

ACCOUNT-BASED MARKETING: TIPS FOR HITTING YOUR BEST TARGETS

Learn how leading B2B brands are using ABM strategies to reach the right decision makers in key accounts to increase marketing ROI

Account-Based Marketing (ABM) isn't an entirely new approach, but the ways B2B companies can laser target their best prospects is constantly evolving. If you haven't heard the term before, ABM is an approach that centers on the objective, data-driven identification of high-value accounts, and engagement of buying committees within those accounts through coordinated marketing and sales efforts.

This isn't the "spray and pray" approach of sending out mass emails or digital ads designed to attract just anyone. Instead, ABM helps you home in on your target accounts and reach them with your message. Data has shown that [*76 percent of your target accounts are unaware of your company*](#) and offerings.

Adopting an account-based approach means you're concentrating your efforts on specific companies who match your ideal customer profile and are demonstrating readiness to buy.

All B2B companies can benefit from ABM, and it's not an out-of-reach strategy even if you're a small team with a tight budget. In fact, ABM helps small teams make the most out of every dollar they invest.



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HOW'S YOUR DATA?

The crux of any ABM program success is the data you're using to build your lists. If you're targeting contacts at accounts that aren't your target industry, or they just aren't the right fit for your product, then your marketing campaign isn't going to work. To get results from ABM, you need to understand your Ideal Customer Profile (ICP), augment that with other data like intent and engagement, and develop a tiered target account list (TAL).

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR ABM SUCCESS

ABM won't work if you're not using the right data to build your target account list. Consider all the money and work you've put into your ABM campaign or strategy wasted if you don't start by setting the goals of your campaign, defining your TAL so you know who to go after, and using the right data sources. Without these crucial steps, you're essentially shooting into the wind and won't get the engagement (nor the revenue!) that you're seeking with your programs. Make sure you are using all of these data types:

- **Fit data** (firmographic attributes like company size, location, industry, etc.)
- **Engagement data** (activity on your website or responses to your campaigns)
- **Intent data** (activity across the web that indicates interest in your category)

Another challenge that marketing teams face is getting buy-in from sales on trying ABM in the first place.

"Internal cohesion is critical for ABM success," says Randi Barshack, CMO at RollWorks. "It creates such amazing levels of efficiency if you can get sales to buy into having a target account list (TAL), scoring and ranking that list, and coordinating marketing and sales outreach. The biggest challenge is getting over that hurdle. And once you get there, you're on a really good path to getting ABM implemented."

Barshack says it's also important for marketing leaders to allow sales to take a first pass at the list to ensure the list aligns with what sales is doing. Rather than trying to force the list (even if it might be more accurate because you're using more data from marketing), the buy-in is more important than the accuracy. "Once you get the buy-in and your sales team sees the results, you can go through another round with more accuracy," Barshack says.

WHAT DATA SOURCES TO USE?

Your Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution—Salesforce, Hubspot, or another platform—is filled with data on

THE ACRONYMS OF ABM

ABM

Account-Based Marketing (ABM): This is an objective, data-driven identification of your company's high-value accounts, and the efforts in engaging and converting potential buyers in those accounts through sales and marketing.

ICP

Ideal Customer Profile (ICP): This is a set of qualities and attributes that describe your most valuable customer—one who is the best fit for your product and company as a source of revenue.

TAL

Target Account List (TAL): This is a list of your company's highest-priority accounts, based on both static and dynamic signals, including buyer intent.

TAM

Total Addressable Market (TAM): The total potential market demand for your product or service, across all vendors.

your customers and prospects. You may also have other sources of data, like a Marketing Automation Platform (MAP), a Customer Data Platform (CDP), an ABM platform, or sources like ZoomInfo, LinkedIn Navigator, and the like.

One way to organize these mountains of data is to focus on two key areas. First, "firmographic" account data (industry, location, size, sales volume, contact data) from your own CRM or CDP and external sources. And then, "readiness to buy" data, which comes from two sources: Engagement data that is first party (meaning, engagement with your own brand), and buyer intent data (behavior like searching certain keywords, visiting competitor sites, etc.)

THREE STEPS TO DEFINING YOUR ICP

1

Analyze your closed-won accounts. Look closely at the qualities of your current customers and what they have in common.

2

Build an ICP chart (you can find one on this [Ideal Customer Profile Worksheet](#)). This is based on the common and consistent qualities of your closed-won accounts including company size, industry, revenue, technology used, and geography.

3

Put your ICP into sentence form to make it easy for your sellers and coworkers to understand and remember.

Note: Keep track of each ICP and the product line it's for to use in your ABM efforts.

HOW TO TIER YOUR TAL

Ideally, you should have just one Target Account List (TAL), but you should not group everyone in your TAL into one tier and treat them all the same. The fact is, your target accounts have different fit, buying intent, and engagement.

Tier 1 of your TAL should be the highest likelihood to buy and be considered the highest value based on their fit, intent, and engagement. Tier 2 would have a slightly lower likelihood to buy and value, while Tier 3 would be lower than Tier 2, and so on.

When you group (or tier) your target accounts, using machine learning and predictive models, by buying intent, fit, and engagement, you can strategically spread your investment based on the tier.

Tiering your TAL also helps you strategically plan your marketing spend. You could run a campaign against your entire unengaged TAL, but save the more expensive channels (like a nice direct mailer or invitation to a VIP event) for the Tier 1 accounts in that campaign.

ONE WAY TO RIGHT-SIZE AND TIER YOUR TAL IS AS FOLLOWS:

- Use machine learning to score your accounts to find those most likely to close. Alternatively, marketing and sales can band together to manually score accounts.
- Score your TAL based on fit, and then layer on buying intent signals and engagement.
- If your target account list is 8,000 accounts, but you only need 3,000 deals to hit revenue, you'll want to focus the high-ticket marketing tactics of your ABM campaign efforts on those in your target account list that are most likely to convert. What does this mean? They're part of your target account list *and* they have a high likelihood to buy along with high engagement.
- For the 5,000 accounts that are less likely to convert, you can use lower-cost marketing tactics for them. They're still important and should be marketed to, but they're not the quickest way to revenue.



THE FOUR STEPS TO BUILDING YOUR TARGET ACCOUNT LIST

1

Start with your ICP to identify existing accounts in your database that match the ICP attributes.

2

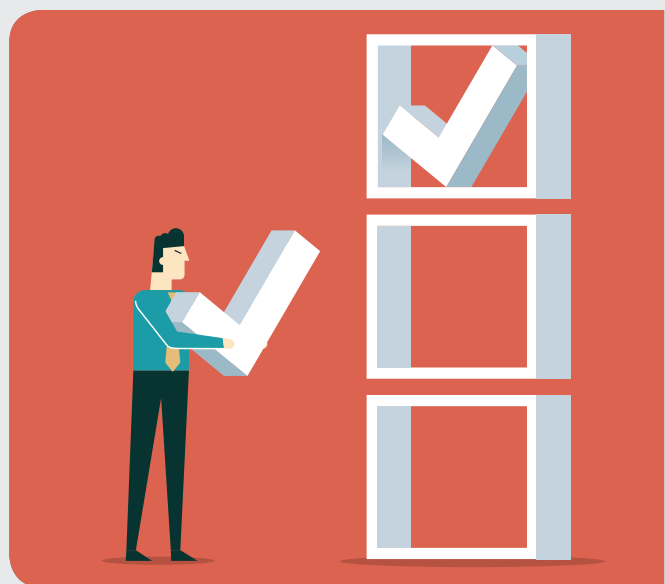
Use vendor data to pull a full set of available unknown accounts into your list based on fit data and intent signals.

3

Collaborate with sales to evaluate the quality of accounts and preliminary tiering.

4

Use machine learning and predictive models to score/tier your account list.



NEXT UP: GET CREATIVE

You can have the best, most optimized data for your ABM programs, but without the right copy on the ads, emails, or landing pages you send people to, your efforts may not pay off. It's important to learn what works and what doesn't for the creative in your ABM campaign. Here are a few tips and insights.

LANDING PAGES

When it comes to landing pages, the name of the game is personalization. You can use tools like Uberflip, Hushly, or Folloze to create custom content experiences and landing pages tailored to buying stages or specific accounts.

A word of advice: Make sure personalization isn't just a name or company name. Everyone does that. Set your company apart from your competition by personalizing your landing pages with content and offers that solve specific pain points depending on the account's sales stage, vertical, company news, etc.

EMAILS

Personalized emails are just as important as the landing page. Make sure your data is correct so no one in your target accounts will receive an email addressed to [first name]. Use email tokens to dynamically add the company name into the email copy or subject line.

Tailor your email copy and CTA based on where the target account is in the sales stage. For example, a "request a demo" offer will always be more effective on an account further down the buying funnel.

Bonus: Scale your sales team's reach by sending emails "from" the contact owner.

DIRECT MAIL

In this age of digital everything, having an item arrive in the mail can make your brand stand out. But we're not talking about flyers and brochures. For example, one pharmaceutical software company wanted to promote their software that helped



pharmacies understand when items were recalled. Their direct mail piece consisted of a box of three pill bottles, each filled with jelly beans that looked exactly alike. The kicker: One of the three was filled with Beanboozled jelly beans with flavors like grass, dirt and fish, that represented the "recalled" pills. In order to figure out which pill bottle was safe and which one wasn't, each bottle had a scannable code that showed the recipient if it was safe or not, and that page contained information about the software.

Of course, this works because pharmacists all still work directly at the pharmacies instead of working from home. If you don't want to run the risk of having your package languish at an office door for months, you still have options.

Alyce offers personalized e-gifting, which includes first researching and sourcing ideas for gifts for your prospects based on their #5to9(™) (a.k.a. after work hours) interests. Then, you create the landing page your prospect will visit along with information about your offering to keep them engaged. Once they visit your landing page, your prospect will select their personal gift and securely enter their physical mailing address. Other leading gifting platforms include Sendoso and PFL.

LUNCH AND LEARN

Another way to level up your introductory meeting or sales pitch is to turn it into a lunch (or drink) experience by gifting sales prospects with a meal delivered to their home or office. Sendoso offers an eGift functionality that delivers a meal or coffee to anyone who schedules a meeting or registers for an event with you on your Sendoso eGift landing page. Sendoso eGifts have resulted in a 450 percent return on campaign investment.

DIGITAL ADS

Ads are an important channel for ABM. They can get your message in front of buyers in your target accounts, even if you don't have their email address. Platforms like RollWorks allow you to do account-level targeting with digital ads. And the team at RollWorks has plenty of ABM plays of their own, like their "wake the dead" program. In order to re-engage target accounts that had no activity for two weeks, RollWorks sent out personalized emails on a Sunday night that offered a free dinner via an eGift card. To make sure the accounts didn't miss the email, they also ran personalized display digital ads and LinkedIn ads targeted at those accounts to increase opens. This paid off in a 10 percent lift in monthly opportunities for the company.



MEET THE MASTERS

Three brands using ABM to fuel marketing success

Who's doing account-based marketing right? We share ideas from brands like PitchBook, NS1, and Dialpad that are using ABM to drive revenue, pipeline, and marketing success at their companies.

PITCHBOOK EVOLVES ICP TO GENERATE MORE PIPELINE

PitchBook, with more than 45,000 customers worldwide, is a financial data and software company headquartered in Seattle, with additional offices in San Francisco, New York and London.

They found that their ICP was evolving and sales cycles were lengthening, which led to a decrease in revenue. VP of Marketing Steve Bendt tackled the problem by aligning his marketing programs with the top priorities for sales and creating laser-targeted ABM campaigns, which included targeted, account-based ads along with sales outreach of emails and phone calls.



In three months, PitchBook saw a 170 percent increase in opportunities generated from those targeted accounts. They also recorded a 79 percent increase in website visits by target accounts and a 220 percent increase in accounts actively engaging with their brand.

NS1 DRIVES 69X INCREASE ON NEW PIPELINE CREATION IN FIVE MONTHS

NS1 provides converged application networking solutions that help keep applications and networks available and secure, improve performance, and make it easier to manage complex networks.



NS1's marketing team invested in an ABM platform that helped them to finalize their target account list (TAL), which resulted in a target account list of about 11,000 companies. They also connected the ABM platform to their Salesforce instance for a bidirectional sync of data, which ended the manual reports that the team had traditionally run.

Next, the growth and analytics team created *digital ad campaigns* that were personalized by company, pain points, stage in the sales cycle, and more.

The result: In just five months, the growth and analytics team at NS1 was able to show a 498 percent lift in unique visitors from target accounts, 69X growth in new pipeline creation, and over 3X ROI on influenced revenue.

DIALPAD CLOSES DEALS 52 PERCENT FASTER WITH ABM

Dialpad is a cloud business communication platform that supports voice, video, and messaging on any device, so you can connect from anywhere.

As they introduced new product offerings, they looked for a way to target specific accounts that would benefit from the added products, and increase their sales pipeline. The product line expansion increased their buyers from just IT to also include customer support, sales operations, business operations, and sales, which also increased the number of people involved at a company in the buying decision.

They chose to create *digital ad campaigns* that were at first generic about the value of their products, but shortly thereafter, they revised the digital ads to be more targeted. The team created over 50 sets of highly personalized digital ads that focused on the key pain points of specific personas and were targeted to the accounts by those personas along with opportunity status, sales stage, and company name.



After nine months of the targeted digital ads, Dialpad saw a 10x increase in site visits from target accounts, 5x increase in unique visitors from target accounts, 21x increase in accounts engaged, 87x ROI in sales pipeline influence, 3.25x ROI in closed-won revenue, and a 52 percent faster time to close a deal.

10 TIPS FOR ABM SUCCESS

Want to ensure you're reaching the right customers and potential customers with the right message? Here are 10 tips for making the most out of ABM.

1. USE INTENT DATA TO IDENTIFY ACCOUNTS THAT

haven't yet engaged with your company, but are consuming content that shows a strong interest in your products. This information can be used to optimize the timing and messaging of your campaigns.

2. MARKETERS ARE HOSTING MORE WEBINARS

than ever before but seeing a drop-off in attendees. Here's the scoop: attendance is no longer queen. Your no-shows are just as valuable as those that attended your webinar. Since your no-shows have shown interest towards your webinar topic, retarget them with ads around similar topics to boost engagement and move them further down the funnel.

3. CREATE PERSONALIZED ADS AND CUSTOMIZED

landing pages/content experiences to optimize conversion from display.

4. MEASURE ALL THE THINGS.

From business impact to optimization metrics, you'll want to measure major points like pipeline, opportunities, deal size, deal velocity, revenue etc., but you'll also want to have insight into campaign-level metrics that give you the power to optimize what's working and what's not working—like reach, money spent and engagement. You'll also want to be able to report at the account level as well as the individual level. Keep in mind that ABM is a long-term strategy, so you'll see some quick wins but it may take up to your typical full sales cycle to see the major business impact.

5. SERVE MESSAGING THAT SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO

each account's specific needs. "Thanks to our ABM targeting abilities, we don't have to throw out 20 messages and hope that one lands. We can mention the specific pain points we know you're going through and how we can help you," says Sam Kuehnle, Digital Marketing Team Lead of [BlackBaud](#).

6. IF YOU HAVE A SMALL MARKETING TEAM, YOU

may wonder if you can handle ABM. You can, says Staisey Divorski, VP Marketing at Enplug, as long as you put in the work to [document very clear verticals and personas](#) when you create highly targeted

account-based plays. This involves identifying your target accounts based on demand and intent in specific verticals; positioning your content and offers based on account pain points; and executing and optimizing quickly.

7. BE CREATIVE AND DO SOMETHING THAT MIGHT

be unexpected—but don't do this for everyone. Along with an email, which everyone in a campaign gets, focus your high-impact marketing tactics, like a piece of direct mail, an eGift, or an invitation to a special event, on your target accounts that have the highest possibility of buying, based on their intent, fit, and engagement.

8. NOT PLANNING ANY IN-PERSON EVENTS, OR

have you found that virtual events aren't working for your company? Shift that spend toward nurturing and retargeting tactics that will net results, advises Ian Brown, Director of Marketing at [Applify](#). After building a list of target accounts and groups in Salesforce, he and his team created personalized ad campaigns, launched their ABM platform, and expanded their clicks from people that had previously visited their site to people they actually wanted to visit and click.

9. ACCORDING TO [GARTNER](#), THE TYPICAL BUYING

process for a complex B2B solution includes six to 10 different decision-makers. With each of those people doing their own research and sitting down to discuss the options, it's clear why a B2B sales cycle can take months or years to complete. If and when you're evaluating ABM software, choose one that will engage the entire buying committee at your target accounts quickly and effectively to decrease that sales cycle.

10. ALSO REGARDING ABM SOFTWARE, THE BEST

software is one that integrates with your current CRM and marketing automation platform (MAP) software. With integrated systems, you can pull data into your ABM campaign from your CRM and MAP, and track activity and results across your sales and marketing programs.

ABOUT

**CHIEF/
MARKETER**

Chief Marketer, an Access Intelligence brand, provides marketers and aspiring CMOs with content, ideas, recognition and events that help them make smarter decisions with their marketing budgets. It offers data-driven industry intelligence, actionable insights, inspiring case studies and the latest technology trends so marketers can improve their campaigns and increase ROI.

ABOUT

 **RollWorks**

RollWorks offers B2B companies of any size an account-based platform to align their marketing and sales teams and confidently grow revenue. Powered by machine learning and an extensive account data foundation, RollWorks helps you identify your target accounts, engage them with digital ads, web personalization, email signatures, and sales automation, and measure the effectiveness of your programs.