUSTIN GRAY

CEO,
LeadMD



Q: What tools can organizations use to support ABM?

Gray: LinkedIn for searching for and following companies. Google Alerts to keep tabs on what's happening within those target accounts. Solutions like InsideView that let you add more details about those accounts. Review each company's website and subscribe to receive their press releases and company news.

ANDREA AUSTIN

VP Enterprise Sales,
InsideView



Q: How can organizations best make use of LinkedIn to support their ABM programs?

Austin: LinkedIn offers different tools to support your ABM success. We utilize Sponsored InMail to open the door with new prospects within a target account. Our marketing team also uses Sponsored Content and Display Ads to reach specific accounts and contacts with the right message.

ADAM VON REYN

Marketing Director,
InsightSquared



Q: How do you use LinkedIn?

Von Reyn: We do research on LinkedIn to better understand whether a company matches our target account profile. Certainly LinkedIn is bread and butter for our sales team. Every member of the team is on there every day to research the make-up of the accounts that they are going after.

Checklist for ABM Success



Checklist for ABM Success

☐ **Step 1: Develop and communicate your ABM strategy.**

Work with sales to document target accounts, goals, and tactics to achieve those goals, who is responsible for what, and how you will measure the impact of your combined efforts.

☐ **Step 2: Make sure you have people with the right skills in place.**

Determine the requisite skills for ABM success and then staff up accordingly.

☐ **Step 3: Agree on goals with sales.**

Define the discrete goals associated with landing new accounts and expanding business with existing ones.

☐ **Step 4: Identify target accounts.**

Collaborate with sales and finance to put together a list of select accounts to target.

☐ **Step 5: Research everyone on the buying committee.**

Get a firm grasp on the role and responsibilities of each person who influences the purchase.

☐ **Step 6: Create content for target accounts.**

Develop compelling, engaging content that speaks to each person on the buying committee and the larger strategic business initiative they share.

☐ **Step 7: Equip your sales team to engage accounts.**

Hand over to sales all insights, information, and guidance about each account, including which content assets to use when.

☐ **Step 8: Put ABM into action.**

Make use of the most fitting technologies and tools to execute on your ABM responsibilities.

☐ **Step 9: Measure the impact of your account-based marketing.**

Calculate the effectiveness of your ABM campaigns and other ABM-related activities.

Ask the Expert

JON MILLER

CEO & Co-Founder,
Engagio



Q: How can ABM be used for customer retention marketing?

I think that one of the biggest problems I see in marketing departments today is the fact that marketers are compensated and measured primarily only on new business. As a result, the vast majority of the marketing budget is to provide new business programs.

If you look at most companies, you know, especially anybody that has a recurring revenue model, a vast majority of actual revenue comes from the current customers, both in terms of renewal and expansion. And yet all that revenue is sort of left to the customers' success team without really any support from marketing—at least in terms of demand generation and program budget.

So, I think that's got to change and it does start with changing how we measure and compensate the marketing department.

Q: In the simplest terms, how would you define ABM?

I often say, "ABM is a strategic approach for sales and marketing to use personalized interactions at named accounts to deepen—to open new doors and deepen existing relationships." But there are key points to that definition.

It's a strategic approach because ABM is not a campaign. It's not like an initiative for this month. It is a way of thinking about how you drive your business.

It's strategic across sales and marketing. Sales has to be as involved as the marketing department to make it work.

It's personalized, so it's about using account-level insight to make sure that each interaction is relevant and resonant, and then it's about landing and expanding relationships.

And lastly, ABM is not transactionable. It's about landing and expanding relationships.



Conclusion

With a strategic plan and tactical approach for embracing account-based marketing, you can get your company started down the path to higher win rates and deal sizes.

We're not saying ABM is all you need. But it should be part of your holistic approach to marketing. After agreeing with sales on the accounts that matter most, start broad, A/B test and refine. Follow the recommendations and best practices we've sprinkled throughout this e-book. Figure out the effectiveness of your campaigns using relevant metrics so you can accurately gauge the impact of your measures, and do more of what's working while building up your ABM muscles.

Put all of this into play— along with tools like LinkedIn Account Targeting and LinkedIn Sales Navigator—and you may soon find yourself in the President's Club!

12 ABM Experts to Follow



ANDREA AUSTIN

VP of Enterprise Sales,
InsideView



MEAGEN EISENBERG

CMO,
MongoDB



DAVE KAREL

Head of B2B Marketing,
LinkedIn



DAVID CAIN

GVP of Global Marketing,
Marketo



DOROTHEA GOSLING

ABM & Pursuit
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CSC



JON MILLER

CEO & Co-Founder,
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JOE CHERNOV

VP of Marketing,
InsightSquared



JUSTIN GRAY

CEO,
LeadMD



NICK PANAYI

Head of Digital Marketing &
Global Brand,
CSC



TRACY EILER

CMO,
InsideView



MATT HEINZ

President,
Heinz Marketing



DAVE RIGOTTI

Head of Marketing,
Bizible





Today, LinkedIn has more than 400 million professionals in its network. That's more than one-half of the 600 million professionals on the planet, representing the largest group anywhere of influential, affluent, and educated people.

For more information, visit marketing.linkedin.com