

The Marketer's Framework for ABM Success



Start

What's inside



Before we get started	4
Pre-strategy assessment checklist	
The marketer's framework for ABM success	5
Step 1 Achieve executive alignment	6
Step 2 Define your objectives	7
Step 3 Select and segment target accounts	9
Step 4 Identify the buying committee	14
Step 5 Determine the right scale	18
Step 6 Align your content to your audience	19
Step 7 Measure and prove impact	25
ABM on LinkedIn: Case studies	29



Account-based marketing (ABM) is a focused growth strategy that is becoming essential in B2B marketing.

It's been proven, time and again, that when marketing and sales collaborate to identify a set of high-value accounts and work in tandem to deliver relevant buying experiences, it produces more efficient performance and stronger results.

At its core, ABM is an attempt at establishing and maintaining relationships with key accounts. That is perhaps one reason why many B2B marketers choose LinkedIn as the foundation of their ABM strategy—because of our reputation as the world's most trusted social media platform.

To enable more marketers reap the benefits of ABM, we've developed a framework to guide you on the path to success.



Before we get started...

Here's a helpful pre-strategy assessment. You don't have to check all the boxes to begin your ABM journey but it's a good idea to understand where, and how, ABM can add value to your organisation.



What are your business growth goals?

- ☐ **Acquisition:** We're struggling to turn leads into customers.
- ☐ **Expansion:** We have the opportunity to upsell or cross-sell existing customers to increase average contract values.
- ☐ **Retention:** We want to increase customer retention and decrease churn.

Is your organisation ready for ABM?

- ☐ **Buy-in:** We can get marketing and sales leadership on-board for our ABM programme.
- ☐ **Resources:** We can dedicate a portion of our marketing budget to our target accounts.
- ☐ **Measurement:** We are prepared to build new reports to track and measure impact using account-based metrics.

Introducing the Marketer's Framework for ABM Success



Achieve executive marketing and sales alignment

While marketing and sales are distinct functions, alignment is crucial to success. The good news is that ABM by its very nature unites the two teams—as long as they agree to work together in the first place. Make this happen by engaging marketing and sales teams early in the process to agree on joint success metrics so that they can work independently but in unison to deliver an effective ABM programme.

92%

92% of highly successful ABM marketers have strongly aligned marketing and sales teams

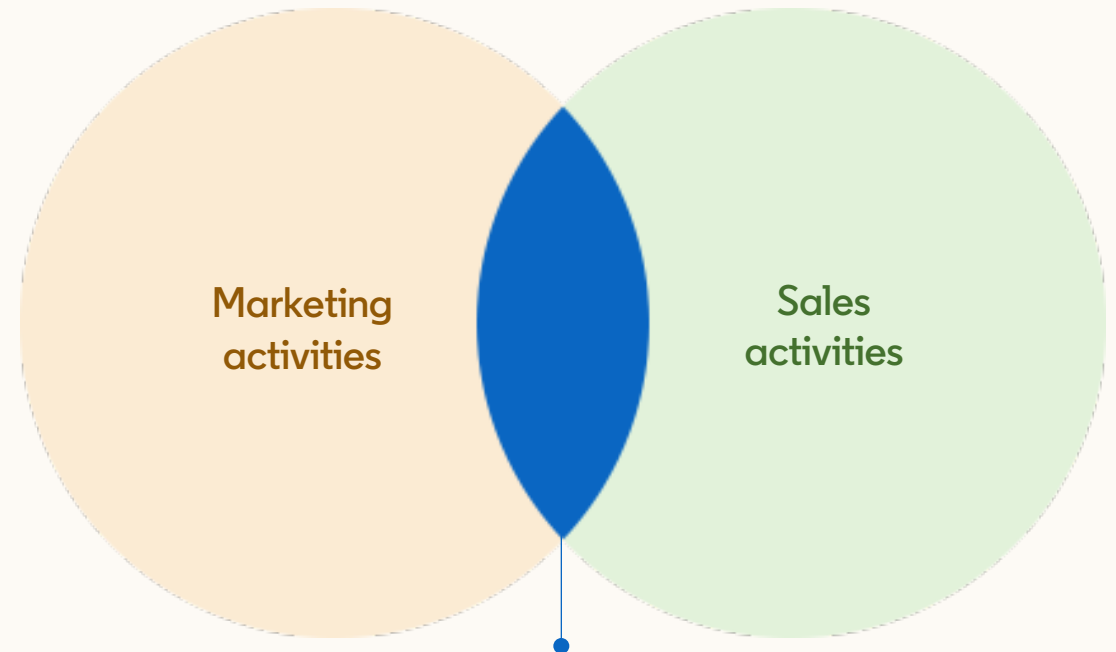
208%

When marketing and sales are tightly aligned, marketing-generated revenue increases by 208%

36%

Marketing and sales alignment produces a 36% higher customer retention rate

LinkedIn data shows that increasing engagement between marketing and sales can boost sales effectiveness dramatically

**+25%**

Audiences exposed to marketing messages on LinkedIn are 25% more likely to respond to a Sales Navigator InMail from the company's sales reps

Define your objectives

When marketing and sales teams have the same goal, it's much easier to develop a shared vision. There are **four main ABM plays** that you can pursue, depending on your agreed business growth objectives.



Business goal: Acquisition

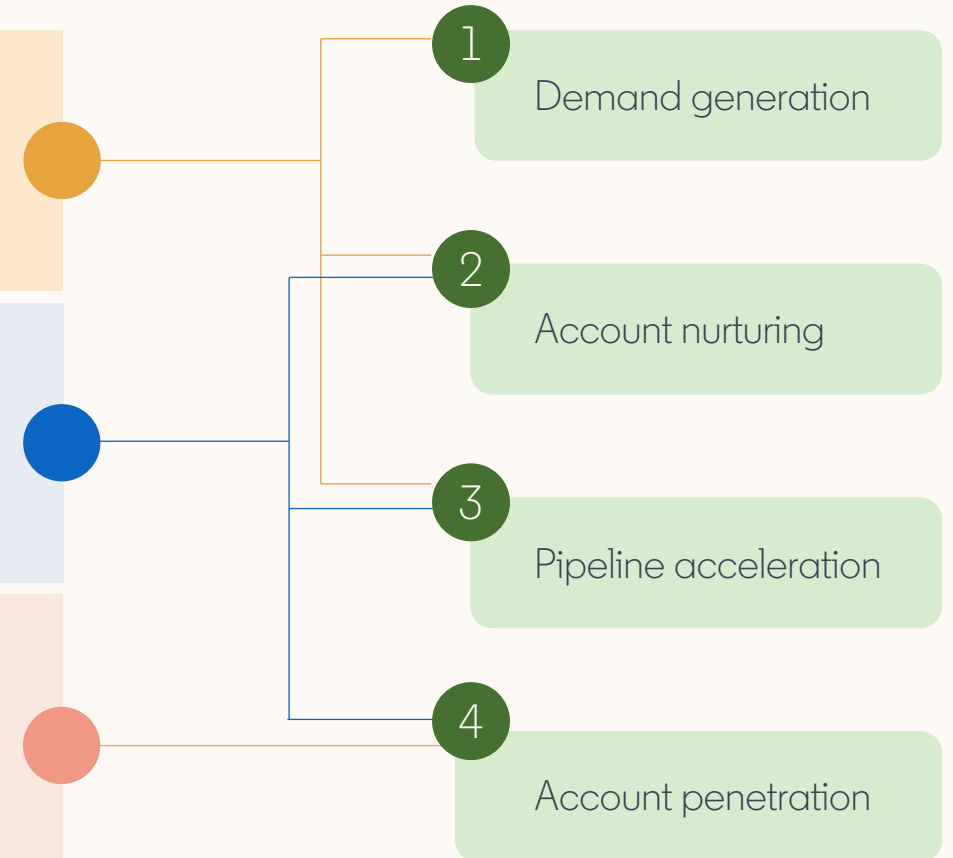
If acquisition is your priority, you'd want to land new companies by guiding new buyers who work at companies not yet doing business with you from initial inspiration through to purchase.

Business goal: Expansion

For business expansion, you'd want to grow relationships by fostering upsell or cross-sell opportunities with those who currently use your product or service. This is beneficial for products with tiered offerings or complementary products.

Business goal: Retention

If you want to retain existing customers, you'd want to ensure that they have the information they need, when they need it. This involves delivering relevant, meaningful content to your most valuable accounts.



Demand generation

87%

of marketers who measure ROI say ABM outperforms other marketing investments

Use it to:

Generate awareness with cold or net-new accounts to improve outcomes for outbound marketing

Make it work:

Share how-to guides, best practices, industry trends, research reports

Look forward to:

Increased brand awareness and engagement, growth in Marketing Qualified Accounts

Measure with:

Growth in number of accounts showing engagement

Account nurturing

91%

of ABM marketers indicate a larger deal size

Use it to:

Increase conversion to sales pipeline by engaging key stakeholders throughout an account

Make it work:

Engage with webinars, custom case studies, product demos

Look forward to:

Increased engagement across the entire account

Measure with:

Lead-to-opportunity conversion rate, pipeline created

Pipeline acceleration

66%

of companies believe ABM increases pipeline opportunities

Use it to:

Increase pipeline velocity and win rates by engaging a wider audience of stakeholders during the sales process

Make it work:

Offer technical/analyst reports, product and service comparisons

Look forward to:

Shortened sales cycle, faster opportunity progression

Measure with:

Win rates, opportunity-stage conversion rate, sales cycle length, revenue

Account penetration

84%

of marketers say ABM helps retain and expand existing relationships

Use it to:

Grow usage of your solutions across the account by tapping into new lines of business or folding new products into the existing portfolio

Make it work:

Develop case study examples of different business units succeeding with your solutions

Look forward to:

New line of business activation leading to an incremental revenue stream

Measure with:

Growth in revenue influenced

Select and segment your target accounts

A good place to start when selecting your target accounts is by understanding what data you have because an effective ABM strategy relies on high-quality, consistent account and contact data.



Data source

Considerations

First-party data

Your own data

Because this data is directly provided to your company, you own and control it, such as your CRM data. However, this may be incomplete or outdated, and may not provide sufficient scale to help you grow.

Second-party data

A publisher's or platform's data

While this usually refers to compliant data collected through your business partnerships, you wouldn't have control or visibility over how the data is collected and processed, so there may be quality assurance issues.

Third-party data

Data that has been aggregated across multiple sources

Data from third-party providers can help fill gaps in your CRM data and offer insights into customer demand and buying intent. As different providers have different methods for defining intent, some tend to be more reliable than others.



Develop an Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)

Now's the time to work closely with your sales and customer support teams. Tap on their front-line experience to understand which types of companies see the greatest success with your products and solutions.

First-party modelling is one way to do it.

Take your most successful customers and look for companies with similar firmographic, technographic and economic profiles on LinkedIn.

This allows you to identify new companies that are most likely to match your ICP.

Look for commonalities among your current customers in each company to develop your ICP



Company:

Company Size:

Industry:

Location:

Function:

Job Title:

Seniority:

Skills:

Interests:

(Business or Personal)



Segment your accounts into tiers

With your ICP guiding the way, you will be able to identify a list of high-value, high-potential accounts. As a next step, we recommend segmenting your accounts.

Doing so gives you much greater control over how to steer your investments and efforts. It also allows you to prioritise the accounts that are expected to contribute the most revenue or value to your organisation.

Tier 1

Highest-priority
accounts

Tier 2

Mid-priority
accounts

Tier 3

Lower-priority
accounts



Checklist

It's best to define the account list tiers together with your sales team while considering:

- ☐ Relationship and connection density
- ☐ Intent models based on deal stage and engagement
- ☐ Deal size and potential revenue
- ☐ Client references within the space

Pending sign-off on footer

Screenshot is low-res

LinkedIn can help

Our first-party, user-provided data is accurate and updated because members are incentivised to keep their LinkedIn profiles fresh for their own business, networking and career opportunities.

Bring your lists onto LinkedIn:

- ☐ Use **Matched Audiences** to upload your target company or contact email lists
- ☐ Use **Audience Breakdown** to find commonalities such as industry and company size

Contact targeting

- Aim for a list size of at least 10,000 email addresses
- If an individual has more than one email address, include them all
- Provide the contact's first and last name as well as company name for more accurate matching

Company targeting

- Aim for a list size of at least 1,000 organisations
- Provide their LinkedIn Page URL for more accurate matching

Customers are responsible for legal compliance for any personal data they provide to LinkedIn (e.g. to target an ad) and should ensure they have a legal basis and right to provide LinkedIn any personal data (including hashed email form) for advertising purposes on LinkedIn.

Our marketing partners can also help with **enhanced audience data**

While LinkedIn is foundational to your ABM strategy, we've developed an ecosystem of marketing partners across audience data, campaign management and measurement.

Our marketing partners can provide you with intent data, for example, to target companies with a high interest in your brand.

Enhance your audience data with LinkedIn's marketing partners

bombora **Lattice** **HG Insights** **Engagio** **sense**

This is a small selection of our partners. Visit [LinkedIn's Marketing Partners site](#) for the full list.

“Bombora’s Company Surge data coupled with LinkedIn Sponsored Content has increased our ability to reach and convert a highly engaged audience that’s in-market now for the solutions we’re selling.”



James Kessinger
CMO, Hushly

Hushly used Bombora Surge data on LinkedIn to maximise its lead generation efforts. Compared to LinkedIn targeting alone, it achieved:

-79%

Cost per click

+414%

Lead-conversion rate

18x

Overall ROI from closed business

Identify the buying committee

As buying decisions become more complex, the buying committee is growing too. Now, an average of 6.8 people are involved in one buying decision. To succeed, you need to build relationships with the entire committee — not just decision-makers and influencers, but also implementers and end-users.



Have you considered senior individual contributors?

Senior individual contributors are an often-overlooked audience. While they may not have any direct reports, they can have a large say in buying decisions due to their advanced domain knowledge.



Reach the full buying committee on LinkedIn

11M

executives who select or recommend new solutions to purchase

63M

decision-makers who shape the vendor selection process by providing feedback

180M

senior-level champions who seek solutions to be more effective at their jobs

722M

professionals who use LinkedIn to achieve their aspirations

Pending high-res screenshot

CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE WEBSITE DEMOGRAPHICS ACCOUNT ASSETS [Create Campaign](#)

Order ID: 13290982 | Line ID: 583574982 | Account level budget: \$50,000,000.00 | Account end date: 12/31/2030

Who is your target audience?

Include people who have ANY of the following attributes: [Remove all attributes](#) [Close](#)

List upload
[Test member list](#) X +

OR Job Titles

[Product Marketing Manager](#) X [Senior Product Marketing Manager](#) X
[Product Marketing Intern](#) X [Head Of Product Marketing](#) X
[Director Of Marketing And Product Management](#) X [Vice President Product Marketing](#) X
[Marketing Product Development](#) X [Director of Product Marketing](#) X
[Product Marketing Specialist](#) X +

Q Search [Learn more about targeting criteria](#)

Audiences
Use your data to retarget website visitors or reach known contacts and accounts

Audience attributes
Add targeting criteria like job title, industry, or skills

Company
Demographics
Education
Job Experience
Interests and Traits

Forecasted Results

Target audience size
34,000+

Segment breakdown

Function
Seniority
Years of experience
Company size
Industries
Interests

Daily spend
\$1,300.00 - \$1,800.00

30-day impressions
48,000 - 190,000

CTR
0.39% - 0.58%

30-day clicks [Key Result](#)
700 - 800

[Narrow](#) audience further

[Exclude](#) people by audience attributes and Matched Audiences

LinkedIn tools may not be used to discriminate based on personal characteristics like gender, age, or actual or perceived

LinkedIn can help

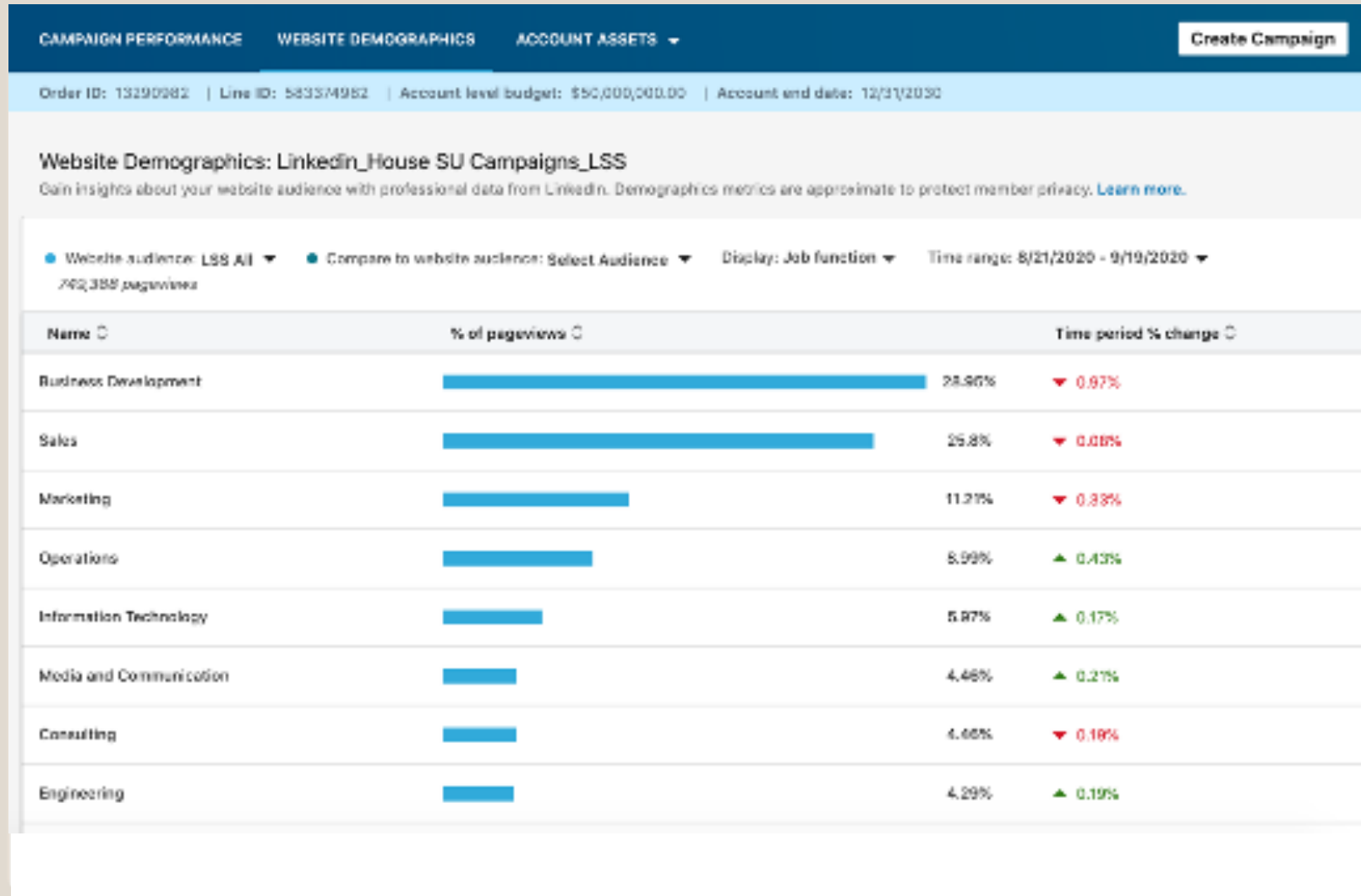
There are three ways to identify your buying committee on LinkedIn:

1 Segment breakdown

Upload a contact list and use our Segment Breakdown feature to better understand the demographic composition of your list.

What traits do your contacts share, and where do they differ? These are useful insights that you can leverage to identify key members of the buying committee.

Pending high-res screenshot



2 Website demographics

Install the LinkedIn Insight Tag on your website for a deeper understanding of your website visitors. Filter for product, solutions or payment pages and view who is spending time on these pages and what their demographic profile is.

The LinkedIn Insight Tag is available for free.

[Download now](#)

Pending high-res screenshot

CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE WEBSITE DEMOGRAPHICS ACCOUNT ASSETS **Create Campaign**

Order ID: 13290082 | Line ID: 58334982 | Account level budget: \$50,000,000.00 | Account end date: 12/31/2030

Audiences

Target with LinkedIn's unique member data

☐ 25 audiences

	Status	Audience count	Last m
☐ Local product leaders Company list 56% match rate	Audience status: ready Campaigns: 3	50,230 members	9/20/2018
☐ Q2 leads Contact list 56% match rate	Audience status: building Campaigns: 9	15,023 members	9/20/2018
☐ Current customers Third-party: Eloqua 56% match rate	Audience status: failed Campaigns: 2	329 members	9/20/2018
☐ Blog readers Website audience	Last signal received: Today Campaigns: 13	12,421 members	9/20/2018
☐ Q2 leads, look-a-like Look-a-like audience Created from Recent sign-ups	Audience status: expired Campaigns: 4	20,000 members	9/20/2018

Create Audience

- Retarget by
 - Website
 - Video
 - Lead gen form
 - Company page
 - List upload
- Create from
 - Lookalike
 - Attributes

3 Lookalike audiences

Grow your list by leveraging our Lookalike Audiences feature to build new audiences who have similar attributes to your contact list and/or Ideal Customer Profile.



Determine the right scale

One of the most important things that you need to know about ABM is that there is no one-size-fits-all answer. The spectrum of ABM ranges from one-on-one conversations with your largest accounts, to programmatic ABM targeting hundreds of lower-value accounts. When deciding which scale is right for you, also remember that you can deploy different approaches for different account tiers. Let's consider your options:

1. Strategic ABM

Approach: 1-to-1 marketing
Personalisation level: High

Recommended for: Tier 1 accounts or when marketing extremely niche solutions

Tip: When running this on LinkedIn, use company name targeting for 100% matching

2. Scaled ABM

Approach: 1-to-few marketing
Personalisation level: Medium

Recommended for: Tier 2 accounts or ABM marketers at mid-sized companies

Tip: Create micro-segments of target accounts with similar characteristics or business challenges to deliver messaging that resonates

3. Programmatic ABM

Approach: 1-to-many marketing
Personalisation level: Low

Recommended for: Tier 3 accounts or when targeted demand generation is needed

Tip: Cluster your accounts (e.g., by vertical industries, horizontal functions, solutions or sales cycles) to run relevant campaigns

Align your content to your audience and their mindset

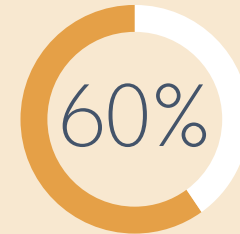
On average, each member of the buying committee gathers four to five pieces of information, which may not always tell the same story. They're challenged to deconflict all this information, which is why it's so important that you consistently serve the right content to each buyer at each stage of the journey.

On LinkedIn, our members tend to be highly engaged.

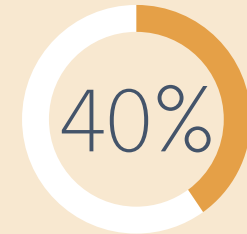
They are twice as intent-driven than users of other platforms, which means they visit LinkedIn expecting to learn and be informed.

In other words, they are primed for content that is relevant to their needs.

LinkedIn members have two types of intent:



Informational
intent



Transactional
intent

Apply this 60/40 rule when planning the content strategy for your ABM programme.



Strategise your content around your audience's challenges

Audience mindset	Audience stage	Audience challenge	Content approach	Content weightage
"I'm your target customer, but I am not yet in need of your product or ready to evaluate alternatives to what we use today."	Problem identification	Competing priorities & information overload	Build brand awareness by showcasing customer stories through engaging testimonial videos and relevant case studies	60% informational content
"I'm researching potential solutions, but I need to know why I should trust you."	Solution exploration			
"I've decided to purchase. Demonstrate to me how you are going to solve my needs."	Requirements	Credibility & stakeholder buy-in	Nurture consideration & engagement by hosting events, webinars and product launches, and share expertise through industry trend analyses and research	40% transactional content
"I've decided to purchase your product. Help me navigate the contract process."	Selection	Accountability	Drive lead generation with events, webinars, whitepaper downloads and product guide downloads	

Making your content relevant

Your sales team is a treasure trove of information when it comes to developing ABM content. Speak to them to understand the pain points that your target accounts share and use these to inform your content planning.

On LinkedIn, tap on our Content Suggestion tool to discover what content your ABM audience is most engaged with.

This should spark some ideas for your own campaign.



1-to-1 marketing ►

Personalise by company name

If you run a dedicated campaign for just one company, grab attention by calling out the company name in your creatives.

A screenshot of a LinkedIn post from Jabra. The post header shows the Jabra logo, name, 46,646 followers, and 'Promoted' status. The text of the post asks 'Working at LinkedIn?' and offers a discount on Jabra headsets for employees. Below the text is a photo of Jabra headphones on a desk. At the bottom, there is a call to action 'Access the Friends of Jabra Employee Purchase Program' and the website 'jabra.com'.

Jabra
46,646 followers
Promoted

Working at LinkedIn?
Then use your work e-mail address and unlock a favorable discount on our most popular consumer headsets in our Friends of Jabra Purchase Program.

Access the Friends of Jabra Employee Purchase Program
jabra.com

1.58%
click-through rate



Avoid hyper-targeting by ensuring that your target account has a sizeable number of employees

1-to-few marketing ►

Personalise by stage and engagement

VMWare delivered different offers based on the audience's funnel stage and previous engagement behaviour.

In many of its campaigns, it generated 3x higher click-through rates and 50% lower cost per lead, compared to industry benchmarks.

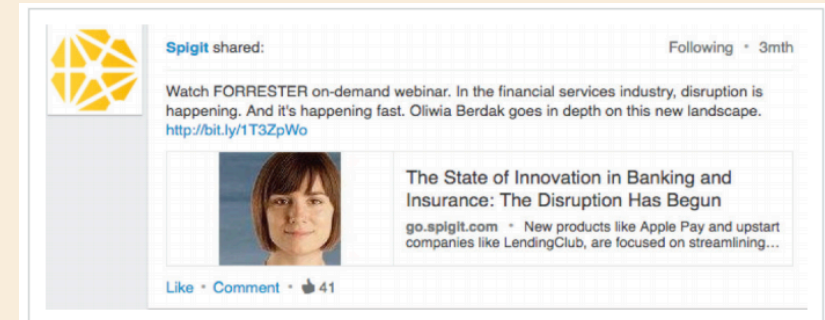


1-to-many marketing ►

Personalise by vertical industry

Spigit set up six campaigns with original case studies, eBooks and webinars tailored to audiences by vertical.

It earned 7x ROI and 0.8% engagement for specific verticals.



Use the right ad formats for each buyer stage

LinkedIn's ad formats are designed to work in harmony to help you advance your objectives at each stage. Here's one way to get started.

Problem Identification

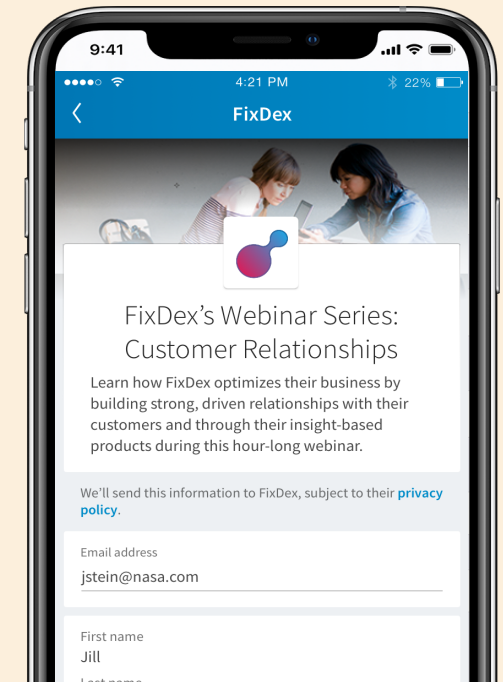
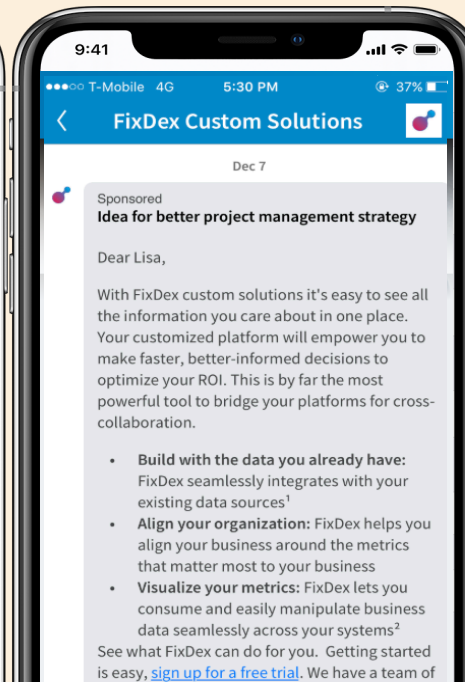
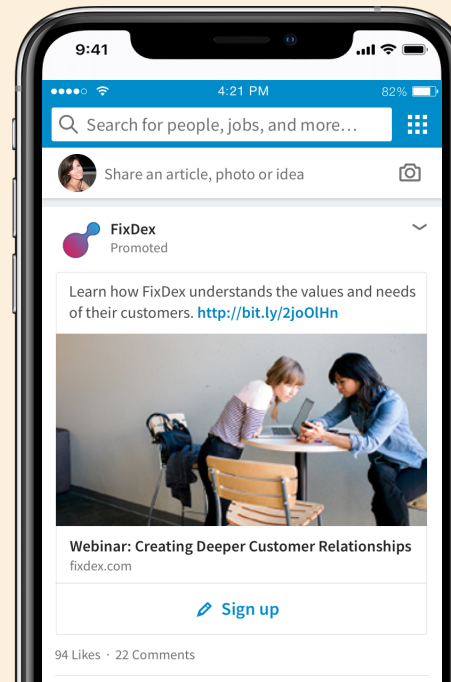
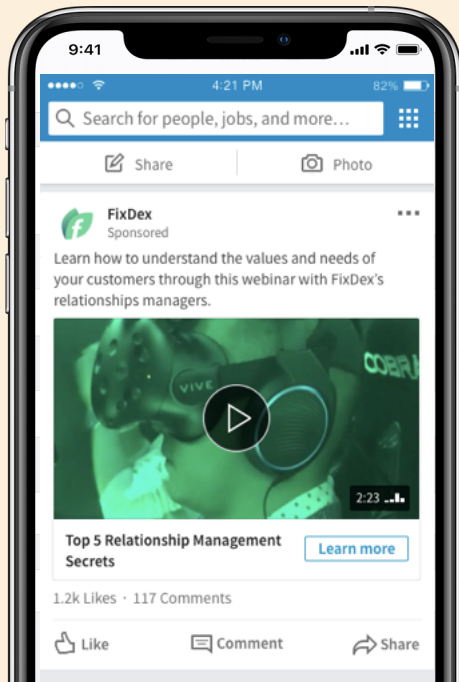
At this stage, focus on building your brand. Use **Single Image Ads** and **Video Ads** to bring your brand to life directly in the feed.

Solution Exploration

Drive engagement with a feed + inbox approach, using a combination of **Sponsored Content** and **Message Ads**.

Selection

Retarget your most highly engaged audiences and drive conversion using a **Lead Gen Form** in messaging or feed.



Our marketing partners can also help with **campaign management**

When taking an omni-channel approach, you can bring in a partner to help you more easily orchestrate relevant content across channels.

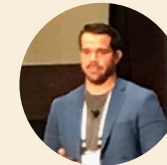
Our partners in campaign management can help you run multivariant tests at scale and identify your best content performing across paid and social channels.

Manage your campaigns with LinkedIn's marketing partners



This is a small selection of our partners. Visit [LinkedIn's Marketing Partners site](#) for the full list.

“Metadata empowered us to make informed strategic decisions about our LinkedIn campaigns almost immediately after launch. The constant dedication of the customer success team to the performance of our program really guaranteed the results we achieved.”



Peter Tarrant
ABM Manager, Tipalti

Tipalti wanted to generate predictable, qualified leads without relying on standard marketing channels. Metadata enabled its ABM strategy on LinkedIn, resulting in:

500+

Net-new leads

\$1.2M

in influenced pipeline

\$330k

in new pipeline

Measure and prove impact

Now comes the most exciting, albeit challenging, part of the ABM process: demonstrating the business value of your efforts.

Since our first step was achieving executive alignment between marketing and sales leaders, you would have already agreed on a set of joint success metrics. This can take many different forms and should be tracked across the entire ABM account journey.

i

As marketers, your aim should be to measure and optimise for results that you can influence.

For that reason, 60% of marketers use engagement to measure success.



Audience stage

Possible metrics

Problem identification

Unique reach
Share of voice
Clickthrough rate

Solution exploration

Ad engagement
Website activity
Marketing Ready Accounts

Requirements

Engagement level
Leads or conversions
Sales Ready Accounts

Selection

Time to close
Revenue

LinkedIn can help

ALIGN MANAGER

FixDex | Marketing CXO Account

ACCOUNT ASSETS

Create campaign

Matched Audiences

Analysts | Ready

Management

Columns: Total Engagement Time range: 4/30/2020 - 7/29/2020

Company name	A Engagement level	Members targeted	Campaigns	B Impressions	Ad engagement	Organic engagement
Matched companies	All	All	All	All	All	All
Star Chart	Very low	12,500,700	37	1,356,411	526	
Leanguide	Very low	176,452	2	50,214	64	
Leanerly	Very high	156,452	1	16,547	12	
Modelane	High	112,457	—	36,145	8	
Overcharge	Low	87,999	5	61,452	8	
FixDex	Medium	92,156	2	17,564	2	
Blashed	Very low	784,547	2	41,223	1	
Refreshing	High	154,565	5	59,541	8	
		65,222	1	41,223	2	

- 1 The **company engagement report** provides a holistic view of your target accounts' engagement across your LinkedIn marketing activities and views on your website.

A Engagement level

We take organic and paid likes, clicks, shares and comments (and paid video views), as well as website visits to give you a holistic look at engagement levels.

Use this to understand which accounts are showing active interest and are ready for sales outreach.

B Impressions

This helps you understand if your message is getting in front of the people you're targeting with paid content.

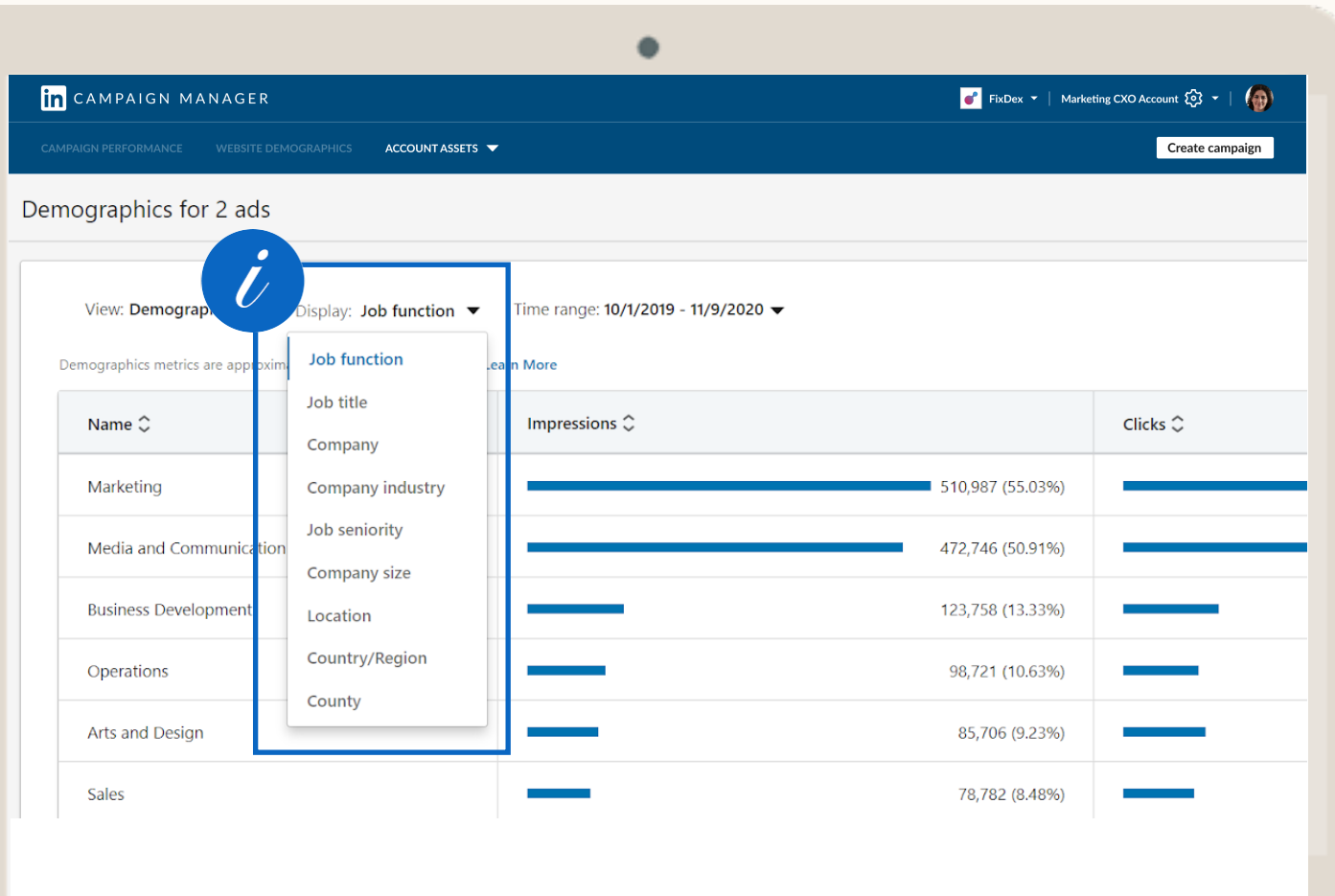
To improve impressions, you may want to reconsider your bid, budget or ad relevancy.

C Organic and paid engagement

These two scores tell you how your ads and organic efforts are landing with your target accounts.

If ad engagement is low, rethink your targeting setup or creative strategy.

2 Campaign demographics measure the reach, engagement and conversions you're getting based on your target audience's professional characteristics.



Know who is engaging with your ads

View by company name for an overview of how well your target accounts are engaging with your content, or filter results by job titles, industries and other traits.

Use this to identify your most engaged sub-segments and optimise your campaigns accordingly.

Assess campaign performance

Campaign demographics also offer rich performance insights, including:

- **Impressions:** The number of people who saw your ad
- **Clicks:** Total chargeable clicks based on your campaign's objective
- **Average CTR:** Percentage of chargeable clicks relative to impressions (clicks divided by impressions)
- **Conversions:** The total number of times people took a desired action after clicking on or seeing your ad
- **Conversion rate:** Percentage of conversions relative to clicks (total conversions divided by clicks)

Our marketing partners can also help with **reporting and ROI**

In addition to the measurement metrics you get on LinkedIn, you may also want to report on metrics such as adoption, churn rate, Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) and Customer Lifetime Value.

Our marketing partners can help you understand the impact of your cross-channel ABM campaigns on engagement and pipeline metrics.

Enhance your ROI reporting with LinkedIn's marketing partners



This is a small selection of our partners. Visit [LinkedIn's Marketing Partners site](#) for the full list.

"We can easily visualise all the important account engagement metrics from our Madison Logic content syndication, display and LinkedIn campaigns in one place. That is really, really helpful and it's something that we will leverage in our reports to the business, so they can have those insights and share them with the sales team."

Schneider Electric

ABM on LinkedIn ►



How Adobe achieved alignment and ABM success on LinkedIn

Challenges

Adobe faced a scenario that should be familiar to many matrixed organisations with multiple marketing and sales teams: siloed strategies resulting in inefficiencies.

“In order to reduce waste, we turned to LinkedIn to help us connect relationship-based sales activity with our broader marketing efforts,” says Matt Rozen, Director of Enterprise Editorial and Social Media.

How Adobe did it

A focused and cohesive account-based marketing framework on LinkedIn enabled the team to harness the power of LinkedIn’s robust member data and advertising tools. Targeting top decision-makers and influencers enabled Adobe to reach the entire buying committee with precision.

Results

161%

Larger deal sizes for LinkedIn-influenced deals, compared to baseline

42%

of closed-won deals in 2018 were influenced by marketing campaigns

[Get the full story](#)

ABM on LinkedIn ►



Genesys uses ABM to break into new markets and cut through noise with LinkedIn

How Genesys did it

- Created **a foundation of data and insights** by tapping into the power of LinkedIn Marketing Solutions alongside Sales Navigator.
- **Refined and optimised their process by leveraging key buyer signals from LinkedIn.** With these insights, Genesys could make better decisions on how to reach prospects throughout a highly targeted customer journey, using a range of creative methods.
- **Involved LinkedIn's marketing partner, Terminus, for campaign management,** and adopted a successful framework for identifying and engaging accounts in a unified, strategic way for each stage of the buying journey.

Results

64%

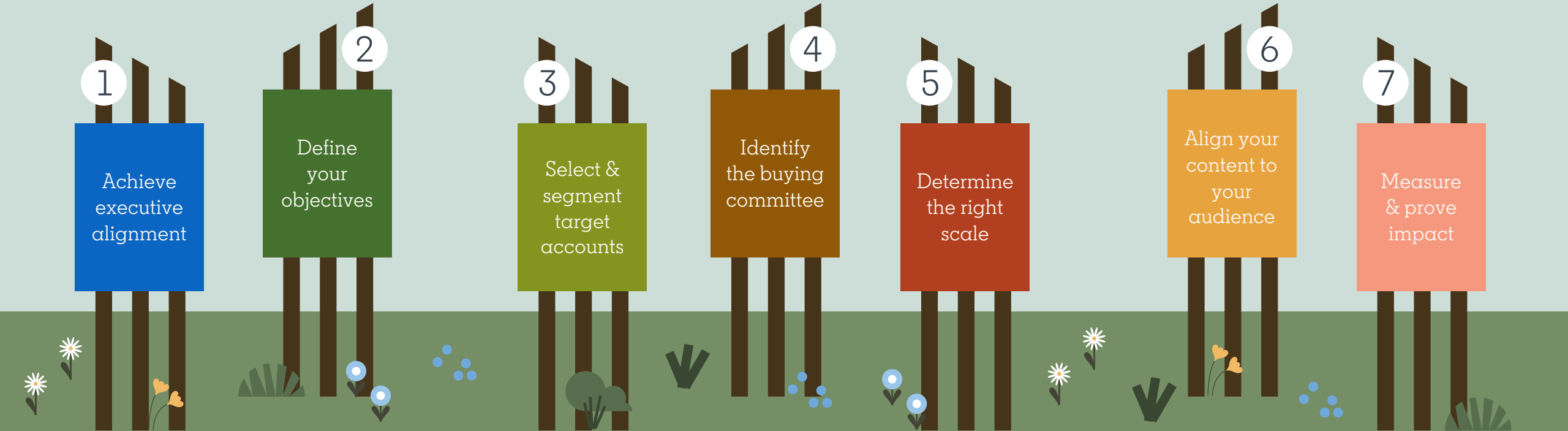
of closed revenue in 2019
was influenced by LinkedIn
Sales Navigator

-30%

drop in Cost Per Lead

[Get the full story](#)

Let LinkedIn be the foundation of your ABM strategy



Proprietary data and targeting



Companies



Professionals



Marketing partners
in audience data

Rich media suite of organic and paid formats



Sponsored
Message



Sponsored
Content



LinkedIn
Events



LinkedIn Live



LinkedIn
Pages



Marketing partners
in campaign
management

Reporting & analytics



Company
Engagement
Report



Campaign
Demographics



Marketing partners
in reporting & ROI



Starting building ABM success now:

Create an ad

Keep learning:

Explore LinkedIn Marketing Solutions

LinkedIn Marketing Solutions