

EBOOK

Unspam Your Brand

The Definitive Guide
to Smarter GTM™ with
Account Intelligence
and ABM/ABX

DEMANDBASE

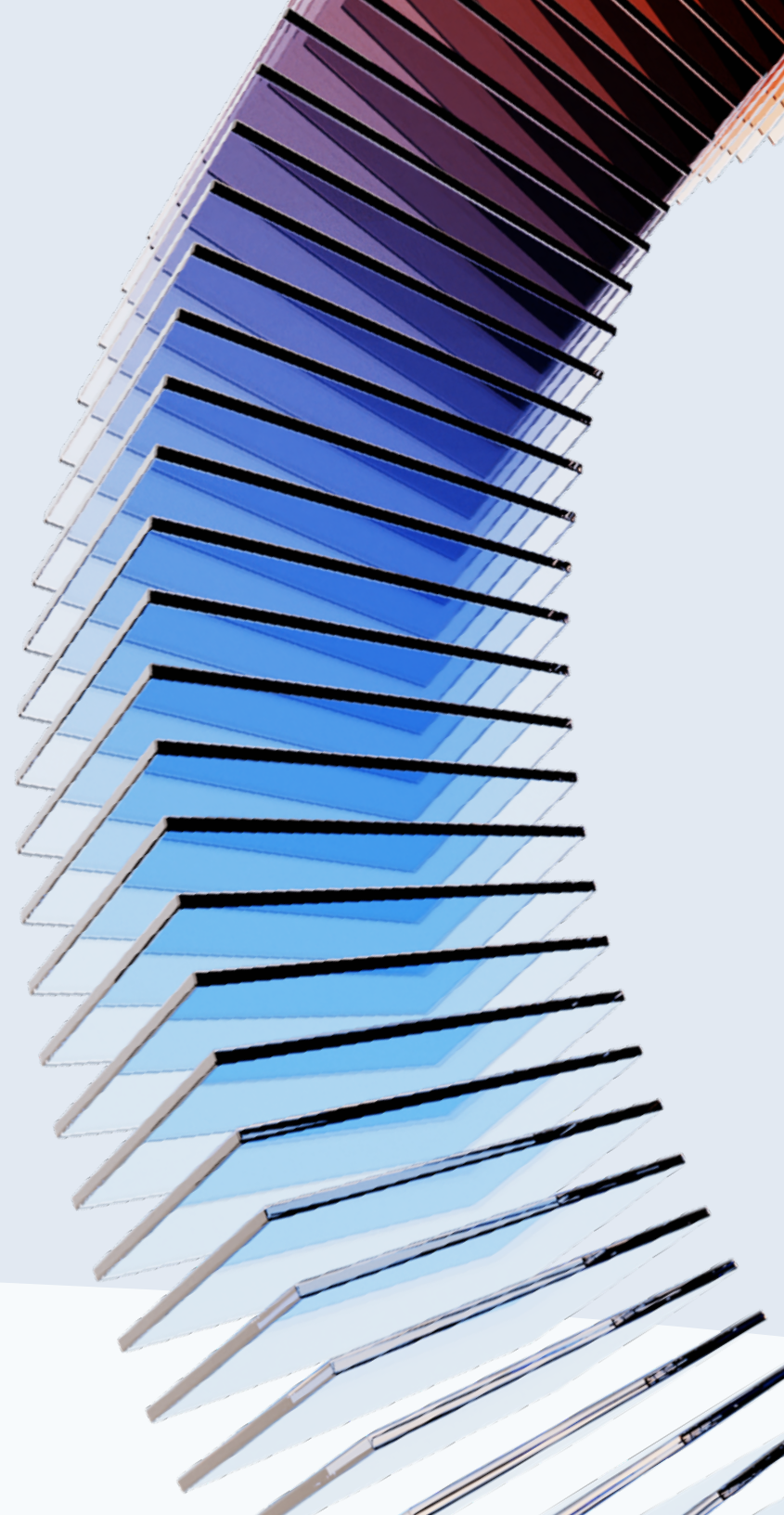


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Introduction

In the mid-2000s, inbound marketing and demand generation revolutionized the way B2B brands go to market. The promise was exciting. No more interruption-based, one-way marketing. No more disconnected marketing and sales teams. No more spray-and-pray. It was a hugely exciting time and a completely new go-to-market (GTM) model.

But it was also flawed.

We all discovered that we had very little control over which companies raised their hands — and that far too many of them weren't a good fit. So marketing and sales teams ended up wasting a lot of time and energy on unqualified leads, and alignment never really got better. Then, around 2015 we saw the explosive rise of account-based marketing (ABM). Now, for the first time, we could focus on specific, named lists of qualified accounts. No more wasting budget by marketing to companies that weren't a good fit. No more spending money to attract companies that sales didn't want to talk to.

And it was pretty exciting, too.

But for all its benefits, early ABM was also flawed. As the name account-based marketing implies, these early attempts didn't sufficiently involve sales. Worse, to engage these target accounts, we needed to reach out whether they wanted to hear from us or not (never a good idea). As a result, first-generation ABM efforts didn't deliver what sales teams needed: the ability to spot opportunities earlier, engage prospective accounts more intelligently, and close deals faster.

Fortunately, there's another way. We call it **Smarter GTM™**. It is a fundamental, customer centric rethinking of an account-based go-to-market — one that uses Account Intelligence to enhance every aspect of the buyer experience throughout the B2B lifecycle. It's time for the next evolution in B2B go-to-market strategies. We can't keep doing the same things and expect different results. Fortunately, a new model, new processes, and new technology — driven by AI and big data—have emerged to show a better way forward for every B2B company.

When done right, Smarter GTM™ will out perform every other growth strategy for your company. And this book is your clear and complete guide to this new world.

About the Author

I'm Jon Miller. I've been in martech my entire career, first as a VP at Epiphany, then as cofounder and VP of Marketing at Marketo, then founder and CEO at Engagio, and now Chief Marketing Officer at Demandbase.

In that time, I've written four Definitive Guides at Marketo and four Clear and Complete Guides at Engagio. This is my first one for Demandbase, and it's the best one yet since it builds on everything I've learned over the last 20+ years.

You might say I enjoy teaching. I'd agree with you. The son of a professional educator, I hate wasting time and talent. I like finding better ways to do things and then showing people how to do them. I write these guides to share everything I know about a topic in a clear, complete, and easy-to-understand way — so you can make them your go-to resource.

Thanks for your time.

Jon



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PART ONE

Why Smarter GTM™?

Why Smarter GTM™ ?

If you work in a business, you've been the target of business-to business marketing and sales. You've experienced the current state of the standard B2B go-to-market playbook. Probably many times a day. And it's not pretty.

"It fills up my Inbox..."

"Ten a day."

"At least ten, fifteen--"

"Fifty!"

"Spam."

"I. Hate. Spam."

"It's not just email -- the content... the ads you get wherever you go online..."

"Just... ridiculous."

"I'd say 'irrelevant' sums it up."

"Like, do they even know me?!"

What's going on here? Clearly something is broken. When you meet marketers and salespeople in B2B you see right away: these people are smart. You have to be in B2B today or you don't last very long.

But here's the thing: all these super-smart marketers and salespeople...are still doing stupid things to their customers and prospects every single day:

- Irrelevant offers.
- Conflicting messages.
- Spam.
- Advertising that's just... noise.
- Sales calls that completely ignore what the vendor ought to know about you.

That's not the exception. It's the current state of B2B. And buyers hate it. As consumers, we've all come to expect some really smart marketing and e-commerce experiences. Think about the last time you were on Amazon. They know you. They remember what you buy, when you bought it, who you sent it to, what products you've viewed and reviewed. And they use all of that data — all of that intelligence — to make your experiences better. That revolution in consumer marketing is finally coming to B2B. It's account-based. It's digital. It's intelligent. And it's what we call Smarter GTM™.

**S. Sales and
M. Marketing
A. Accelerating
R. Revenue
T. Together**

Smarter GTM™ is Account-Based

B2B is fundamentally different from B2C in regard to the complexity of how companies buy.

In every complex B2B deal, there are many buyers involved: the decision maker, the end user, the influencer, the CFO, the procurement department, and so on. LinkedIn research found an average of 6.8 people in the B2B buying committee and a Clari study found that deals over \$100K require 19 meetings with 14 different stakeholders.

Put simply, while in B2C, individuals or leads make the purchases, in B2B, companies or accounts do.

However, traditional go-to-market (GTM) processes — and technologies — are built around the lead, the individual buyer who progresses along your funnel until becoming a marketing qualified lead (MQL) and is then passed like a baton from marketing to sales.

That's why so many B2B companies have hit a wall with traditional MQL-based demand generation efforts.

It's time to recognize that we're not marketing and selling to a lead. We're marketing and selling to an account.

Lead-centric go-to-market isn't designed to handle accounts:

- It wastes time, budget, and effort filling the funnel with prospects that aren't associated with any target account.
- It can't map the relationships between the decision makers and influencers within the account.
- It can't track the level of engagement of the entire account at any given time—so it misses important buying signals.
- It can't orchestrate interactions to deliver consistent messages to the entire account buying team.

It's called business-to-business, not business-to-lead.

And that's why so many companies adopted an account-based marketing (ABM) approach.

Salespeople never talk about how many **leads** they've closed.

They talk about how many **accounts** they've closed.

An Account-Based Experience

Sales has always used an account-based approach. And with the rise of ABM, the marketing teams started to get onboard.

But, by its very nature, traditional ABM focused on identifying valuable accounts and attempting to engage them, regardless of whether the time was right or if they were interested in hearing from you at all. And that's precisely the kind of customer experience buyers hate. It's time for ABM to evolve.

That's why Smarter GTM™ companies are adopting a new approach called account-based experience (ABX).

ABX takes the precision and targeting of traditional ABM and adds an intense focus on the customer at every stage of the buying cycle, using account intelligence to know when and how to engage and what to say to each account. And, while ABM was focused on one department, namely marketing, ABX is a bigger tent that covers the entire revenue team, including Ssales, sales development, and customer success.

The End of Account-Based Marketing? Account-based experience doesn't invalidate account-based marketing. In many ways, ABX simply takes the best practices that have emerged around ABM, brings in other departments including sales, and adds the critical concept of account intelligence.

Regardless of what you call it, a smarter account-based go-to-market is simply the right way to approach B2B.

Account-based or lead-based?

There's no rule that says you need to practice only an account-based approach or only traditional demand generation. Instead, think of it as a spectrum. On one end are companies selling only to the Fortune 100. The vast majority of their efforts are going to be account-based. On the other end are companies selling into the SMB (small and mid-size business) market. The majority of their efforts are going to be focused on demand generation. Most likely, you're somewhere in the middle, so you'll want to balance the two strategies.

In fact, 64.9% of companies are currently using a mix of account-based and traditional demand generation programs.

(Demandbase ABM Outlook Survey 2018)

Smarter GTM™ is Digital

B2B sales and marketing need to get smarter because there's been a huge shift in the way companies buy from other companies.

Just as digital transformed B2C buying, it's now transforming B2B as well. The rapid changes caused by the pandemic persist, driving rapid change. Buyers spend less time meeting with sellers and more time leveraging online channels. Most of the buying journey happens online, on websites, review sites, Zoom calls, and email.

This digital transformation of buying creates new challenges and opportunities for smart companies.

- **Challenge:** It exacerbates information abundance and attention scarcity, making it harder than ever to capture the modern buyer's attention.
- **Opportunity:** There's a growing firehose of data that sales and marketing leaders can harvest to make their GTM motions way more informed and intelligent.



Challenge: Attention Scarcity

To say that modern buyers are overwhelmed with information is a cliché.

And yet, it remains more true today than ever before. Waving the Content is King banner, B2B companies have deluged our poor buyers with even more information: blogs, ebooks, webinars, product reviews, videos, emails, phone calls ...

The sheer quantity of information has become overwhelming, and information from suppliers, while appearing trustworthy, is often contradictory — which can actually hurt rather than help the chances of closing a sale.

Interruption Marketing

Interruption Marketing describes tactics that work only if they interrupt you to get your attention. Classic B2B examples include the cold call that interrupts you working on a proposal, the unwanted email in your inbox, or the flashy booth at a tradeshow. In each example, the marketer thinks his job is to create a call script, email copy, or booth gimmick that will make people pay attention.

Of course, all the other marketers are also fighting to get the buyer's attention, and so the battle escalates. The result is a tragedy of the commons—when everyone tries to get the customer's attention, the customer gets a terrible experience, and nobody wins.

Challenges in Capturing the Modern Buyer's Attention

1. Buyers are harder to reach than ever.

They don't want to be marketed to. They don't want to feel sold to. And they will let you know by opting out, tuning out, and tossing out any unwanted interruptions. They'll avoid forms and do everything they can to stay anonymous. Personally, I avoid putting accurate information onto a form since I know it'll just lead to unwanted emails and phone calls. And (admittedly) I take a perverse joy in hitting the spam button on unwanted sales outreach.



2. Buyers do their research before they talk to sales.

While it's no longer news that buyers want to do their research online and anonymously before talking to sales—marketers have been talking about this trend for 15 years—it, nonetheless, remains as true as ever. The biggest change is that 10 years ago the vast majority of the research happened on our own websites so we could observe the behavior.

But today, buyers do more of their research on third-party websites—which is hidden to traditional marketing automation scoring.

B2B buyers are typically **57 percent** of the way to a buying decision before actively engaging with sales.

70 percent of buyers fully define their needs on their own before engaging with a sales representative, and **44 percent** identify specific solutions before reaching out to a seller.

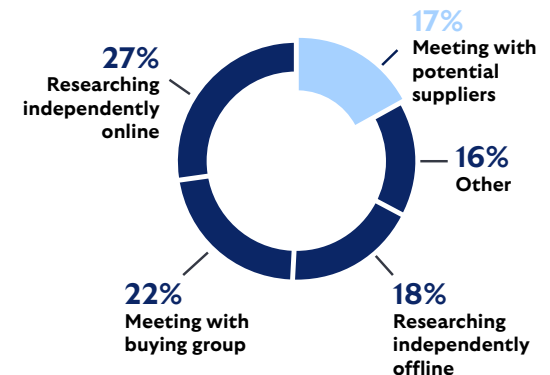
67 percent of the buyer's journey is now done digitally.

CEB, CSO Insights, SiriusDecisions

3. Buyers spend less time with suppliers and more with each other.

Gartner writes that “the ready availability of quality information through digital channels has made it far easier for buyers to gather information independently, meaning sellers have less access and fewer opportunities to influence customer decisions.”

In fact, Gartner research finds that when B2B buyers are considering a purchase, they spend only 17% of that time meeting with potential suppliers. When buyers are comparing multiple suppliers, the amount of time spent with any one sales rep may be only 5% or 6%.



Source: (Gartner, [The New B2B Buying Journey & Its Implication for Sales](#), 2019)

Opportunity: New Sources of Account Intelligence

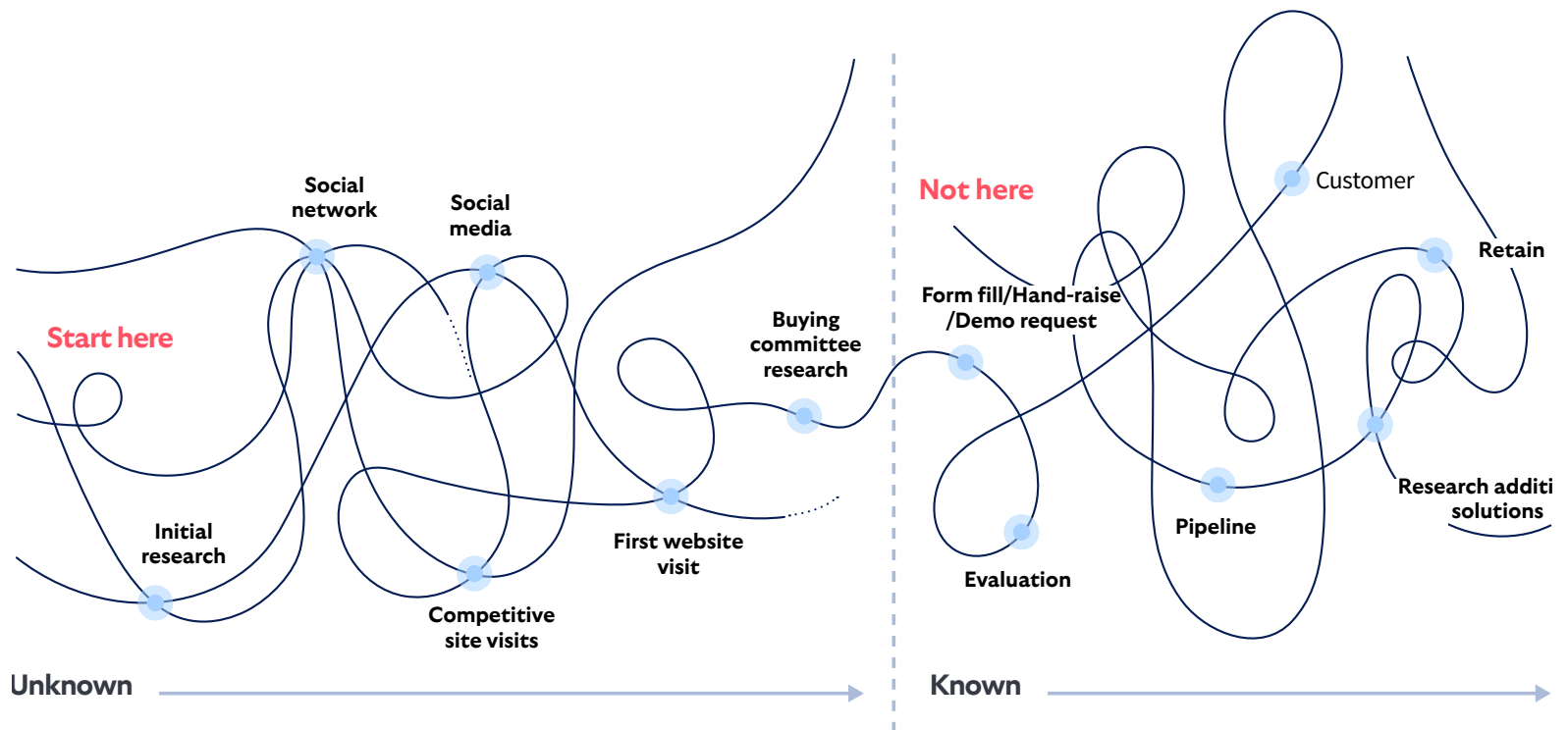
All this puts B2B companies in a remarkable quandary.

On the one hand, we want to respect our buyers and not interrupt them with unwanted outreach.

On the other, prospects are conducting much of their buying journey on their own, online and anonymously. If we wait for the prospect to fill out a Contact Me form, we've waited too long. The prospect has learned a lot, formed opinions, and may have a preferred vendor (likely not you) in mind. Or worse, a competitor closes the deal before you even have a chance to engage. Ouch.

Fortunately, digital buyers leave a massive footprint of buying signals — on and off your website — about what content they read and what they're potentially interested in buying. When combined with AI, companies can use these insights to build trust with potential buyers, identify the magic moments when customers are open to engaging, and orchestrate the perfect interactions across sales, marketing, and customer success teams.

That's what we call **Account Intelligence** and it's fundamental to Smarter GTM™.



Smarter GTM™ is Intelligent

While 70+% of the buyer journey occurs online and anonymously, buying teams are dropping signals into a digital haystack.

All this data is only an opportunity if sales and marketing teams are able to collect it — and put it to use. But even when the data exists, it's not available when and where it's needed — it's dispersed across systems and databases and teams and departments and software platforms.

And not just two or three systems, literally dozens. It's not at all unusual for a B2B company to be using 30-50 sales and marketing applications and platforms. Each of these apps and platforms is doing a good thing in its own little swim lane, but collectively it means critical data about accounts gets spread all over the organization. So the insight you could get by connecting the dots is either never created, or it's locked inside the apps that generated it.

This go-to-market fragmentation can be crippling to effective, efficient, relevant B2B marketing and selling. It makes sellers blind to what's happening at their accounts, and it frustrates buyers and wastes resources and budgets.

Account Intelligence for the win Account Intelligence makes sense of all this, bringing together the numerous buying signals from an account, enriching it with reliable thirdparty data, and making sense of it with AI.

It combines and cleans data across web activities, CRM and marketing automation platforms, email, calendars, and other systems — and augments it with information about each account, the contacts at the account, their interests, the technologies they own, and much, much more.

The result is that B2B marketers and salespeople:

- Make better decisions and are more relevant when it matters most
- Spot opportunities earlier and progress them faster
- Turn spammy interactions into relevant engagements

Aligning to the Account Journey = Smarter GTM™

Account Intelligence powers Smarter GTM™ by aligning your go-to-market efforts to the account journey. You know where each account is in its buying process, so you can create the right experience for them each step of the way.

As a result, Smarter GTM™ lets us work with buying teams on their own terms: anonymously when they want to be, helpful and relevant when they're ready — and always based on trust. It's a much better customer experience and it delivers much better long-term results.

Use deep account insights to ensure each interaction is relevant and useful enough to be worthy of their attention.



Early in the journey focus on building your brand on a foundation of trust.

Move from emotion to logic with thought leadership and education.

Find when accounts are in-market and actually interested in hearing from you — but before they raise their hand on your website.

Break down the traditional “baton pass” from marketing to sales, connecting insight to action and engaging the entire buying committee.

Enhance the post-sale experience by continuing to identify key opportunities to engage at the right time.

SMARTER GTM™ DEFINED

Smarter GTM™ is a B2B growth strategy that injects Account Intelligence into every step of the buyer's journey, across every marketing and sales motion.

Smarter GTM™ Defined (cont'd)

B2B growth strategy:
A fundamental strategy that spans all your go-to-market efforts; not a simple campaign or tactic.

Smarter GTM™ is a **B2B growth strategy** that injects **Account Intelligence** into every step of **the buyer's journey,** across every **marketing and sales** motion.

Buyer's Journey:
Touches all aspects of the full customer journey including brand, pipeline, opportunities, and post-sale retention/expansion.

Marketing and Sales:
An orchestrated process across marketing and sales (plus sales development, customer success, and any other customer-facing team).

Account Intelligence:
Uses research and AI to know when and how to engage, and what to say.

The Benefits of Smarter GTM™

Smarter go-to-market starts with the benefits of ABM and extends them beyond marketing to the entire buyer journey, making every action more intelligent and more relevant.

Zero waste

Focus your time and resources on accounts most likely to drive revenue.

A super-efficient strategy that targets 100 percent of your time, budget, and effort on the named accounts your company decides have the greatest potential.

“ ABM aspires to be ‘zero-waste’ marketing. It’s a model that targets only the companies and contacts that are likely to buy your product and that sales has pre-committed to try to close.”

-Joe Chernov, CMO Pendo

Much bigger wins

Big deals build big businesses.

It consistently drives larger and better deals — those that tend to stick around longer and become even more valuable over time. With an account-based strategy, you’re more likely to have buy-in from a wider team, to lock out or constrain competitors, and to reach higher into the account. When Smarter GTM™ wins, it wins big. In a study released by the ABM Leadership Alliance, companies that implemented accountbased strategies saw an increase of 171 percent in their average contract value (ACV).

SiriusDecisions Command Center™ data shows that 91 percent of respondents say deal size is larger for ABM accounts, and 1 in 4 say it is over 50 percent larger. It also found 30 percent of marketers that worked in an account-based manner reported greater than 100 percent engagement increase with their C-level targets.

Better close rates

Increase your win percentage.

Because it actively targets all of the buying influencers and decision makers in an orchestrated way, the systematic discipline of Smarter GTM™ significantly outperforms the unaligned approaches of the past. The SiriusDecisions 2017 State of Account-Based Marketing Study found that 91 percent of responders said ABM accounts had a higher close rate, with 66 percent of responders reporting more than 20 percent better close rates.

Organizations report, on average, a 48 percent higher win rate from their account-based efforts, and create opportunities in 21 percent of target accounts.

-TOPO

The Benefits of Smarter GTM™ (cont'd)

Drive post-sale expansion

Increase the lifetime value of your best accounts.

Many companies get more revenue (and revenue growth) from current customers than from new ones. With large deals, it's all about land and expand. Smarter GTM™ applied to existing customers delivers personalized account orchestration for a greater share of wallet and higher margin.

Align marketing and sales

Tightly integrate your revenue teams.

By definition, Smarter GTM™ requires marketing and sales to focus on the same accounts with clear and agreed-upon criteria, sharing information and orchestrating their interactions. Less friction. Better ROI.

A better customer experience

Create the trusted, relevant experience customers demand.

It focuses on engaging with buyers with the right approach for each account at each point in their journey. And it's coordinated, with all interactions synchronized across channels so you look like one company with a single, compelling story. Buyers appreciate that. 58 percent of marketers in the ITSMA and ABM Leadership Alliance's 2017 ABM Benchmark Study said that ABM plays a major role in making their entire company more customer-centric.

84 percent of marketers said ABM offers significant benefits to keeping and expanding existing client relationships.

**-Alterra Group
SiriusDecisions**

Tighter alignment between marketing and sales is the primary value demonstrated from ABM today.

-Forrester

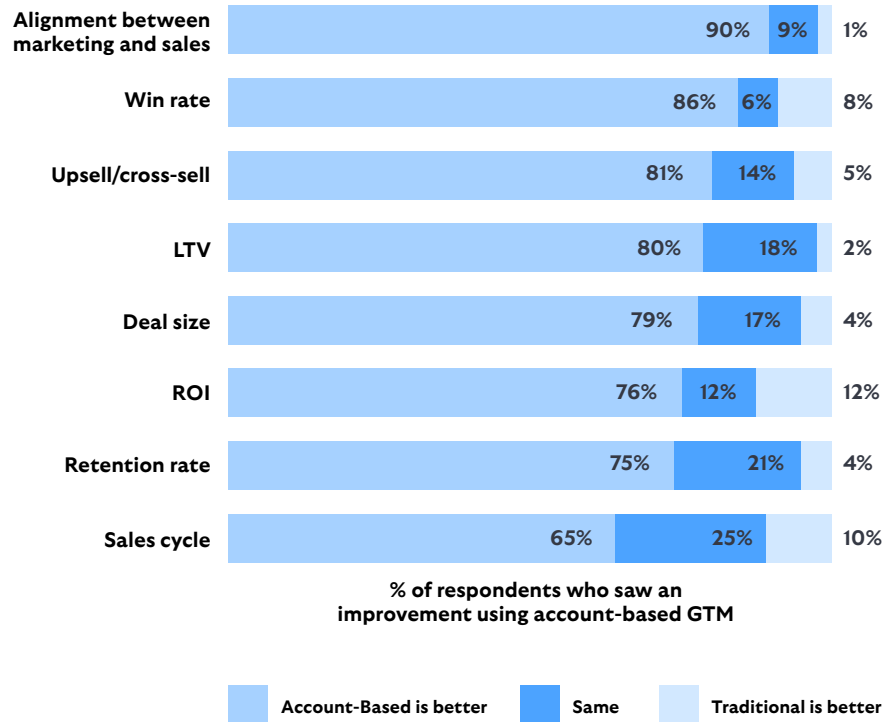
“Rising customer expectations are the most disruptive trend in business today. Companies that differentiate their customer relationships on the basis of account-specific insights and responsiveness raise customer expectations and create competitive advantage.”

-IDC

The Benefits of Smart GTM™ (cont'd)

A smarter account-based go-to-market delivers better business performance than traditional GTM.

Does your account-based GTM perform better than your traditional GTM across key organization results?



TOPO ABM Benchmark Report 2019

Qualitative benefits

Here's what the ITSMA says about the qualitative benefits of a smarter account-based approach.

Customers

- Feel better understood from in-depth analysis
- Understand vendor offerings, strategy, and solutions more broadly
- Enjoy increased customer satisfaction
- Experience a more tailored approach
- Develop deeper partnership with vendors
- Tend to position and sell vendors across the organization

Sales

- Earns status of trusted vendor and partner
- Has richer conversations
- Aligns better with customer needs
- Uncovers new opportunities
- Increases revenue, margin, and wallet-share
- Stays on the same page with the rest of the team

Marketing

- Aligns sales and marketing in a unified account strategy
- Orchestrates coherent, relevant messages
- Increases marketing ROI
- Consistently tailors campaigns
- Strengthens brand reputation
- Secures more customer references

Think Big, but Start Small

Don't get intimidated. If you've been living in a traditional world, adopting a new GTM strategy may seem daunting. But just like when starting any new strategy, pursue an incremental approach — think big, but start slow and gradually increase your speed as you gain confidence and experience.

Establish: the onramp

When you start from zero, you'll probably start with a pilot to prove early success. In this initial phase, you're getting started and putting the building blocks in place to set you up for longer term success. Key activities might include identifying a specific list of accounts (usually for just a subset of reps) and tackling one or two initial use cases. (As we'll see, this might include top-of-funnel advertising to high-intent accounts, delivering engagement insights to sales, or running a marketing campaign with SDR follow-up.)

Operationalize: the merging lane

You've proven some success and are ready to take on more. The strategy is becoming established and understood and the revenue team is excited about progress and potential. Here, you add more accounts and create repeatable processes and best practices.

Common use cases include identifying accounts, researching competitors, empowering sales with account and individual engagement insights across multiple channels, and personalizing the journey experience.

Grow: the through lane

Now you are fully in gear. Marketing and Sales are fully aligned not only philosophically, but also in practice, and they're working to meet the same goals and objectives. You're now reaching out to your target accounts (which you've identified through predictive modeling, big data, and AI). And you are executing multi-channel plays according to journey stages. Success is measured by engagement and journey performance.

Optimize: the fast lane

At this point you're a Smarter GTM™ pro with your engine running on all cylinders. By now, you've pulled in your customer success team along with marketing and sales, so that your entire revenue team is running orchestrated campaigns. You're using intent-based insights, personalizing the website experience, and orchestrating plays for every stage of the account journey.

When you've mastered a mature GTM practice — maybe within a year, maybe two — executing orchestrated account-based plays and campaigns will become second nature, and your revenue teams will wonder how you've ever lived without it.

Charting the Path

So that's why Smarter GTM™ is quickly becoming the next big thing in B2B.

We hope you've discovered the power and inevitability of this strategy and have started thinking about how you can apply it in your company.

Now it's time to talk about how to do it.

In the next section, we'll show you exactly why and how to define your account journey. Then we'll discuss the core styles of GTM, based on account value, and briefly talk about the importance of creating a brand based on trust and advocacy.

From there, we'll walk through the five core Smarter GTM™ processes in-depth:

1. **Build** your Account Intelligence foundation.
2. **Find** the accounts that drive your business.
3. **Engage** with relevant, personalized interactions across channels.
4. **Close** opportunities by aligning marketing and sales.
5. **Measure** account progress.

And then we'll finish with practical ideas on how to implement Smarter GTM™ at your company and an overview of the technology that can help. Let's get to work.



Advice



Megan Heuer

Managing Director,
Winning By Design

Questions to ask yourself:

- Is our funnel built to accommodate non-linear buyers?
- Is our outreach designed to help or herd?
- Are we offering emails or experiences?

Buyers don't want to be sold to.

They want to solve their problem, and they're going to do whatever is necessary to get there. And while we marketers would often prefer they follow set stages, buyers never stick to their part of the script. They may step forward. They may step back. They do what they like. The question is, how can we architect a system that supports them given that?

First step, think in terms of accounts

When you start to think in terms of account-based, there's an evolution most organizations go through. It starts with marketing to accounts and then evolves into account-based marketing. Those two are not the same, of course.

The first is when you simply have a list of accounts but you're still thinking in terms of lead volume. The latter is when you begin to adapt your organization's behavior to understand that account's intent and interests and then act to help them through that lens.

The future is account-based experiences

Account-based experiences (ABX) take account-based marketing to its logical conclusion. ABX encapsulates everything pre- and post-sale.

Because, when we separate those functions, they move in different directions and cause buying friction. When they're combined, everyone has a shared goal and it's easier to understand your customer or group of customers and support them.

No matter how many loops they go in, it's always a good experience.

PART TWO

Account Journeys

Account Journeys

A key principle of Smarter GTM™ is aligning every aspect of your go-to-market to the right account experience for every stage of its journey.

So what does the account journey even mean?

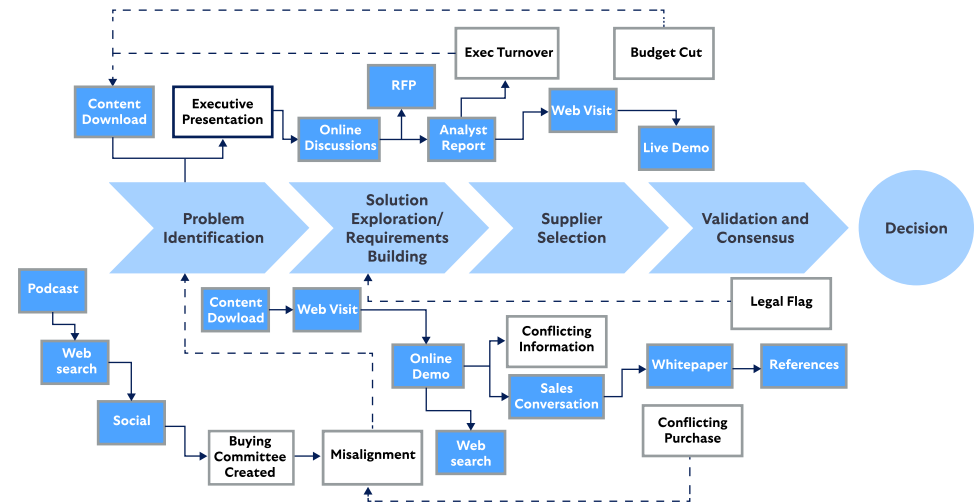
The account journey isn't linear

Gartner's research identified six B2B buying "jobs" that customers must complete to their satisfaction to finalize a purchase:

- › **Problem identification.** "We need to do something."
- › **Solution exploration.** "What's out there to solve our problem?"
- › **Requirements building.** "What exactly do we need the purchase to do?"
- › **Supplier selection.** "Does this do what we want it to do?"
- › **Validation.** "We think we know the right answer, but we need to be sure."
- › **Consensus creation.** "We need to get everyone on board."

But these jobs aren't completed in a linear fashion. Buyers engage in "looping," revisiting each of those six buying jobs several times over the course of a purchase process.

This makes the traditional baton handoff between marketing and sales ineffective in serving today's highly complex B2B buying journey. Smart marketing and sales teams operate more like a football team, working together to move the ball down the field. The path is rarely straight, but it's always directed.



Your Framework for a Non-Linear Process

The account journey is not linear, but that doesn't mean you can't put a framework on top of it to help understand and manage it. It's like lines on an American football field. In a typical match, the ball moves up and down the field as the game progresses with each play. The ball itself takes a very non-linear path towards either end zone. And yet, the lines on the field play a useful role.

- 1. They tell us how likely we are to score.** If we're on our 5-yard line, we have a much higher chance of scoring than if we're on our opponent's 40.
- 2. They guide us on what plays to run.** If we know we just need a yard or two, maybe the running back takes the ball. But if we know we need a significant gain, then a long pass to a wide receiver is the right call.

By mapping the non-linear account journey to a linear set of buying stages, we can achieve similar benefits, helping us measure our progress and guiding our marketing and sales plays. The key insight is that an account will move forwards AND backwards through the stages—throughout their nonlinear process—and your go-to-market must adapt accordingly.



Mapping Account Journeys

Though account journey stages vary across different businesses, this simple framework is a starting point.

Companies can and should adjust these stages to map to the nuances of their business. Some companies add a Meeting stage between Marketing Qualified (MQA) and Opportunity, for example.

Others break up Opportunity into more than one stage. Many companies create journeys focused on their post-sale experience, expanding and retaining their customers. The key is to customize the account journey so it works for you.

See the [Appendix \(Other Account Journeys\)](#) for more examples.

48 percent of marketing teams are expected to organize their strategies around the customer journey in 2020, up from 18 percent in 2019.

Demand Gen Report's 2019 ABM Benchmark Survey Report



Funnel stages most target accounts go through

Post-Sale Journey Stages

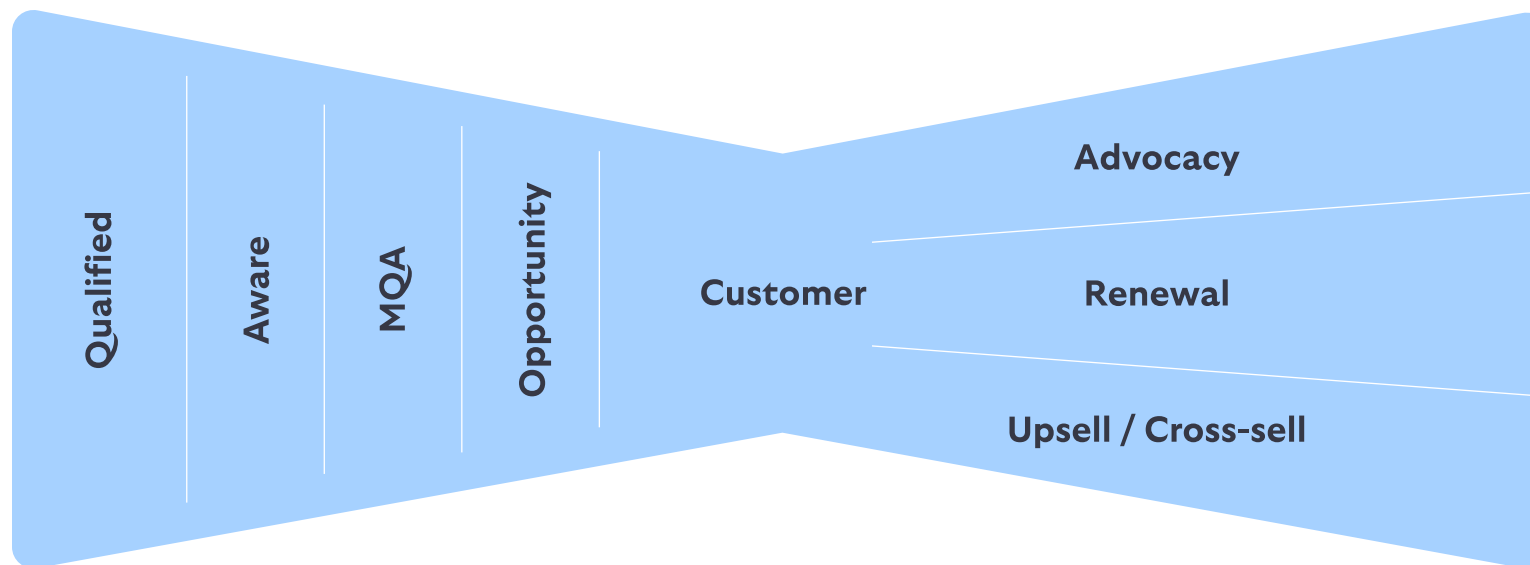
Since traditional demand generation focuses primarily on net-new opportunities, many marketing departments don't receive credit for campaign responses from existing leads and customers—at all.

In Smarter GTM™, marketing and Sales don't just land new accounts—they also expand them together over time.

This means your account journey should look beyond the closed-won opportunity. It's a richer view of the relationship: While new business typically has only one goal for the journey (acquire the account), many goals emerge after the sale, like these:

- Cross-sell (a different buying center buys the same products or the same buying center purchases additional products)
- Upsell / expansion (a buying center buys more of the same product)
- Renewal
- Usage
- Success
- Advocacy

Multi-product companies will have separate journeys for each product or solution as well.



The bow-tie: Smarter GTM™ focuses on existing customer success and expansion as much as, if not more than, new customer acquisition.

Marketing Qualified Accounts

There are times when overwhelmed buyers—who normally resist marketing and Sales outreach—actually want to hear from vendors. If we can use account intelligence to find these “magic moments,” we can help the buyer and significantly increase our chance of winning their business.

You want to spot these receptive, information-hungry buyers early, from the first glimmer of research activity. This helps you guide the conversation toward your solution’s advantages and paint a picture of the competitive landscape that will tilt your way. Getting in early helps you build trust, earn access to more stakeholders, shape the need, and set more of the evaluation agenda.

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MQAs, defined

Marketing qualified accounts, or MQAs are the subset of your qualified customer targets that are showing the signs of being in-market and ready for sales outreach.

79%

of executives

will read unsolicited materials if they are relevant to their business.

ITSMA

74%

of buyers

choose the sales rep that’s first to add value and insight.

Corporate Visions

Beyond the MQL

Marketers have been tracking how leads move through funnels for over a decade, and this has helped turn marketing from art into science.

But, as we've seen, lead-centric marketing has hit a wall. Marketing may qualify contacts that actively consume content, believing such action displays noteworthy interest. But it really just tells us someone at the account wanted to download some content or get some swag at an event. When contacts at that account aren't ready to start a sales process, the so-called "lead" is useless to sales.

What is useful to sales is knowing when an account is in-market and actually ready to engage with them. That's what Smarter GTM™ powered by Account Intelligence is all about.

That's why many B2B revenue organizations are adopting marketing-qualified accounts (MQAs), either instead of traditional marketing-qualified leads (MQLs) or in combination as part of a double-funnel.



Identifying Marketing Qualified Accounts (MQAs)

So how do you identify the magic moments when an account is in-market and interested in hearing from you?

This is where Account Intelligence comes in. You want to look at WHO the account is (some may never be qualified no matter how much interest they have) and WHAT behaviors they show, on and

off your site. Machine learning is invaluable here, sorting through billions of signals to identify the accounts that show the same patterns as your best customers when they were entering the purchase cycle.

A simple acronym helps explain what you should look for:

F	FIT	Accounts in your ICP
I	INTENT	Interest in your products and/or competitors
R	RELATIONSHIP	Context and history with the account
E	ENGAGEMENT	Time spent with your company

See the section on **Build** later in this book for a deeper dive into Account Intelligence, and the section on **Find** for more on identifying accounts with the FIRE methodology.

Point-Based Engagement Scoring

Another way to identify MQA accounts is by using a traditional point-based engagement scoring system, similar to marketing automation lead scoring.

Although there are many methodologies you can use, we recommend using engagement minutes. This assigns a certain amount of time to each interaction—say one minute for a web visit and 20 minutes for a webinar attendance. This approach is easy to set up and understand, and can be customized for each business.

From there, you'll want to define MQA thresholds that indicate sales-readiness, looking at three factors:

- **Depth:** The total amount of account engagement.
- **Breadth:** Measured by the number of different people driving the activity.
- **Time:** How recent the engagement is.

For example, a simple MQA rule might be “60 minutes of engagement in the last three months from at least three personas, at least one VP level or higher.”

MQA definitions should also target the specific dimensions most important to your business:

- **Company:** A large enterprise might need to show more engagement from more people than a small company. You may accept a lower threshold from target accounts than non-targets.
- **Personas:** Your business may need to see a certain amount of engagement from key personas in specific buying centers plus at least some engagement from a senior executive to move the account into MQA status.
- **Key Actions:** Certain actions known as Act Nows always make an account marketing qualified (e.g., a particular demo is accessed by two different people at an account, or a director-level contact requests a meeting).
- **Exclusion List:** You may want to exclude certain accounts as MQAs. These could be partners or companies that don't fit account criteria.

Align Interactions to the Specific Account Journey

Creating the right experience for each account based on where it is in the journey is a fundamental tenet of Smarter GTM™. Knowing where the account is in its journey gives you clues about what jobs the buyers are trying to accomplish and how you should engage.

- **Aware:** Is a qualified account aware of your category but not engaged with you? Build awareness and trust in your brand, leveraging social proof and avoiding anything salesy or aggressive. Account-based advertising can play a big role here.
- **Engaged:** Is an account engaging with you but not yet showing buying intent? Nurture your budding relationship with thought leadership that educates and reinforces your brand value, ideally helping them to identify solution criteria and prioritize trade-offs.
- **Marketing Qualified Account:** Is an account showing signs of being in-market? This is the magic moment when sales should reach out to multiple personas in a deeply relevant and helpful manner, supported by marketing air cover (personalized content, ads, direct mail, trials, etc.).
- **Opportunity:** Is the account already engaging with your sales team? Help the account complete the B2B buying jobs with tools to compare vendors, validate their thinking, and build consensus with the broader committee. Third-party validation like case studies, reviews, and analyst reports work well here. Marketing is uniquely qualified to engage the broader committee in a scalable way, including account-based advertising.
- **Customer:** Now's the time to deepen your relationship by showing your appreciation and offering how-to or best-practice content, driving adoption and helping the account see additional opportunities to use your solutions.



Expert Advice



Randy Frisch

Co-Founder, CMO,
and President, Uberflip

Questions to ask yourself:

- Do we have a balance of channels to attract and engage?
- Do we have a full view of our customer journey?
- Can we identify where each individual is in their journey?
- What must change for our team to be more agile?

Some channels attract, others engage

Now that you know who should buy from you, what channels do you use to engage them? You have lots of channels — emails, ads, social, direct mail, chatbots — but most of those don't really engage people. They simply attract them. What engages people is a salesperson to talk to, a landing page to interact with, a content management system that serves up articles, or a content experience platform. That's the critical question many marketers ignore — while people may come to your properties, do they stay? If they do, you can orchestrate account journeys.

Without a 360-degree view, you may miss important people

The key to account journeys is getting a true 360-degree view of what your customer is doing. This has been happening for a long time in the consumer world and now it's happening in B2B — data platforms that make those journeys clear. As buying committees continue to grow, you can't afford to miss someone important. If one buyer doesn't get pulled in until the proverbial ten-yard line, they may become a detractor. You have to map all your data so you miss nothing.

How can your team become more agile?

During the pandemic, one medical device company's marketing team found they evolved from demand generators to remote customer educators. All their ventilators sold out overnight. Demand was no longer a problem. However, their technicians now couldn't visit hospitals to set things up. So, they created remote education campaigns. We've only seen more of that since then — marketers needing to be agile and handle whatever issues come up in the customer lifecycle. That's the part of the promise of thinking in terms of account-based experiences.

PART THREE

A Spectrum of GTM Styles

A Spectrum of GTM Styles

Smarter GTM™ is not a one-size-fits-all strategy. There are multiple styles based on the potential value of the account. The spectrum ranges from truly one-on-one conversations with the largest accounts to technology-driven programs with thousands of lower value targets.

We see these styles of GTM across our clients:

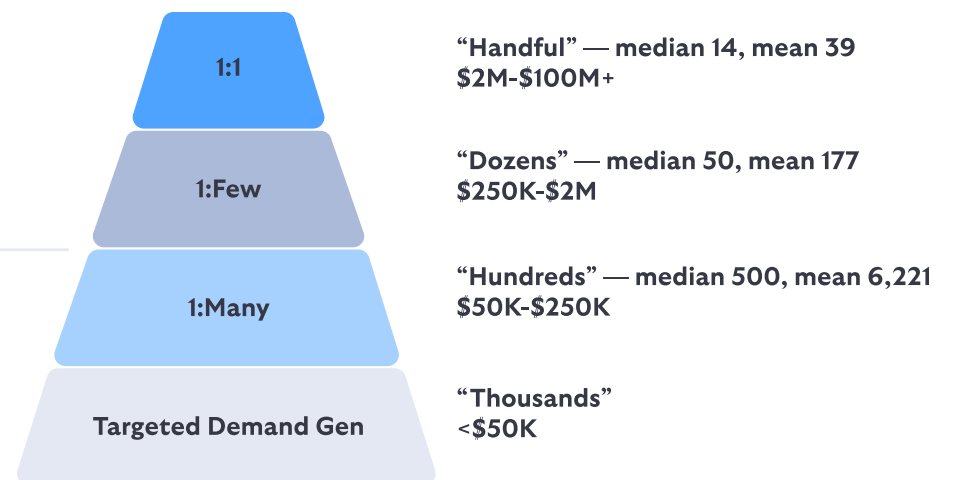
- **One-to-One:** Delivers highly customized experiences for a very limited number of valuable accounts.
- **One-to-Few:** Focuses on small groups or clusters of accounts with similar business imperatives.
- **One-to-Many:** Uses technology to find accounts, personalize interactions to individuals within those accounts, and measure results by account.
- **Targeted Demand Generation:** A broad style that bypasses personalization to drive even more scale.

Different styles of GTM

Note: The data in this section comes from the ITSMA and ABM Leadership Alliance ABM Benchmark Studies, primarily 2020.

Companies often use segmentation and triggering strategies to temporarily move accounts to a higher style.

If you're focusing on a specific industry this quarter, then you might temporarily upgrade those accounts from targeted demand generation to One-to-Few. Similarly, if an account is showing signs of being in-market or MQA, then you might bump them to One-to-One while you reach out personally.



One-to-One GTM

This highly customized style of GTM directly engages strategic target accounts with the highest revenue potential — generally at least \$2 million a year and up.

Often, this approach is focused on expanding and deepening relationships with existing customers. (Typically 80 percent of these accounts will be current customers.)

Accounts in this style of GTM get completely bespoke sales and marketing. Your playbook is:

- **Deep research:** Map out each buying center to understand areas of revenue potential (whitespace). Build out the buyer's organization chart to ascertain the contacts you know and where you need to build relationships. Research key business priorities and publish detailed account dossiers integrated with sales account plans. Consider internal chat groups or forums for each account.
- **Personalized content:** Create customized marketing content, value propositions, and messaging. (One company we surveyed even hires an agency to come up with specific branding for each of these top accounts.)
- **Dedicated programs:** Drive executive briefings, innovation days, high-end experiences, and other marketing activities just for that one account.
- **1:1 attention:** Involve the entire organization, from the CEO down, to create executive engagement and personal meetings.

This level of customization requires significant investment; companies typically invest \$36,000 to \$50,000 a year in marketing programs to reach each of these accounts, and it's not uncommon to see one marketer covering just a handful (e.g., about five) One-to-One accounts.

Don't Have Too Many One-to-One Accounts

According to the *ITSMA and the ABM Leadership Alliance's 2020 ABM Benchmark Study*, while the median number of one-to-one accounts is 14, the average number is 39. This indicates that some companies are reporting much larger lists.

We suspect these companies are falling into a classic mistake of putting too many accounts into their top tier, so they can't deliver on truly bespoke, customized interactions. That's why we don't recommend calling your levels Tier 1, Tier 2, etc. It creates too much pressure to let everyone have their share of the top tier, resulting in no accounts getting the benefit of true One-to-One.

One-to-Few GTM

The One-to-Few style is a more scalable approach for accounts that are valuable but don't warrant top-tier investment — usually in the \$250,000 to \$2,000,000 annual potential range. It also works well for a temporary focus on specific segments.

Instead of completely bespoke GTM marketing, this approach focuses on micro-segments of accounts with similar characteristics and business imperatives, e.g., Credit Card Payment Processors. This style is used equally for new business (51 percent) and for expanding existing accounts (49 percent).

The median number of total One-to-Few accounts per company is 50 (mean 177), with each micro-segment typically containing 5 to 15 accounts.

Companies apply deep research to the cluster and modest levels of personalization to each account, investing between \$3,000 to \$15,000 per account per year.

One dedicated marketer can cover up to five or six clusters in this style. The most common tactics used in One-to-Few include one-on-one meetings, executive engagement, email marketing, custom thought leadership, and in-person or virtual roadshows/events.

Since these accounts are often smaller, mapping out individual buying centers may not be as challenging. But you still want to spend time making sure you have quality data at the account level, as well as for each person and key persona in the organization — and you'll want a process to keep those insights fresh, at least annually.



One-to-Many GTM

The One-to-Many style uses technology to drive broad programs with light personalization and customization.

Each account is generally less than \$250,000 revenue per year, and a company can have hundreds at any given time — the median number is 500 accounts, and the average is a whopping 6,221 (though we suspect that companies with very large lists are using targeted demand generation for most of the accounts and are using segments/triggers to rotate their focus on a subset).

Companies invest a few hundred to a few thousand dollars per account per year, and on average, 72 percent of One-to-Many accounts are new accounts; the remaining 28 percent are existing customers.

While all styles of GTM can benefit from the use of technology, the One-to-Many style benefits most by using it to drive scale and optimize measurement. Under this style of ABM, the most common tactics are virtual and in-person events, account advertising (including social), one-on-one meetings, and content syndication.

Targeted demand generation

While there is no hard line between One-to-Many and targeted demand generation, the main difference is the level of personalization each marketing strategy uses. Both strategies use tactics such as email, advertising, events, and direct mail, but in One-to-Many, each account gets some personalization, while there is little to no personalization in targeted demand generation — at least until an account becomes marketing qualified. This makes targeted demand gen scalable up to thousands or even tens of thousands of accounts

Which Style is Best?

There is no best style for your GTM. The right style is the one that matches your situation, the value of your accounts, and your deal sizes. Some companies will use just one style; others may use all of them. The most effective programs use segmentation and triggers such as MQAs to move accounts temporarily into different styles as appropriate.

PART FOUR

Branding Matters

Create your Brand on a Foundation of Trust

Before we dive into the core Smarter GTM™ processes, I want to take a minute to talk about branding. Most demand generation marketers tend not to think much about branding. But your brand can have a massive impact on the success of all aspects of your go-to-market.

Put simply, without good brand support, even the greatest GTM programs will struggle to hit their goals.

That's why a Smart GTM strategy begins with the smartest thinking about brand generation, not just demand generation. And as we'll see, for B2B companies that means creating your brand on a foundation of trust.



Brands Work on Emotions

B2B buyers are still people. People are emotional. And emotions impact economic decision-making.

We know B2B buyers are overwhelmed with choices (not only which vendor to work with, but also what content to read, what events to attend, and what campaigns to respond to). And the fact that B2B buyers have emotions means that no matter how disciplined a buying process is, they will use emotionally driven heuristics to simplify these complex decisions — often choosing the vendor that seems “safest.” In fact, whether the buyer realizes it or not, the decision is often made long before the buying process is completed. And when this happens, even subconsciously, much of the buying process ends up being an effort to justify the initial emotional decision.

B2B marketers can and should tap into this by appealing to the emotional side of their prospects, as well as their rational side. This is where branding comes in, because brands inherently operate on an emotional level by stimulating the amygdala portion of the brain (part of the reptilian limbic system).

The power of negative emotions.

When looking to buy something, we balance the pleasure of the prospective possession with the pain of acquiring it.

In B2C marketing, marketers often capitalize on the anticipation of positive emotion by appealing to aspirational feelings such as desire. In contrast, the strongest B2B brands capitalize on the avoidance of negative emotions. This is because there is an asymmetry between the upside and downside of B2B purchases. The buyer does not experience the full benefit of the solution directly and may not be rewarded for making a good purchase, but a bad purchase can destroy the buyer’s reputation and damage job security.

B2B brands can tap into this by building trust in the buyer’s mind. The classic example is “nobody ever got fired for buying IBM.” One way to achieve trust is by being a dominant leader in your category (or being seen as such). Having a strong company purpose and values helps as well, as long as you always act authentically and in a consistent manner.

5 percent of customers say that if they trust a company, they’re more likely to be loyal patrons.

State of the Connected Customer, Salesforce

Building Trust with Thought Leadership

A great way to build a brand of trust is to become a trusted advisor via thought leadership.

Applying all this is straightforward, and yet so many companies don't follow these basic principles in their content marketing:

1. **Quality over quantity.** Remember those buyers who are overwhelmed with too much content? Thought leadership isn't about cranking out more blog posts or pushing yet another generic webinar, hoping to generate more leads. It's about creating genuinely useful, valuable content that customers and prospects value — knowing the opportunities will come. Personally, I'd rather create one guide than a dozen lower quality ebooks.
2. **True expert advice.** Buyers need help to see possibilities and issues they wouldn't think about on their own. (This is why the Challenger Sale approach is so effective.) If you can frame the discussion and help customers reconcile conflicting sources of information, then you will reduce skepticism and increase trust. This is harder than creating Top 10 listicles, but it works.
3. **Long-term view.** If an SDR calls me in the middle of my day, I feel interrupted. If a good friend calls me, I pay attention to what she has to say. The difference is trust, built over time. This requires a long-term view of your marketing investments, and it requires matching your message — and medium — to where the buyer is in their journey.
4. **Make it easy for buyers.** Potential customers want to use your website for research on their own terms. If you don't have the information they need, or if you make it too hard to access, they'll simply do their research elsewhere — and you'll miss out on valuable clues about when they move into a new stage of the buying journey.

Building Trust with Thought Leadership (cont'd)

Demandbase Secret Sauce: Should you gate your content? We think about it based on the buying stage of the content:

- **Early/awareness and problem identification—No gate.**
The goal of this content is to build brand trust, so you want it to be broadly accessible with no gate or perhaps a simple email address for unknown visitors. The main exception is registering for events, where you need their information.
- **Middle/solution exploration, requirements building, supplier selection—Maybe.** If a company is interested in this content (e.g., RFP template, long-form demos, comparisons), they are motivated to get it, and you want to know about it since it suggests now might be one of those magic moments when they're open to you reaching out. Fortunately, technology can help a lot here. If the visitor is already cooked in your marketing automation system, then skip the form; you don't need their contact info again and they'll appreciate the streamlined experience. If the visitor is not in your marketing automation yet, an ABM platform can still identify the account. In this situation, perhaps a short form will suffice.
- **Late/validation and consensus—Mostly no.** Later in the buying process, more members of the buying committee will access your site, looking to understand and validate the decision. Case studies, ROI analyses, and other forms of social proof are important here. Give the broad buying committee a good experience by making it easy for them; you can still add contact info to your database from other sources (e.g., technology can automatically pull contacts from email cc's or meeting invites with the account, and add them to your CRM).



Social Proof

Jeff Bezos said: “Your brand is what other people say about you when you are not in the room.”

When we are uncertain about how to act, we look to others for signals. If it feels like everyone is choosing one vendor, then we feel pressure to jump on the bandwagon — even if it’s not the right choice for our business.

Combine that with snap decisions based on heuristics, and it’s no surprise that a lot of B2B decision-making ends up looking opaque — the buyer may have already decided (perhaps subconsciously) for or against you before you even started the process.

This is why social proof is so important. The term was coined by Robert Cialdini as part of the six key principles of persuasion in his (awesome) 1984 book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, namely: reciprocity, scarcity, authority, commitment, liking, and consensus (social proof). The main categories of B2B social proof are:

Experts / influencers

- Soft: associating themselves with your brand (e.g., speaking at one of your events)
- Hard: recommendations and rankings (e.g., analyst reports)

Customer advocacy

- Visible: public reviews and social media mentions
- Invisible: private conversations (aka “dark social”)



Driving Social Proof with Advocacy and Community

Conversations about your products and your industry are happening, online and offline, both visibly and beyond your view. Your customers, prospects, partners, and other influencers are sharing their opinions and recommendations, and as my old boss used to say, “They’re either for you or against you.”

So how can we ensure our community is for us? How can we nurture these conversations to generate the social proof our brand needs?

The Number one thing is to deliver a great customer experience. Have a good product that solves a real problem and is easy to use. Make it painless to do business with you. Provide great service. If you truly deliver a great experience, positive conversations will follow.

But there’s much more to word of mouth than just “create a great experience” and wait. Go-to-market teams can also amplify word of mouth! One of the best examples of this comes from my old company, Marketo (now Adobe) and their Marketing Nation program.

- **Put emotion into your brand.** B2B doesn’t have to be boring, and buyers are people first. When an experience evokes an emotion, people will want to share it with others. The Marketing Nation tapped into this by giving people a feeling of belonging and support.
- **Identify and mobilize your advocates.** Create a formal advocate program and give it a name. At Demandbase, we call our advocates DemandAces. When you get a positive NPS review, ask the person to join the program. Incent your customer-facing employees to drive their best customers to the program. This group will become your go-to whenever you need a reference,

review, case study, etc. But be sure to give more than you get. Engage with the advocates (personally), ask for their advice (they want to be involved), track what they have done to help you, and reward them in ways they will appreciate (a bottle of wine, a meeting with a product manager, a charitable gift, etc.).

- **Engage online.** Create an online community and actively engage with customers (and possibly prospects, partners, etc.). But don’t stop there — engage anywhere people are talking about your industry or products. Be a part of the conversation.
- **Manage ratings and reviews.** Review sites like G2 and TrustRadius are an important way to codify your word of mouth. But you can’t just hope advocates will submit reviews — you need to ask them to, in the right way at the right time. A personal request asking engaged users to share their experience at three and six months after they complete onboarding can go a long way.
- **Nurture super-users.** Create an elite group of your most advanced users and brand ambassadors and put them on a pedestal. Each year, the Marketo Champions program selects 50 certified experts who actively shared their knowledge and expertise and rewards them with exclusive content, swag, access, and opportunities. Marketers proudly displayed being selected as a Champion on their LinkedIn profiles and saw significant career progression as a result.
- **Go beyond customers.** A great component of the Marketo Marketing Nation was that it included partners and influencers. They participated in the online community, in events and on social—which helped them feel more connected and more likely to talk about their favorite brands, providing a positive halo effect for the brand.

Expert Advice



Justin Gray
CEO, LeadMD

Questions to ask yourself:

- Are we measuring client outcomes?
- Have we looked to customer-facing teams to help us select accounts?
- Is our account-based approach creating good experiences? Agile?

Did we fulfill our promise to our customer?

The first thing you can do to maximize GTM success is to reorganize your business around helping clients achieve their goals. This is still a new concept for many. What exactly are customers trying to do? How does your information help them get what they want, and help you understand that they got it? Today, most businesses have very little awareness around that. Maybe they know the number of active users or emails sent, but what they should be seeing is that they've helped the customer achieve 120 percent of their goal. Know the goal. Organize around it.

You need a full view of your customer

Rather than start with the data you've always used, such as firmographics and headcount, start fresh by looking at your current customers. What makes your best prospects is the same thing that makes your best clients — don't overlook what's right in front of you. The information you seek resides with customer success, with executives, or with people who can see the market. Reverse-engineer your target account list from those conversations. Then figure out what makes them successful.

Use your data to safeguard the experience

Once you have your foundation, the question then becomes, "What do we do with it?" And the answer is account-based experiences and coordination to ensure those experiences. If you don't have a synchronized understanding that transcends departmental silos, you end up in a world where 250 emails go out to one single contact because your lifecycle and demand generation teams didn't coordinate. That's a true story. It can happen.

PART FIVE

The Five Smarter GTM™ Processes

The 5 Smarter GTM™ Processes

The most successful GTM strategies have tactics in each of these five areas.

1

Build your Account Intelligence foundation

Collect buying signals from an account, enrich it with reliable third-party data, and make sense of it with AI.

2

Find the accounts that drive your business

Target accounts most likely to deliver revenue, and identify which are in-market and ready to buy.

3

Engage with relevant, personalized interactions across channels

Develop account insights and use those insights to orchestrate account-specific interactions across advertising, your website, sales engagement, direct mail, and more.

4

Close opportunities by aligning marketing and sales

Connect revenue insights to action by seamlessly integrating your go-to-market.

5

Measure account progress

Prove — and improve — the impact of your efforts with account-based analytics.

Let's take each in turn...

The 5 Smarter GTM™ Processes

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Prove — and improve — the impact of your efforts with account-based analytics.

Build your Account Intelligence Foundation

A smarter go-to-market requires a solid foundation of data and intelligence. This is easier said than done. Critical information is fragmented across disparate data silos, and even when combined it is often inaccurate, outdated, and missing key insights. This makes it impossible to connect the dots and understand what your accounts are doing on and off your website — a problem exacerbated by the sheer volume of big data at play.

That's why any smart GTM effort must sit on a foundation of Account Intelligence. Without a proper Account Intelligence foundation, you get:

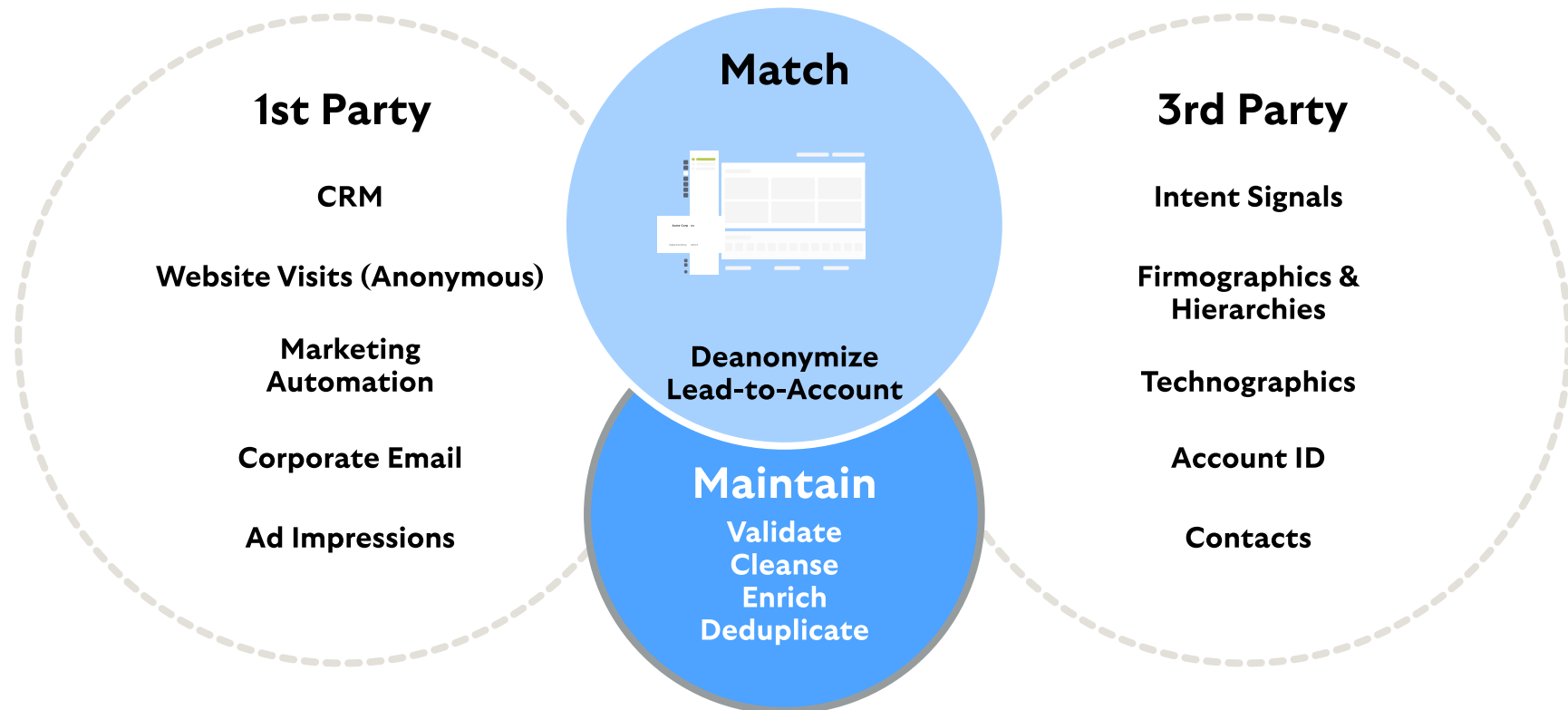
- **Account blindness:** Can't identify the high-quality accounts that are in-market and ready to engage.
- **Omni-spam:** Can't orchestrate relevant account interactions across channels.
- **Fumbled plays:** Can't align sales and marketing around a common view of the account.
- **Hunch-based decisions:** Can't measure success, tracking how your efforts are moving the account needle.

These were the exact challenges that I faced when trying to implement an account-based GTM strategy at Marketo. I drove my MOPS team crazy trying to contort Marketo + Salesforce into an account-based system, and it's what led me to decide to leave and start a company in the ABM space (Engagio). Even then, our solution lacked critical account insights, which is part of why we combined forces with Demandbase in 2020 to create the “new Demandbase” and ultimately the concept of Smarter GTM™.

Build your Account Intelligence Foundation (cont'd)

Five steps to Account Intelligence

- ▶ **Connect:** Unify all the data about your accounts — and the people at them.
- ▶ **Match:** Gather all the known and anonymous behavioral data and match it to the right account.
- ▶ **Augment:** Extend your intelligence with quality third-party data including firmographics, contacts, technographics, and intent.
- ▶ **Segment:** Build specific audiences to understand your accounts and target your campaigns.
- ▶ **Maintain:** Drive data integrity by cleaning, unifying, and enriching your accounts, contacts, and leads automatically.



Connect all your Account Data

Critical account data gets scattered and siloed across multiple sources:

- **CRM:** Accounts but also opportunities, activities, and campaigns, not to mention leads and contacts.
- **Marketing automation:** People and programs, plus digital behaviors like email opens and campaign responses.
- **Emails and meetings:** A goldmine of account insights buried in your Gmail or Exchange server: emails, meetings, new contacts ...
- **Web visit data:** Visits, trends, and specific pages for known and anonymous visitors. (Up to 98 percent of the traffic on your website is unknown and needs to be deanonymized.)
- **Advertising:** Impressions and clicks
- **Firmographics and technographics:** Basic account information like industry, location, revenue and size, plus the specific technologies in use at a company. (For example, at Demandbase, knowing what CRM and marketing automation a customer has is an important indicator.)
- **Buyer intent:** The content that people from the account read on the open web. (Baseline levels show what an account is interested in and surging trends indicate when an account is in-market.)
- **Other:** Product usage data, custom intent signals, content engagement, and more...

Like the parable of the blind men touching an elephant, partial views of your data don't accurately portray the whole.

That's why Account Intelligence starts with connecting to your core GTM systems to unify the data into a single view. (Just be smart about how you manage your API usage so you don't overwhelm your core systems like CRM and marketing automation.)

Customer Data Platforms

A customer data platform, or CDP, is the modern way to manage all your customer data in a single, unified version of the truth that's accessible by other systems. A CDP is different from other central databases because it's owned and operated by the marketing and/or revenue departments.

There are two types of CDPs: standalone and embedded. A standalone CDP is a separate tool that incorporates account-based data integrated into the rest of the stack, while an embedded CDP is a capability of another solution, often an ABM/ABX platform. The key is that the data is available to all other systems, no matter where it lives.

Match it

Once you connect all the data, the next step is to match it to the right account. We need to (1) deanonymize unknown traffic and (2) match known leads to the right account.

Deanonymize unknown traffic

Buyers want to stay anonymous in the early stages of their research, both on your website and out on the web. But that doesn't mean we lose all visibility!

By matching anonymous traffic to the right account, we can shine a light on account intent and know how to engage effectively. (And by focusing on the account and not the person, we avoid privacy concerns.)

The traditional way to deanonymize traffic is based on reverse mapping the IP address. This can work, especially when using an accurate mapping source, but it requires people to be surfing the web from work (or on a VPN). When users are working from home, at a coffee shop, or on the road, you need another approach.

The best strategy constantly evaluates multiple signals, combining cookies and IP addresses with AI, to pinpoint the account.

Here are some of the ways Demandbase does it:

- **First-party cookies:** If we're connected to a website via our tag, we can tie the cookie we see to the login information on that site.
- **Behaviors:** We monitor behaviors that indicate someone may work for a company (e.g., regularly checking the stock price). If we see enough of them, we can infer that the cookies active at that IP during working hours are more likely to work for the company.
- **Real-time processing:** For each identification we are constantly considering everything we know about the IP address and cookie (as well as the browser agent and time of day). If we see a change in the pattern, it can be a signal that perhaps the person has changed jobs.

Aren't Cookies Going Away?

The digital marketing ecosystem used to run entirely on cookies. Now, privacy concerns and the ending of cookie support by major browsers means the ecosystem is re-organizing itself around some new concepts and technologies. This will change the way account-based marketers identify accounts and target ads.

The Privacy Sandbox

In an effort to find alternatives to cookies, Google is leading a joint industry initiative called the Privacy Sandbox. The idea is simple: to protect individual user privacy while also mitigating the impact on advertisers and other players. They are committed to finding workable alternatives, which suggests ABX marketers won't be left without viable options.

FLEDGE and Topics

Google is proposing various strategies. FLEDGE is meant to support remarketing and custom audiences, and Topics maintains a list of five of your most recent interests (though it remains to be seen whether there will be B2B interests).

Site Consortiums

Another possible approach is the emerging consortiums of sites that will use common authentication tools, such as Liveramp's Authenticated Traffic Solution and the IAB and Trade Desk supported Unified ID 2.0. Essentially these will act as single sign-on tools for the independent web. By authenticating themselves, individuals are able to maintain control over the use of their data, and in return for individuals' trust, brands and publishers can create valuable experiences and content. This will allow publishers to authenticate their audience in an opt-in, privacy compliant way.

So while cookies may be going away, the industry is working hard to come up with appropriate solutions.

An advantage of these new approaches is that they would work across all the major web browsers (Firefox and Safari already block third-party cookies). This means that account identification has the potential to become even stronger without cookies than with them.

Match Rate and Accuracy

The match rate is the percentage of the traffic to your site that can be deanonymized. It'll never be 100 percent since even B2B sites get traffic from consultants, job seekers, and so on.

More importantly, a vendor can artificially boost their match rate by lowering accuracy and giving false positives. (The ultimate example of this is you could say 100 percent of the traffic comes from IBM, which would be a 100 percent match rate, but with extremely low accuracy.) So be sure to take any claims of better match rates with a grain of salt. What matters the most is **accurately identifying the traffic from the accounts you actually care about.**

Accuracy is especially important when it comes to using account identification for advertising or web personalization. Every dollar spent advertising to an inaccurate identification is money wasted and personalizing the experience to the wrong account is just plain annoying to your audience.



Lead-to-Account Matching

Lead-to-Account (L2A) matching involves tying each lead to the correct account, then using that data for analytics, lead routing, engagement scoring, and so on.

Why do we need L2A?

Leads don't roll up to accounts in Salesforce, and a similar disconnect exists in most marketing automation systems. This means you might have hundreds of people in your database that work at your target accounts but no way of tying their activity to the right company. This is especially a problem when bringing in new leads from marketing programs (such as submissions from a website form or a trade show list).

Some companies respond by converting all leads to contacts, but this can be manual and expensive. We know of one company that estimated they spend \$78,000 a year on this!

The failure to match isn't just a missed opportunity, it has cascading effects:

- **Limited account visibility:** Without mapping lead activity to accounts in your CRM, your team lacks a critical understanding of target account engagement.
- **Misrouted leads:** Without account-level information (e.g., the account's HQ location, company size, and whether the account has an open opportunity or if it is an existing customer), leads can get routed to the wrong owner.
- **Wasted time:** SDRs waste time checking out leads before calling, trying to verify their validity, and checking what may already be happening at the account.
- **Reporting challenges:** Without L2A, it's impossible to assign pipeline or revenue credit to campaigns that influence individual leads since deals happen at the account level.

Lead-to-Account Matching (cont'd)

Lead-to-Account (L2A) matching identifies which account each individual lead should be part of. Once you've made a match, you can make the connection for the purposes of account-based programs and metrics, while keeping the record as a lead (which maintains all your existing lead processes).

Or you can explicitly convert it to a contact in the account. Either way, getting this right is a critical step in all account-based programs.

Lead-to-account matching is absolutely required for high-growth organizations running account-based programs.

- TOPO, Marketing Technology Report 2019



VersionOne maps 20,000 leads with a click

VersionOne provides agile lifecycle management solutions for some of the largest tech companies in the world. They had 20,000 leads in Salesforce that were not matched to an active account opportunity. With a single click, Demandbase's lead-to-account matching took VersionOne's 20,000 leads and automatically matched them to the proper account in Salesforce. Immediately, lead visibility became account visibility, which led to valuable intelligence for marketing and sales. After implementing Demandbase, VersionOne achieved 88 percent engagement with target accounts, which translated into an increase in conversions that then led to a 66 percent increase in the value of their opportunities.

How does L2A Matching Work?

There are three main approaches to L2A matching.

Option 1: Manual L2A matching

There aren't many benefits to manual lead-to-account matching besides completing the job. This time-consuming approach slows lead processes, gets expensive, and is plagued by human error.

Option 2: Domain-based L2A automation

This process automates a simple match between email and website domains. While this is a reasonable way to start, most companies run into limitations:

1. Personal email addresses aren't matched, like those from Gmail or Hotmail.
2. Complex enterprise domains are missed. For example, domain-based matching doesn't pair www.yahoo.com with a @yahooinc.com email.
3. Assignment within large enterprises doesn't work. For example, @ge.com emails don't match with the appropriate division of GE.

Option 3: L2A technology

More sophisticated methods (including Demandbase's) involve L2A technology that automates matches based on multiple dimensions.

These capabilities first identify duplicate accounts and determine which copy is real. They then use fuzzy logic to match company names, websites, and email domains with other critical information fields. This is especially valuable with personal emails and complex enterprise domains. For example, fuzzy logic matches Hewlett Packard with hp.com, HP, and us.hp.com.

For accounts with multiple divisions, L2A technology can match leads with specific divisions via location. For example, GE has more than a dozen major businesses, including GE Capital, GE Healthcare, GE Oil & Gas, and so on. But a lead likely belongs to the GE Power account if she has a @ge.com email and an address in Atlanta, GA.

Benefits of L2A matching

Marketers who implement L2A report:

- More relevant customer experiences. Buyers spend more time with account managers who have clear insight into cross-sell and upsell opportunities. They also stop receiving inappropriate prospecting calls.
- Improved prospect journeys. Prospects won't hear from different reps.
- Increased SDR and sales rep productivity.
- They spend time on revenue-generating activity, not manual lookups.
- Better account insights. Engagement of individual leads rolls up to the overall account.
- Seamless lead management. Appropriately routed, nurtured and scored leads are more likely to move through the funnel.

Augment it

No matter how good your data may be — and who’s kidding, your data probably isn’t great — your Account Intelligence foundation needs to be augmented with quality thirdparty data to get a “hi-def” view of accounts.

This includes data about accounts (firmographics and hierarchies); the people at those accounts (contact data); the technologies they have installed (technographics); the topics they show interest in (intent data) — plus news and social insights, and as discussed above, an account identification graph.

Firmographic Data

Firmographic data includes details about a company such as revenue, number of employees, industry, and location. This information is also useful for identifying new accounts, scoring accounts, marketing segmentation, territory design, lead routing, and other GTM processes.

The data most often will come from an account data vendor such as Demandbase, Dun & Bradstreet, Oracle DataFox, or ZoomInfo.

Hierarchy Data

The largest accounts often have multiple divisions, each with sub-accounts (also known as buying centers, as noted earlier). For

example, The Walt Disney Company has divisions that include Studio Entertainment, Parks & Resorts, Media Networks, and Consumer Products & Interactive Media.

Depending on their practice, companies might identify corporate parents like Disney as the target account. Others define individual divisions, like Studio Entertainment, as target accounts. Identifying child accounts can be a great way to expand your target account list. It’s also important to understand the full scope of your relationship with the account.

To sell to global enterprises, create each division (or buying center) as a separate CRM account, then use account hierarchy functionality to roll data up to the corporate parent. Data providers that can deliver this hierarchy information include Demandbase, Dun & Bradstreet, and Oracle DataFox.

Contact Data

You can target accounts. In fact, we encourage you to. But at some point you need to know the people who make up the buying teams. This is where contact data can help.

Contact data steers you to the people you should know and shows you how to contact them (no pun intended). It includes name, email, phone number, job title, level, function, location, connections, and more.

TOPO's Account Based Benchmark Report, 2019 reported that the average number of actively targeted contacts per account ranged from 4.3 to 8.9, with companies that have larger ACVs targeting more contacts and top performers targeting approximately 25 percent more than all others.

Where to find contacts

There are many sources of contact data, including:

- **Your existing data** — living in your CRM and marketing automation or hidden in your email/calendar systems.
- **Purchased contact data** — buying contacts from reputable data providers such as Demandbase, and ZoomInfo.

- **Call programs** — having Sales Development Reps call into the account to build out contacts.
- **Manual research** — manually scraping sources such as LinkedIn Sales Navigator, media or event websites, industry forums and social media channels.
- **Email conventions** — if you know a company uses “first.last@company.com,” then you can figure out email addresses when you only have names. Be aware that you may not have permission to use these emails in marketing.

Who collects the contact data?

Your Entitlements will determine who is responsible for maintaining accurate contact data at target accounts.

As an example:

- For **One-to-One accounts**, the accountbased marketer maintains all contact information, working with the AE.
- For **One-to-Few accounts**, Marketing maintains data for the six top personas and updates it quarterly.
- For **One-to-Many accounts**, Marketing maintains data for two personas and updates it once a year.
- For **targeted demand gen accounts**, there is no proactive contact generation; SDRs may source contacts in advance of a big calling campaign.

A Persona-Based Approach

It's usually smart to target multiple members of the buying team. This means you'll want to customize your outreach, creating distinct messages and offers for different personas.

Start by focusing on just two personas: the user and the decision maker. As you gain experience, you can build detailed personas that cover all the important roles inside a buying team, for example:

- › **Initiator:** the person who starts the decision-making process
- › **Decider:** who makes the actual purchase decision
- › **Buyer:** who selects the suppliers and manages the buying process
- › **Influencer:** who contributes to the specifications and evaluation
- › **User:** who actually uses the product or service
- › **Gatekeeper:** who controls the flow of information in and out of the company

When you've mapped out the ideal personas, you can easily see which roles you've already got contacts for and where you still have coverage gaps.

Arming your sales team with persona insights will also help them increase the relevance of your outreach. When they know what pains to discuss and what language to use, they can have more relevant, helpful conversations.



Maintaining Contact Data

If the world stood still, building your contacts would be a one-off exercise. In the real world, it's a continuous process.

Even if you start with perfect data and 100 percent account coverage, that data will decay at a rate of anywhere from two to seven percent a month, depending on the role and industry. People leave companies, change positions, and get promotions all the time. So, you'll need an easy way for the team to continually update your data—plus a regular data hygiene check to see if you're still up to date.

Data quality matters

Data quality is too often neglected in marketing. In Smart GTM, it's especially important. You don't want to waste money sending expensive direct mail twice to the same person — or, even worse, look stupid by personalizing a letter with the wrong facts. (Maria Pergolino, CMO of ActiveCampaign, tells the story of a sales rep that kept notes about contacts in the “first name” field in the CRM system. Imagine getting an email addressed to “Dear Mike, hates us!”). Investing in data integrity processes and tools — removing duplicates, validating address information, and standardizing

company names — could save you time, money, and embarrassment later. It also ensures accounts are assigned to the right reps, and decision-making is based on accurate facts. (See the section on Maintain below.)

Responders to the Demandbase 2020 ABM Market Research Study said that data quality issues were the biggest challenge to executing account-based programs.

Technographic Data

Technographic data provides insight into a company's current tech stack and future technology needs. Depending on what you sell, knowing that a company uses Salesforce, Workday, or G Suite might make them a much more (or less) attractive candidate for your solutions. It can also help you customize your message.

You'll look at:

- Complementary technologies to yours
- Technology that rules out your solution or makes investment less likely
- Companies that use competitors' solutions
- Indications of wallet share
- What technology the company is likely to purchase next

You can source this data manually by looking at forums, job boards, social media, etc., but most often it comes from providers such as Demandbase, BuiltWith, HG Data, Slintel, and ZoomInfo.

Beware: Not all providers are the same. Many enterprise software products have JavaScript signatures clearly visible on the company website; finding these technographics is easy.

But it's much harder to find technologies behind the firewall, since that requires extrapolating unstructured information from billions of web pages — like job postings and social forums — then using humans to verify the information. If behind-the-firewall technologies matter to you, make sure you know where the information comes from.



Intent Data

Intent data is an indicator of an account's current level of interest in your company or category. It uses artificial intelligence to track online activity and uncover the topics that companies are actively consuming across the web.

This section covers third-party intent, which identifies the kind of content an account consumes on sites other than your own website. It's different from engagement (the E in FIRE), or first-party intent, which tracks what accounts do on your site (discussed below).

Why use intent data?

- **Identify in-market accounts.** Spikes in interest in a specific topic can identify when accounts are in-market. This helps you find the magic moments when buyers — who normally resist marketing and sales outreach — actually want to hear from vendors like you.
- **Identify good fit accounts.** The content that an account tends to read could indicate how qualified it is for your solution. For example, if you sell cybersecurity software, an account where employees show significant interest in that topic is likely to be a better fit than one where employees show no interest.
- **Identify relevant topics.** Your sales team can use intent data to understand what topics a specific account will find most relevant, and your marketing team can use it to understand the trending topics your market cares about.

TOPO research on intent data

90%

of intent data users use it to select accounts, and 68 percent share insights with sales and sales development.

90%

of intent users report it has a moderate impact, and 47 percent say it has a high or very high impact.

31 percent of users report intent data is exceeding their expectations.

More than two-thirds admitted that they are challenged by making intent data actionable.

How Does Intent Data Work?

Vendors like Demandbase, Bombora, 6sense, and MRP/ Prelytix collect intent from a broad array of sites, while others such as TechTarget, Madison Logic, and G2 track content consumption locally on their sites.

In both cases, vendors use four steps to derive intent data:

1. Collect content consumption events.

The event is a signal that contains the visitor's IP address, an anonymized cookie, a timestamp, and geo-location information (usually just metro or country). There is no personal information.

Collecting these events is straightforward for vendors that use their own site. For others, the methods vary. Demandbase does it by plugging into the B2B advertising bidstream for over 2 million sites (close to 500 billion content events a month), while Bombora uses a co-op of 4,000+ B2B publishers, vendors, and content syndication businesses (representing 22 billion events monthly as of Q4 2020).

2. Deanonimize and identify the account.

As discussed earlier, a key technology is the ability to identify accounts that are on a specific web page. In cases where the data comes from a publisher that requires a login, the publisher may know the company from their registration data. In others, the intent provider deanonimizes the traffic using cookie and IP information. As always, accuracy and match rates are both important.

How Does Intent Data Work? (cont'd)

3. Analyze the content of the page.

The next step is to analyze and classify the content of the page into specific keywords or topics. This is best done via natural language processing of the content on the page, though some vendors simply read the SEO meta tags (which isn't designed to be indicative of buying intent) to identify the page content.

Artificial intelligence plays an important role to understand the context and relevance of the page, not just the keyword. For example, does "lead scorer" refer to someone identifying hot B2B leads or the top basketball player in a game? And even if the specific word doesn't show up on the page, if related concepts show up, then it can still indicate interest.

Which article is relevant to Digital Security?

The image shows two article snippets side-by-side. Article 1 is titled 'Recent Innovations in Cybersecurity' and has a red navigation bar with 'Local', 'World', 'Sports', and 'Politics'. Article 2 is titled 'National Security Advisor to Visit Border' and has a green navigation bar with 'Business', 'Health', and 'Technology'. Both articles have social media sharing icons and several lines of placeholder text, some containing the words 'digital security' and 'security'.

How Does Intent Data Work? (cont'd)

4. Identify patterns and trends.

The algorithm now has a massive data set of specific accounts reading specific content topics. It can now apply machine learning to identify true intent patterns.

How many relevant articles did they read?

More articles imply stronger interest. Over how many different days? A potential buyer would have sustained interest.

How old were the articles?

New articles are likely news of the day while older articles imply vendor research.

How recently did they read the articles?

Timing is everything: Intent goes cold, fast.

How rare are the relevant keywords in the articles?

Rarer, more specific keywords imply the account is further into the buyer journey.

Do they have intent in other topics that disqualifies them?

Scale matters when it comes to intent data. There are over 100,000 possible topics, and a single relevant article does not indicate a potential buyer. You need to find trends and patterns across the account.

When evaluating intent data providers, make sure you understand what data sources they use and the science behind their algorithm — it can make a big difference to your results.

Baseline vs. trending intent

Depending on the algorithm, you may see two kinds of intent patterns from your provider: baseline intent and trending intent.

Baseline, or weekly, intent shows general interest in a keyword or keyword set over time, which can indicate broad awareness and interest in the topic across the account.

Trending intent — sometimes called surging intent — indicates when an account is showing an increased interest in a keyword or keyword set. It's useful for showing when an account may be moving into a purchase cycle. Some vendors update this daily, others weekly.

How Does Intent Data Work? (cont'd)

Different intent data providers source their information using a variety of techniques. Pay attention to the differences to ensure the intent data meets your business needs.

Need	Question	Considerations
Match Accuracy	How does the vendor identify which account is showing intent?	The accuracy of the account identification is essential to Smarter GTM™. False positives increase inefficiencies (going after wrong accounts). False negatives will miss intent signals from key accounts.
Quality of Source	Where on the internet are intent signals sourced?	It should come from reputable websites. Working with more than one vendor gives access to multiple sources.
Quality of Context	How does the vendor analyze the page content?	Intent data should be extracted from visible page content, not hidden metadata tags. "Exact Match" without page content can deliver false results (e.g., "lead scorer"). AI and natural language processing will perform better than metadata tags and exact match.
Quantity of Source	How much intent signal does the vendor have to work with?	More data for the AI to work with results in better accuracy and more granularity of keywords.
Keyword Taxonomy	Does the vendor have a predefined taxonomy, or does it let customers pick custom words?	Predefined taxonomy may not be enough, especially if you have very specific or rare keywords and branded terms.
Update Frequency	How often does the vendor look for new intent behaviors and update their data sets?	Daily or weekly? Does the data come into your system automatically or via manual import?
Signal Volume / Coverage	What fraction of your target accounts have intent data at any given time?	High volume sources allow for intent in niche markets.

Using Intent Data

According to TOPO, 67 percent of companies with intent data found their biggest challenge was understanding how to use it. Having the data is great, but not using it to the fullest potential will increase the risk that your competitors will spot the hottest opportunities before you do.

When looking at bringing intent data into your organization, make sure you have a plan for how to operationalize it.

- How will the data flow into your accountbased platform? To your marketing automation? To your CRM?
- How will sales reps, SDRs, and customer success teams get notified about trending or competitive intent and turn it into call lists?
- Does it come over email, Slack, CRM lists/ view/reports/ dashboards/tasks, etc.? How will they see which keywords are most relevant to each account?
- How will the intent data get baked into your predictive models?
- How will advertising campaigns take advantage of intent data? What other actions should trigger based on intent (direct mail, SDR outreach, etc.)?
- How will the data inform your understanding of where the account is in the buying journey?

Key Takeaway

If intent is the new lead, then more intent signals provide more leads. If your organization partners with multiple intent vendors, they should ultimately be used together to shine the light on the correct accounts with higher levels of certainty. When in doubt, always ask the intent provider for the science behind the collection to feel confident that the intent data collected is worthy of operationalizing.

Segment It

Having your data unified, matched, cleansed, and augmented is a great start — but Account Intelligence also requires the ability to start making sense of all that data via segmentation. Good segmentation enables better analysis, predictive modeling, personalization, and perhaps most importantly, engagement across channels.

This is why no screen is more important in a GTM platform than the one that helps you define lists and segments. I'm convinced that Marketo's "Smart List" / "Smart Campaign" functionality is the reason why that platform ultimately won out as the #1 marketing automation solution.

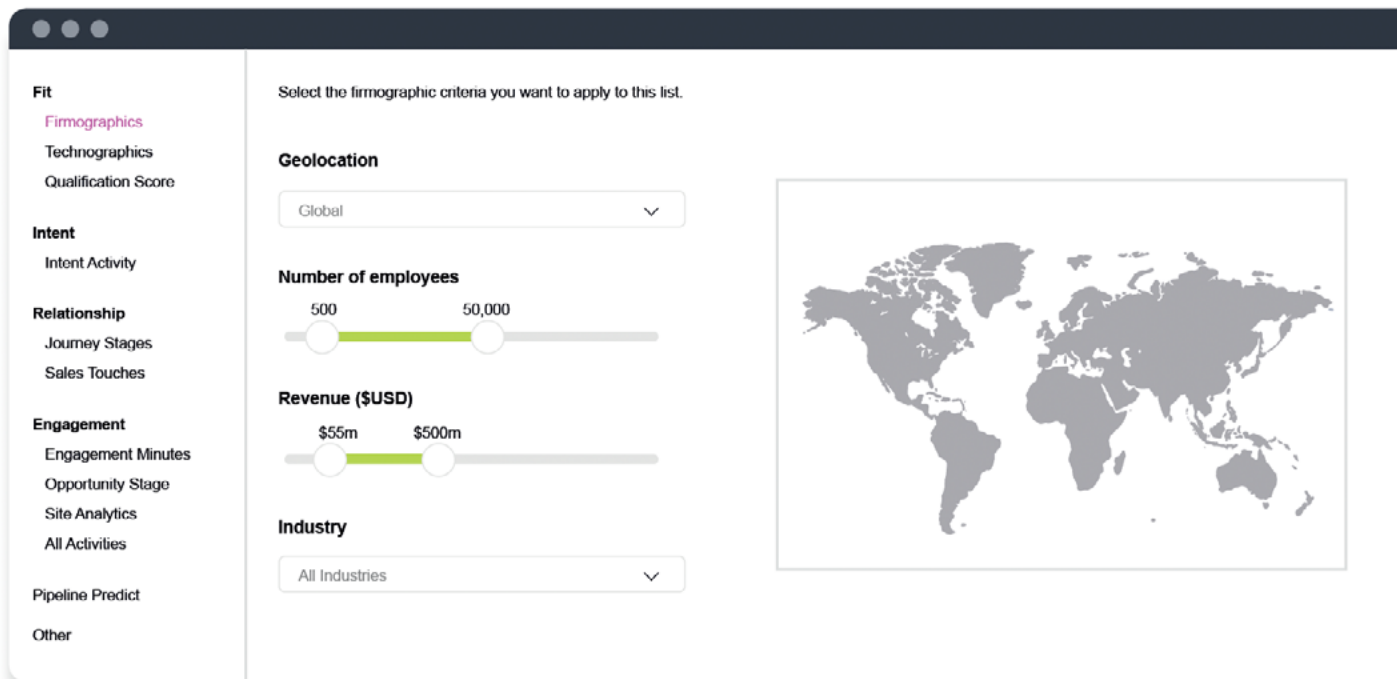
Done right, this screen lets non-technical users easily build basic as well as insanely complex segments that combine sophisticated relationships between people, accounts, opportunities and behaviors. And that in turn drives the success of all your GTM efforts.



Basic Segmentation Strategy

Easy segments should be easy to create.

1. **Industry** — Industry verticals tend to have unique and specific attributes, pain points, and goals. Focusing on specific issues for different industries shows that you know what matters to them—and that your solutions are the right fit.
2. **Size (headcount or revenue)** — Mid-market companies typically face different challenges than SMBs or enterprise organizations, so you might choose to segment your message by organization size.
3. **Region** — If you sell into different countries, you'll want to translate your messages and, ideally, customize for each geography and language.
4. **Journey stage** — Change the offers based on the account journey stage: education and thought leadership for early-stage; buying guides for mid-stage; validation for late-stage; and adoption or expansion for customers.
5. **Intent** — Accounts demonstrating a need or interest in your value proposition are a powerful segment.
6. **Basic activities** — You might target accounts that have (or have not) visited the website, that are (or are not) showing engagement, etc.



Demandbase Selector interface in "Basic" mode

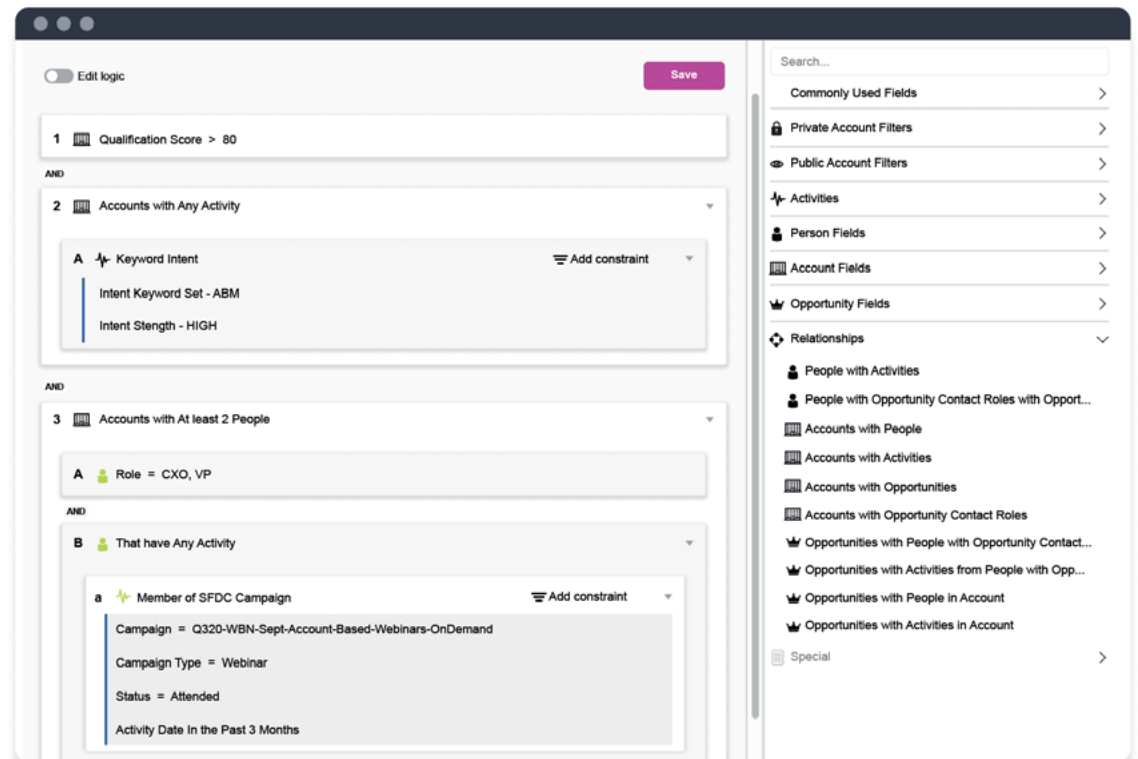
Advanced Segmentation Strategy

As your account intelligence practice matures, you'll progress to more advanced segmentation that reflects the complex relationships between accounts, people, opportunities, and activities.

There is where platforms can vary widely.

A few items to watch for:

- ▶ Access to all your **custom fields** (people, account, and opportunity) and a self-healing schema so new fields show up automatically.
- ▶ Filter on **activities**, such as people who filled out specific forms or responded to specific campaigns.
- ▶ Segment based on certain fields **changing a value**. For example, a campaign membership moving from Registered to Attended, or an opportunity stage moving from Diligence to Proposal.
- ▶ Navigate **relationships** across objects (e.g., accounts with at least 2 VP-level people who attended a webinar).
- ▶ Refer to **existing segments**—especially important so marketing operations can create reusable best practices.



Demandbase Selector interface in “Advanced” mode

Example Segments

Over time, you'll build a large library of segments.

- Some will be static, such as your core list of target accounts.
- Some will be dynamic, such as your current marketing qualified accounts (MQAs).
- Some will be ad hoc, such as for a specific campaign (execs at Tier 1 accounts who have not recently engaged) or quick analysis (which ICP accounts have registered for your summit).

Example lists:

- Accounts with a high qualification (fit) score
- Prospects in the healthcare industry
- Accounts that had more than one employee attend a webinar
- Target accounts with no recent engagement
- Prospects who have visited three or more solution pages
- Customers who've bought Product A but not Product B (and are showing intent for Product B)
- Accounts in a specific sales rep's territory
- Accounts with trending intent
- Hot MQA accounts with no recent sales interactions (emails, meetings)
- Closed lost opportunities that are reengaging
- Open opportunities showing intent for competitors
- Execs who watched an online demo in the last 7 days but haven't received any sales touches

You can start to see just how powerful segmentation can be.

When combined into a holistic strategy, dynamic lists like these form the core of your go-to-market.

Maintain it

Poor data quality is extraordinarily expensive. Companies market to the wrong accounts and leads. Sales reps fight over account ownership. Operations teams wastes hours manually cleaning data. And execs make decisions and forecasts based on inaccurate data.

Industry wisdom claims it takes \$1 to verify a record as it's received, \$10 to later cleanse and de-dupe it, and \$100 if nothing is done, because the ramifications of the errors are felt over and over through lost opportunities and wasted resources.

It's no surprise, then, that more than 70 percent of revenue leaders say data management is a high priority. Yet, a staggering 65 percent do almost nothing about it! Data cleaning tools like Demandbase clean and enrich your accounts, contacts, and leads automatically. You'll want fine-grain control over which records and fields to update and when to clean.

Dirty Input Data	Cleaned
Zycus Parent Account, Accenture - Brasil OEM	Zycus Inc.
Sam guy, uelg@kyrconsultingllc@gmail.com	samuelg@kyrconsulting.com
City: Suite 101, State: Seattle, Zip: WA, Country: 98124	City: Seattle, State: WA, Zip: 98124, Country: USA
Able Computing, dashpont.com	dashpoint.com/able-computing
fQzmir	Fazmir
DP Portuga; United States	ADP Portugal
Xactky - Internal 8/12/19	Xactly Corporation

#1 reason for Marketing and Sales misalignment is poor data.

Unlocking Revenue Performance in the New Normal, Demandbase (InsideView), 2020

Expert Advice



Rene Asis

Chief Tech Evangelist,
LiveRamp

Questions to ask yourself:

- What's our plan for cross-system or cross-functional governance? (e.g., consolidation of one account list or your source of truth)
- How will we suppress or reconcile competing programs? (e.g., search, programmatic ads or demand gen)
- How can we account for corner cases? (e.g. in social demand gen or addressable TV buys)

Clean experiences begin with clean, connected, normalized data

If you want your customers to have a clean media experience, it all begins with a strong data foundation. When you don't have strong data governance, or something as simple as structured naming conventions, you can inadvertently deliver messaging to the wrong company or target audience. Large complex marketing organizations, or companies that aren't policing their operations, can wind up creating a poor experience for target accounts or customers.

Get your data speaking the same language

A B2B marketer's goal is full personalization throughout the entire customer lifecycle or to produce a synchronized account experience for their customers. To make this happen, a marketer's infrastructure and operations must have the foundation to be inclusive of all potential and current inputs, such as common to advanced digital media channels (e.g., display, CTV, and demand generation). This can take the form of a universal privacy-safe identifier or a deterministic identifier that can connect to target accounts across your technology stack.

Connected data mitigates misinformation

Once you have a clean data foundation, consider how this informs your marketing practice. Take time to understand how your prospects, customers, and buying committees operate. A customer you're marketing to can have a senior leader inform an analyst that they need an advanced storage system, while another person in the same company is researching a different set of hardware such as a wireless network. Across a target account you could observe varied behaviors like this, which could result in disparate account-based experiences when marketing or engaging with this company.

The 5 Smarter GTM™ Processes

1

Build your Account Intelligence foundation

Collect buying signals from an account, enrich it with reliable third-party data, and make sense of it with AI.

2

Find the accounts that drive your business

Target accounts most likely to deliver revenue, and identify which are in-market and ready to buy.

3

Engage with relevant, personalized interactions across channels

Develop account insights and use those insights to orchestrate account-specific interactions across advertising, your website, sales engagement, direct mail, and more.

4

Close opportunities by aligning marketing and sales

Connect revenue insights to action by seamlessly integrating your go-to-market.

5

Measure account progress

Prove — and improve — the impact of your efforts with account-based analytics.

Find Accounts that Matter: Account Selection

The whole point of ABX — which is a key part of a Smart GTM — is to focus your sales and marketing efforts on a relatively small number of high-value accounts that have the greatest revenue potential.

That's why account selection is a critical step in any account-based GTM.

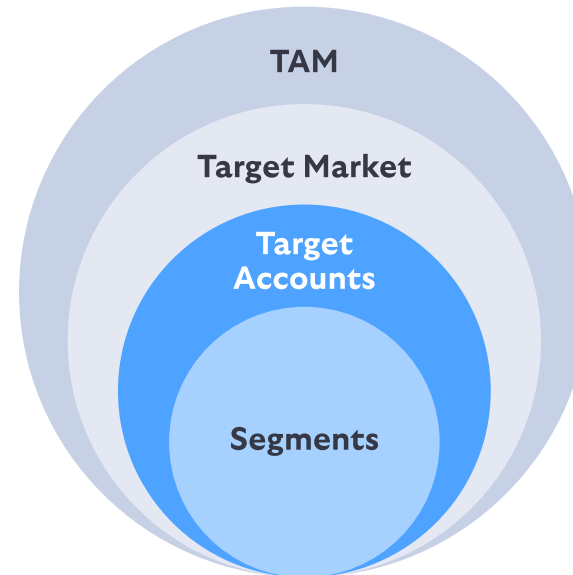
You'll only have the resources to work a certain number of accounts effectively. Get this right and you'll get the maximum return on your efforts. Get it wrong and you'll either miss major opportunities, waste resources on the wrong accounts, or both.

Fortunately, Smarter GTM™ is not a one-size-fits-all strategy. You can pick a relatively small number of accounts to get continuous, significant investment and also have a much larger list from which you only focus on a subset at any given time.

Account selection is the process of progressively narrowing your focus:

- **Total Addressable Market (TAM):** Any account you could possibly sell to.
- **Target Market (ICP):** Accounts in your ideal customer profile.
- **Target Accounts:** Accounts you are actively pursuing at any given time (ideally grouped into different styles).

- **Segments:** Accounts that match specific rules (e.g., accounts in cybersecurity, accounts that have open opportunities, accounts that use your competitor; accounts showing interest in a specific product you sell, etc.).



Tip: Give your target account list a name. This list will be the unifying force in your company, helping your revenue teams work together for a common goal. At Demandbase, we call our top 4,000 target accounts the DB4K.

Account Selection

When the number of accounts you could pursue is larger than the number you can effectively pursue, account selection allows you to focus your limited resources where it'll have the biggest impact and segment accounts for more efficient execution.

The key strategies are:

- Defining different styles of GTM based on account value.** By aligning the amount of investment and tactics you use (aka “entitlements”) to each account’s potential value, you put more resources where they’ll show the highest returns.
- Segmenting and rotating account focus:** By grouping similar accounts together (often by industry, but it could also be customers of a competitor or other segments), you can plan out a calendar to increase your focus on one or a few segments at a time. This will also dramatically simplify campaign and message creation.
- Triggering specific actions.** For accounts in your target market that aren’t in the current focus, you can still identify specific activities that indicate you should focus on them and trigger the appropriate actions. Examples include accounts showing signs of being in-market and ready to engage (e.g., Marketing Qualified Accounts), accounts that use your competitor but are approaching renewal, and accounts that just hired a new executive.

According to TOPO, organizations only pursue an average 38 percent of their target account list at one time. The key is to pick the right number of accounts based on the capacity you have to execute each strategy — and this begins by defining your entitlements for each style of GTM.

Aligning marketing and sales on target accounts and entitlements is to Smarter GTM™ what defining a marketing-qualified lead is to demand gen—the core of all your alignment efforts.

	Q2			Q3		
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Segmented						
Competitor Displacement						
Finserv						
Pharma						
Triggered						
Competitive Intent						
MQA Stage						
New Executive						

Entitlements

Account entitlements answer the question “What is the right amount of time, money, and resources dedicated to each account for each style of GTM?”

In particular, they serve as the contract between marketing and sales, defining exactly what each department will do to support the account-based effort for each account in each style.

Entitlements typically fall into four categories:

- **Data:** the level of account research and planning (including data purchase and maintenance) applied to each
- **Advertising:** the monthly budget applied to attract and engage each account
- **Direct Mail:** the cost and level of direct mail and gifts, and the number of personas who receive gifts
- **High-Value Offers:** a broad category including executive meetings, exclusive events, customized content, Cameo messages, etc.

You can have one set of entitlements for accounts that are evergreen for a given ABX style based on the potential account value and another for accounts that are temporarily in an ABX style because of segments and triggers.

Simplified Account Entitlement Example

	Evergreen	Triggered
1:1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Account plan • 1:1 workshop • VIP experiences • 100% custom content, chat • Advertising • Proactive outbound • Quarterly contact refresh (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$100+ gifting • Cameo message • 100% customized response
1:Few	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini account plan • 20% custom content • Advertising • Proactive outbound • Quarterly contact refresh (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$75+ gifting • Highly customized response
1:Many	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising • Limited outbound • Program-based content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$50+ gifting • Customized response
ICP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General demand gen • No outbound until trigger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightly customized response

Entitlements

I believe it is essential to define your entitlements before you select target accounts. Whether it costs time or money (or both), an entitlement uses limited resources.

Entitlements define the constraints on how many accounts you can afford in each style of ABX.

A key mistake we've seen companies make is to pick and tier their accounts before defining entitlements. This often results in selecting too many accounts in each tier and the inability to provide the right level of focus and customization to realize the full benefit at those accounts.



How Many Accounts Should you Have?

The entitlements you set define your capacity for how many accounts you can select for each style at any given time.

If a top-tier entitlement is to create a detailed account plan, then each sales rep can maintain just a handful of these accounts. If personal meetings with your CEO is an entitlement, how many can she realistically do in a year?

SDR capacity can be a good guide for how many segmented and triggered accounts you can support at any given time. According to TOPO's recommendations, an SDR has a total of 13.5 hours of prospecting time a week. They also assume an SDR reaches out to six contacts per account. If it takes 20 minutes to personalize the engagement for each contact (deep personalization), then the SDR can handle about seven accounts per week. But if the play only requires five minutes to personalize, then the SDR can handle 27 per week.

Finding ways to expand your capacity is a great way to scale your program. If the number of packages you can send each year is a constraint, then investing in a direct mail solution can unlock scale. If the time it takes to personalize SDR outreach is a constraint, then investing in ways to use AI to know what to say to the account can unlock scale.

Although the number of accounts depends on the GTM style of, most companies target between 101 to 500 accounts, with up to 50 per individual rep.

Demandbase 2020 ABM Market Research Study

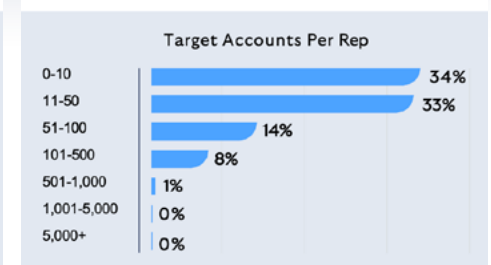
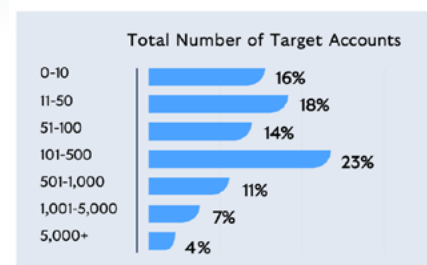
Health Checks

- Are you investing too high a percentage of your resources in too few accounts?
- If reasonably successful, will these wins deliver the numbers your business needs?
- Are you spreading your resources too thinly? Could more focus deliver better results?

Demandbase Secret Sauce: Number of Accounts

At Demandbase, each account executive has a territory consisting of:

- Five one-to-one accounts
- Thirty one-to-few accounts
- One hundred (approximately) one-to-many accounts from our core target account list
- Additional named accounts in our ICP for triggered campaigns—up to 1,500 for mid-market reps, a few hundred for enterprise reps, none for strategic reps



Scoring and Picking Accounts

Once you know how many accounts per style you can have at any given time, the next step is to pick them.

You'll begin by picking accounts for each evergreen style, and you'll also want to define the rules that would cause you to upgrade an account temporarily (such as entering the marketing qualified account stage).

Sales should own the account selection.

A key lesson learned is that sales should feel like they own the account selection for each tier. Alignment and buy-in are so critical to account-based success. When marketing manages to create engagement at a target account, you want the sales team to feel excited. This is much more likely to happen when sales has picked the accounts. (It's okay if marketing helps or even drives the process.)

Questions that guide the account selection process include:

- **Where** have we sold most effectively in the past?
- **Which** kinds of accounts have proven to be most profitable over time?

- **What** characteristics are most predictive of long-term success?
- **What** traits should rule out an account?
- **Which** accounts do we already have an advantage in?
- **Which** accounts do we already have engagement with?
- **What** accounts deliver the most revenue or strategic value?



Scoring helps Coupa spot opportunities

Coupa's all-in-one Business Spend Management platform helps technology companies manage spend across every aspect of their organization. When they first started their ABM program, they turned to Demandbase because it provided so many pieces of the ABM puzzle, allowing them to get campaigns up and running faster. When it came time to choose their target accounts, they married Engagement Minutes and Demandbase offsite intent with their in-house ideal customer profile (ICP) scores. The end result: targeted, strategic account lists that both the marketing and sales teams were excited to work on together, and which have become the heart of its ABM strategy.

Their ABM program now fuels a full third of all account development rep opportunities, making it an important contributor to the business.

Manual vs. Predictive Account Selection

Here are three of the most common ways to select accounts as well as our recommended approach.

Manual selection

The simplest way to select accounts is to let the sales reps draw up their own lists and combine them into a master list. In this scenario, they may be hunting for firmographic and engagement data on their own. Or marketing can jump-start the process by providing sales with basic data.

In general, this list won't be wildly off base— reps know their markets (and they will have immediate buy-in to the outcome). But, without further analysis, it will almost certainly miss some big opportunities and overvalue others.

Basic scoring

Another approach is to come up with a points- based system to score accounts. (Accounts in appropriate industries get five points.

Accounts of the right size get another five. And so on.) While this approach lacks rigor, it can provide an easy way to focus the sales team on best-fit accounts.

Predictive analytics

Predictive analytics takes data about accounts that have progressed to a certain stage of the buying process and uses it to find other accounts that look most like them.

Just as Netflix predicts which movies you'll like based on the ones you already liked, predictive analytics chooses the companies most likely to buy by analyzing the ones who have already bought (or have become opportunities).

Predictive models don't operate with any biases or hypotheses. They simply analyze the data, building the model around any and all characteristics that best correlate with eventual success.

At Demandbase, we recommend companies use a combination of hard business rules (such as company size) and predictive analytics to guide their account selection. See the next page...

Don't overthink it.

Whichever selection process you choose, starting with a "good" account list is almost always better than waiting months to make it "perfect." Get started—you can always fine-tune later!

Account Selection with FIRE

The F.I.R.E. acronym — Fit, Intent, Relationship, Engagement — is a great framework for combining predictive analytics with specific business rules to select evergreen and triggered accounts.

Criteria	Core Question	Key Activity	Data
<u>Fit</u>	Are we interested in this account? How closely does it match accounts where we've easily created significant revenue?	Define an ideal customer profile (ICP) and prioritize accounts by its qualification score.	Firmographics Technographics
<u>Intent</u>	Are they showing interest in our category or our competitors? Is their interest trending up?	Identify what topics companies are actively consuming across the web and when interest in a topic surges.	Baseline intent Trending intent
<u>Relationship</u>	What's our existing relationship with this account?	Track whether AEs and SDRs are already reaching out to an account and whether there were previous meetings or opportunities. Know if another division is a customer, or if they've purchased a competitor.	Email Meetings Opportunities Technographics
<u>Engagement</u>	How engaged is our company with this account right now?	Monitor which accounts (and personas) visit your website, download your content, attend your events, and so on.	Account activity Engagement minutes

Fit

How interested are we in this account?
How closely does it match accounts where
we've easily created significant revenue?

Ask yourself “Who’s my best customer?” (It’s OK, we all have a favorite, no one else needs to know.) Now, wouldn’t it be nice to clone them? That’s what the ideal customer profile is all about.

The ideal customer profile (ICP) defines the attributes of accounts that are expected to become a company’s most valuable customers.

The ICP takes into account the potential value of the account as well as the relative difficulty of selling to them. Whether you use rules, points, or a predictive model such as [Qualification Score](#), the account data that goes into the ICP include firmographic and technographic data.

When defined properly, your Fit score not only helps rank accounts, it also helps identify additional accounts that aren’t yet in your database — win/win!



Account Qualification

You will likely have firmographic or technographic rules that establish whether an account can be on your target list.

Your company may have hard rules (such as only selling to certain industries, locations, or company sizes), while other attributes will be more directional (some industries are more relevant than others).

For example, at Demandbase we look at both firmographics and technographics when qualifying accounts. Rather than hard rules, we combine these with our predictive analytics to come up with a final target account list.

You can complete this Target Account Checklist to identify the basic characteristics you can consider for the accounts you want to go after.

Technographics	Firmographics
Marketing automation	Annual revenue
CRM software solutions	Industry
	HQ location

Account Qualification (cont'd)

Target Account Checklist

The following worksheet offers a basic set of characteristics to consider when building your target account list, as well as prompts for drilling down into characteristics most relevant to your business.

- Is B2B
- Is a customer
- Is not a customer
- Industry is:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Annual revenue > _____
- Employee size > _____
- Located in:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Aligned with company business objectives
- Aligned with company strategic direction
- No recent marketplace shifts that would disqualify
- Not disqualified by sales
- Influential brand
- Account score > _____
- Goals:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Key pain points:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Products, solutions, services:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Industry focus:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Customers:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Competitors:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Products and solutions owned:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Internal functions/operations teams:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Purchase decision makers:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Other:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Intent

Is the company showing interest in our category or our competitors?

As discussed earlier, intent data can help you know when an account is entering an active buying cycle — which is super cool. But it can also be used for account selection, since all else being equal, an account that tends to read about topics relevant to your category will be a better account than one that doesn't.

This is why it's important to track both baseline and trending intent.

Demandbase Secret Sauce: What positions are they hiring for?

An account's hiring practices can signal whether they're ready for your solutions. At Demandbase, for instance, our sales reps are interested in knowing whether an account is hiring for demand generation, digital marketing, or an ABX-specific role. It signals they are investing in their ABX practice and the timing could be right.

Relationship

What's our existing relationship with this account?

It's never good to go to sales and say, "Here's a hot MQA account that's in-market!" only to have the sales rep say, "Yeah, I know, I spoke to them last week." Or perhaps they reach out to the prospect and get forwarded a previous rep's conversation — or worse, get the reply, "We're already a customer."

Don't get schooled by your prospect.

Look for previous activity, past opportunities, and whether the parent or subsidiary has any connection to you.

- What kind of outreach has been done in the past? Emails, calls, or social media?
- When was the last activity? Which people have been contacted? Did the account engage with past outreach?
- Are there any current open opportunities? Which products are attached to the opportunity? If it was closed-lost, what was the reason?
- What connections does your company have into the account? Executive relationships, past customers who changed jobs, common acquaintances?

Unfortunately, knowing this can be difficult, especially since many sales reps don't do a good job of logging their emails and meetings.

Software (like Demandbase) that can attach to the email and calendar server and automatically log interactions goes a long way to help here.

And tools like Demandbase Sales Cloud or LinkedIn Sales Navigator can help understand the connections into the account.



Engagement

How engaged is this account with your company? Is it visiting your website, downloading your content, attending your events?

Engagement describes something fundamental about the customer's connection to your brand: Higher degrees of engagement mean a deeper commitment. More emotion. More connections. More activity — such as buying and advocating.

In short: Engagement matters.

You can track engagement for many kinds of activities:

- Website: Visits by account
- Marketing automation: Email opens, event attendance, program success, content downloads, etc.
- CRM: Activities, tasks, and campaign membership
- Email/Calendar: Human email interactions (e.g., replies) and meetings

The challenge is to combine all these activities into a single score. As discussed in the MQA section, we've found that an easy-to-understand way to measure and understand engagement is to use time as a proxy for engagement.

For example:

- 1 minute: Web page visit
- 2 minutes: Email reply
- 10 minutes: Content download
- 30 minutes: Webinar attendance
- 30 minutes: Sales meeting
- 120 minutes: Dinner attendance

By tracking the engagement minutes that your target accounts are spending with you and combining these interactions at the individual and account level, you get a good proxy for engagement.

Before someone spends money with you, they'll spend time with you.

Engagement (cont'd)

Do	Don't
<p>Assign minutes to activities that <u>actually show</u> engagement.</p> <p>Consider giving higher or lower weight to minutes from specific personas. For example, you may count CXOs at 150 percent or even 200 percent.</p>	<p>Assign minutes to the activity you complete. Sent emails count as engagement only if the recipient opens them.</p> <p>Assign minutes to passive activity like ad impressions. People actually need to visit your website to be engaged.</p>

DocuSign® Engagement drives uplift for DocuSign

DocuSign is a global company that helps organizations connect and automate how they prepare, sign, act on, and manage agreements.

DocuSign uses Demandbase to capture on-site activity and off-site intent, and then send the account engagement insights directly to sales, in real time.

According to Perri Garner, Director of ABM, the Demandbase difference comes down to Account Intelligence, since DocuSign is able to see exactly what web pages and content top accounts are viewing and how this changes over time. As a result of using Demandbase, DocuSign increased customer engagement and sales pipeline by 22 percent.

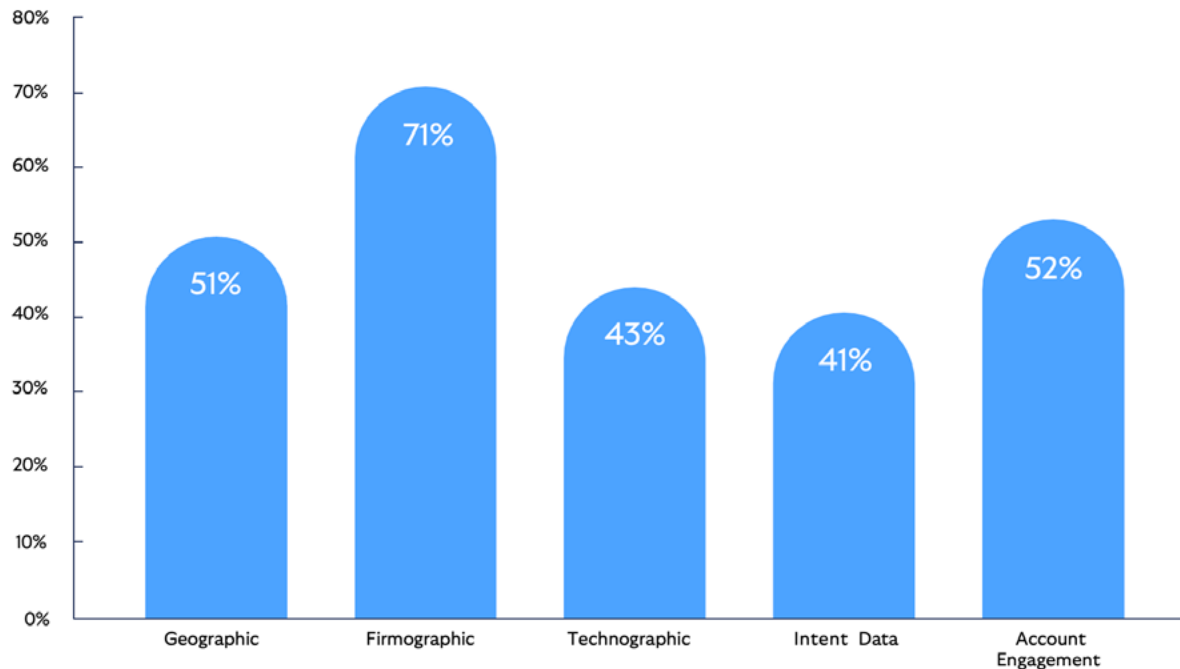
Time to Pick!

You've defined your entitlements, and you know how many accounts you can have for each GTM style. You've used the FIRE methodology to score your accounts. Now it's time for sales to select their accounts for each style.

Exciting!

This is best done by giving each account executive a view of their territory that lets them see all the relevant information about each account: fit/qualification score and key attributes, intent data, relationship context, and engagement minutes.

Common Account Qualification Criteria



2021 Account-Based Marketing Benchmark Report, RevOps Squared and Demandbase

Mark the occasion.

Agreeing on a target account list is a big deal. For the first time, sales, marketing, and executive leadership are all aligned on the most important dimension in B2B: which accounts you want to sell to. Go on: Throw a virtual party! (I'm thinking champagne but a non-alcoholic alternative can work—as long as it's bubbly.)

Time to Pick! (cont'd)

Start with each account executive's (AE) entire territory, then score each account according to the FIRE model. Then, let the AE choose accounts for each style guided by your scoring.

The AE may have good reasons to include or exclude an account other than its score—but at least you have an agreed system for evaluating potential—and a good basis for discussion.

Account	Map	Employees	Fit	Intent	Relationship	Engagement	Total	Sales Pick
Bluth Company	Eloqua	5K-10K	90	Medium	20	257	94	1:1
Initech	Pardot	1K-5K	80	High	5	215	87	1:1
Pritchett Closets	Pardot	250-500	75	High	6	216	86	1: Many
Acme Inc	Marketo	1K-5K	85	Low	15	146	66	1: Few
Gringotts Bank	Marketo	10K+	75	Medium	0	107	59	1:1
Cyberdebe Systems	Marketo	500-1000	90	Low	0	161	59	
Hooli	Eloqua	10K+	75	Medium	10	22	56	1: Few
Dunder Mifflin	Hubspot	100-250	70	Medium	8	31	54	1: Many

Example of an account selection spreadsheet used by Demandbase. The AE reviews the ranked list of accounts for their territory and then applies their own judgement to pick the accounts they want to target for each style of GTM.

Maintaining the List

Be patient.

Smarter GTM™ efforts take time. Once you've chosen your list of target accounts, stick with it for longer than you may feel is right.

Sales reps may overreact to bad news and want to take an account off the list. But persistence can pay off.

Just because an account is not ready to buy right now doesn't mean they should be removed from your target account list.

Plan to update the list periodically—the best practice is minor updates quarterly with larger updates once a year. There may also be major updates to the list depending on corporate goals and initiatives. For example, if you launch a new product that targets manufacturers, then you'll want to expand your list to include those companies.

Tip: Don't turn over more than 25 percent of your list each quarter. If your turnover is greater than that, you may be abandoning the ship too quickly.

Should existing customers be on the target account list?

Yes, especially if expansion revenue from existing customers is important to you—which it so often is. In fact, many companies (49 percent) dialed up their focus on growing business within existing accounts in response to the 2020 pandemic (ITSMA and ABM Leadership Alliance, 2020 ABM Benchmark Study, September 2020).

You may have reps that focus exclusively on existing customers, or your reps may have a mix of new prospects and existing customers. You may want to define different entitlements for customers than prospects, but otherwise the process of target selection is the same.

Expert Advice



Dave Munn

President & CEO,
ITSMA

Questions to ask yourself:

- › Are we targeting new or existing accounts?
- › Are we selling new products or changing the perception of existing ones?
- › What is our geographic focus or industry focus?
- › What criteria would prompt us to “fire” an account?
- › What are the triggers for account growth?
- › What are the triggers for account profitability?

Don't spend the same amount on every account

Not every account is a good target for an account-based program. That may sound obvious, but it isn't how many companies think. Just because you have a top 100 list in healthcare doesn't mean you should pursue every one of those accounts. This is why key account selection is so critical, and why it should be based on multiple factors. Ask yourself what it is about those accounts that make them a good fit for your business.

What are those criteria? Are they actually a fit for you right now?

Also, look at whether they can actually buy

Beyond their attractiveness to you and your team, ask whether they're a fit with you as a provider based on your strengths, solutions, and ability to meet the needs of that account at this moment. There are only so many dollars to go around and you can't waste them. Start with small clusters of accounts and target your ABM activities, people, and dollars toward the accounts that have the greatest opportunity for success and the greatest fit right now.

It may be less exciting than outreach, but companies that don't go through a careful prioritization process end up with accounts in the program that waste those dollars. These are firms with impressive logos but where the match just doesn't make sense. And if you only have 50 or so accounts, how many wrong-fit ones can you afford?

Your per-account spend should match the opportunity

A similar error is spending the same amount on every account. The potential reward of every account is different. And your budget should vary based on the reward they each offer. And because those potentials change over time, your budget should change to match. For example, if a one-to-many account launches a new RFP, you need triggers in place to temporarily bump them up into the one-to-one category.

All of this comes down to governance. What's your rubric for account attractiveness? For organizational fit? Triggers for altering budget? Build that into your program.

The 5 Smarter GTM™ Processes

1

Build your Account Intelligence foundation

Collect buying signals from an account, enrich it with reliable third-party data, and make sense of it with AI.

2

Find the accounts that drive your business

Target accounts most likely to deliver revenue, and identify which are in-market and ready to buy.

3

Engage with relevant, personalized interactions across channels

Develop account insights and use those insights to orchestrate account-specific interactions across advertising, your website, sales engagement, direct mail, and more.

4

Close opportunities by aligning marketing and sales

Connect revenue insights to action by seamlessly integrating your go-to-market.

5

Measure account progress

Prove — and improve — the impact of your efforts with account-based analytics.

Engage

Now it's time to engage with your accounts, delivering relevant experiences across channels, orchestrating interactions across advertising, website, sales touches, and more.

Here are the steps.

Understand: Develop account insights

Learn what matters at each account so every interaction can be relevant and resonant.

Personalize: Create customized content and offers

Tailor your message with high value offers and personalized content.

Advertise: Attract target accounts

Build awareness and credibility and attract accounts to your website.

Interact: Engage accounts across channels

Engage with accounts using events, direct mail / gifting, human outreach (e.g., SDR, executive), web personalization, and content syndication.

Orchestrate: Coordinate account-focused plays

Synchronize interactions into coordinated plays that align to account plans and goals.

The 5 Smarter GTM™ Processes

3a Engage (Understand): Develop account insights

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Understand: Develop Account Insights

To break through the noise, Smarter GTM™ success depends on understanding everything you can about target accounts (and key buyers at those accounts — aka Account Intelligence —) so you can maximize your relevance and resonance within each.

The idea is simple.

Every customer experience is the sum of its engagements.

Dial up the relevance and resonance of your interactions and you'll increase the quality of the experience.

Leveraged properly, Account Intelligence specific insight will have a dramatic impact on every experience:

- Key accounts will be more likely to open and read your emails.
- They'll consume and share more of your content.
- They're more likely to attend your events and webinars.
- They're more likely to take and return your sales calls.
- Your sales and customer meetings will be more productive and effective.
- Your sales and cross-sell cycles will be accelerated.

That's the power of relevance and resonance— and that's why insight is so critical to Smarter GTM™.

Fortunately, with modern technology based on machine learning, you can automate much of the work to understand your accounts, including knowing where they are in the buyer's journey, what topics they're interested in, and what technologies they use.



Cut Through the Noise to Engage with the Right People

B2B markets are more competitive than ever. They're crowded, commoditized, noisy, and everybody is trying to knock on the same doors.

Buyers are overwhelmed, and even if they are in-market for your solutions, they'll still reject anything uninteresting, hit "SPAM" on emails that smell like sales, and ignore your cold calls.

None of that is a good account experience. But a meaningful, relevant interaction driven by rich account intelligence is.

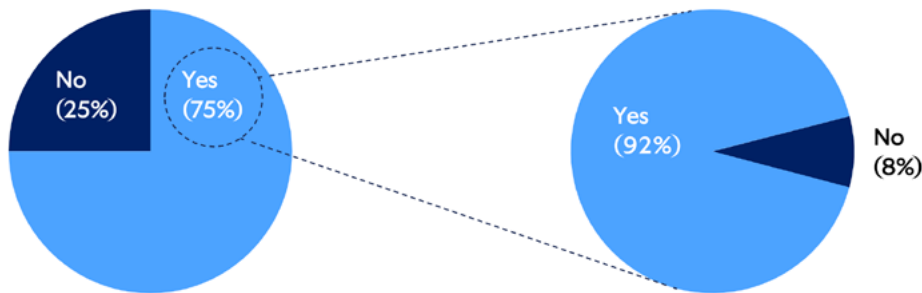
We know from The Challenger Sale that the best B2B salespeople control the sales process and follow these practices:

Would you read unsolicited marketing materials that contain ideas that might be relevant to your business such as success stories, research reports and webinar invitations?

% of respondents (N=346)

Would you pay attention to these marketing materials even if they were from solution providers you had not previously done business with?

% of respondents (N=258)



ITSMA, How Customers Choose Study, North America, 2007

- › Teach: offer unique perspectives to their prospects and are great at two-way communication.
- › Tailor: understand the prospect's value drivers and craft messages to their economic motivators.

Smarter GTM™ applies the same concept to the entire go-to-market process, including marketing and SDRs. ITSMA studies show that 75 percent of executives will read unsolicited materials if relevant to their business, but the key here is that it must be relevant—which means it reflects:

- › Knowledge and understanding of the industry
- › Understanding of the account's unique business issues
- › Fresh ideas to advance the business

96% of buyers are likely to consider a brand if the sales team has a clear understanding of their business needs and 93% are likely to consider a brand if sales provides personalized communication.

LinkedIn & IDC Whitepaper "Social Buying Meets Social Selling"

84 percent of business buyers are more likely to buy from a company that demonstrates an understanding of their business goals.

Salesforce State of Connected Customer, 4th Edition (2020)

What Kind of Intelligence Are You Looking For?

To deliver fresh ideas based on knowledge and understanding of an account's industry and unique business issues, your team needs good account intelligence.

Fortunately, technology today can automate many of the most important insights— especially for one-to-few and one-to-many accounts. Put this information into the CRM— and train your reps to use it—and you'll jump ahead of most companies in your ability to deliver relevant account experiences.



What Kind of Intelligence Are You Looking for? (cont'd)

Insight Type	Use
Journey Stage (automated)	<p>An account's stage in their account journey is the single most important piece of information for a relevant account experience.</p> <p>Early-stage accounts aren't interested in hearing about your products or being sold to. Late-stage accounts want help comparing vendors, validating their thinking, and building consensus. Knowing when an account is an in-market marketing qualified account is critical to knowing the right time to engage.</p>
Intent (automated)	<p>Intent data is perfect for understanding the topics an account will find most relevant and what keywords they use to describe the problem. This can include both third-party intent and first-party engagement signals.</p> <p>You can deliver different messages to accounts showing interest in "network infrastructure" than those showing interest in "cybersecurity."</p>
Firmographics (automated)	<p>An account's industry or vertical tells you a lot about the likely business challenges it is facing, and the product marketing team can create vertical-specific content that will resonate better than generic messages.</p> <p>This works best when you can narrow in on sub-verticals. Don't just talk about "financial services companies." Focus on the specific challenges faced by "credit card payment processors." A rotating approach in which you focus on different segments each month works well here.</p>
Technographics (automated)	<p>Companies want to know that your solution works well with the rest of their technology stack. Talking about their existing technologies shows you understand their business.</p> <p>At Demandbase, if we know an account uses or is researching a complementary technology like Outreach, SalesLoft, or Drift, then we can talk to that prospect about how well our solutions work together.</p>
Competitors (automated or manual)	<p>It can be useful to know who an account's top competitors are, especially if you're already working with some of them (FOMO and social proof).</p> <p>Vendors such as Owler provide this information, or you can find it manually by looking at G2 or TrustRadius or using some Google searches.</p>
Triggers (automated or manual)	<p>Triggers include news about your accounts that create compelling reasons to reach out (or not to). These include company expansions, leadership changes, fundraising, awards, relocations, acquisitions, and financial updates.</p> <p>Vendors such as Demandbase (InsideView) and Crunchbase can automate these alerts, or you can track it manually with Google and social alerts and researching press releases, SEC filings, and earnings calls.</p>

Building Your Account Insight Using Research

Some insights can only come from research. This is especially true for one-to-one accounts.

The industry

Market dynamics, news, trends, growth drivers, and inhibitors...

The account

Their top priorities; their stated strategy; their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; their culture and values; their competitors and partners; their divisions and unique buying centers; which buying centers own your products; which own competitors; which are open (whitespace analysis)...

The target personas

The contact information for each member of the buying team; their priorities, prejudices, preferences, styles, tactics; where they've worked in the past (and what systems that company used)...

The relationships inside the account

How each key contact relates to the other members of the team; who reports to whom; who holds budgets; which are the influencers, blockers, mobilizers, enablers...

Your connections to the account

Your existing connections to the key contacts; previous deals; customer service experiences; your experience with their close competitors; LinkedIn connections to people you know; university or past company ties...

Tiering and Activating Your Account Research

It's impossible — and unnecessary — to throw the same intensity of research at a smaller, non-named account as you can for your biggest enterprise accounts. Focus your efforts where they'll make the most impact and automate when it makes sense.

One-to-One

- Each account is treated as a “market of one”
- Full account plans (see below) with buying center mapping
- Quarterly updates
- Dedicated insight team per account
- Internal Slack group or intranet page per account to share insights
- Ad hoc alerts for breaking news that can be acted on
- Supplement with automated insights (stage, intent, technographics, etc.)

One-to-Few

- Deep research on each micro-segment — trends and issues
- Lighter research on individual companies
- Supplement with automated insights (stage, intent, technographics, etc.)

One-to-Many

- Focus on automated insights (stage, intent, technographics, etc.)
- Basic profiles: 3 facts for selling in under 3 minutes (a tip from Vorsight)
- Create easy to understand messaging quick cards that reps can use to activate each insight, e.g., how to translate different intent signals or industry sub-verticals into specific pain points by persona.

Sources for Account Research

Take advantage of all the possible sources of account insights.

- **Surveys** — When in doubt, ask. Run your own surveys or hire vendors like By Appointment Only (BAO), SimplyDIRECT, Savanta, or Ziff Davis to do the research for you.
- **Direct conversations** — Captured by your SDRs, salespeople, and event staff.
- **Existing connections** — Someone in your company — or inside your partners, suppliers, or customers — may have deep experience with the account or the people in it.
- **Official company information** — Annual and quarterly accounts, letters to shareholders, investor calls, and the “About” section of the website are all solid sources of insight (it’s surprising how little they’re consulted by salespeople).
- **Social media** — The information people share on social media can be pure gold; it’s timely, relevant, and personal. Monitor LinkedIn profiles, Twitter feeds, Clubhouse rooms, and participation in online forums. Social monitoring tools can help.
- **Blog posts** — More and more senior executives are blogging, either on the company site or on other industry forums. Read their posts and capture the insight.

Ownership and goals

Insight generation has to be somebody’s job or it’s nobody’s job. Consider compensating your SDRs on insight collection metrics, hiring specific staff to do it (see sidebar), or outsourcing it, perhaps offshore.

Regardless of who does it, insight will stagnate without goals.

Agree on some targets as part of your entitlements to keep the machine whirring:

- Number of new profiles per quarter
- Profile updates per month
- Account updates per month
- Organizational chart completion percentage
- Relationship map completeness

Scaling insight

One company we work with has a four-person team that creates Value Hypothesis documents for each of their 1,400 target accounts that include:

- What they think the account should be worried about
- Examples of similar companies that they’ve helped
- Content they’ve researched about them (e.g., quotes from their CEO)
- Entry points — content or messages that can be sent directly to start dialogs

These are customized by account but can be based on segment-specific templates.

The result is pure gold for an AE about to pick up the phone!

Account Plans

In traditional selling, account plans normally focus on the products or solutions that the company wants to sell. Smarter GTM™ turns this model around and starts with an account-centric view that focuses on relationships, reputation, and revenues.

Here's how to make an account plan for your one-to-one accounts. (Also, check out the Appendix for an Account Plan Template).

Step 1: The basics

Explain what business the company is in, identify key firmographics (e.g., location, revenue, and number of employees), list the top competitors (and similar companies you currently do business with), identify key investors or major shareholders, and enumerate top executives.

Tip: Describe what they do in your own words—not the typical language found in a boilerplate. This will help everyone engaging with the account understand it in human terms.

Step 2: Map the buying centers at the account

For each potential deal, you'll need to map out the relevant buying center and define the relationships between the people in it. Identify the decision-makers, influencers, mobilizers, and potential blockers. Your account plan will be built around these people.

Tip: Also identify selling personas (e.g., economic buyer, economic user, technical approver, and coach).

Step 3: Research each buying center

Identify the key issues and challenges for each member of the buying center (see the Insights section for what to research and sources of

information). Specifically, look for whitespace opportunities. Ask: Which buying centers have opportunities for which of your solutions?

Your goal is to understand how to drive growth within the account. Ask probing questions to understand where to build the most value, such as:

- How do you measure a successful partnership?
- What are your three to five-year goals?
- What's the biggest challenge you're facing today?
- What would be the most effective way for you to impact your strategic objectives?

Step 4: Define goals for each buying center

Your account goals will depend on where the buying center is right now. Do you need to get in the door? Accelerate the deal? Drive success at an existing customer? Cross-sell?

These goals will guide the buying journey you want each buying center to take — in other words, the Buying Journey Stages the account will go through on the way towards achieving the goal.

Step 5: Assign plays to journey stages

Based on the goal and buying stage, map out the specific plays (orchestrated marketing and sales actions) that will help move each buying center closer to the goal.

The account profile must be a living document, regularly updated with new information. The entire team should be alerted to important updates to any of the above categories.

Advice



Kris Rudeegraap

CEO, Sendoso

Questions to ask yourself:

- › How do we know when to reach out?
- › How do we know what to say?
- › How well do we know the humans within that account?

Prospects should say, “Wow, you just read my mind!”

You can break any successful, engaging interaction down into two parts. The first is knowing when to reach out. Timing is everything and that’s where technology like Demandbase comes in — knowing exactly where they are in their journey. The second part is being as relevant as possible. You need to be tuned-in, helpful, and reaching out right when they’re likely to respond, with an answer to a question they actually have. When you do that, prospects say things like, “Wow, you just read my mind!”

Unfortunately, the opposite of this is all too common today

I recently got an email addressing me as the alumni of a school I did not attend. Right there, you’ve lost me. At the same time, in this past week, five vendors have all sent me cupcakes. Part of what we’re seeing is that the mix has grown more complicated. You can’t throw a quarterly Hail Mary campaign out to everyone, but you can’t hyper-personalize if it’s with data you don’t have. This is the question: How do we orchestrate all that, at the right level of precision, for the right account, across your entire organization?

That’s why I’m excited about Account-based experience

It’s the right lens through which to view this problem. ABX goes beyond account-based marketing in that the concept of in account journeys has evolved from a tactic to a go-to-market strategy. It involves everyone from SDRs to success managers and the product team. When you put everyone’s minds together, you’ll be both timely and relevant, and it might just feel like you’re reading people’s minds.

The 5 Smarter GTM™ Processes

3b

Engage (Personalize)

1

Build your Account Intelligence foundation

Collect buying signals from an account, enrich it with reliable third-party data, and make sense of it with AI.

2

Find the accounts that drive your business

Target accounts most likely to deliver revenue, and identify which are in-market and ready to buy.

3

Engage with relevant, personalized interactions across channels

Develop account insights and use those insights to orchestrate account-specific interactions across advertising, your website, sales engagement, direct mail, and more.

4

Close opportunities by aligning marketing and sales

Connect revenue insights to action by seamlessly integrating your go-to-market.

5

Measure account progress

Prove — and improve — the impact of your efforts with account-based analytics.

Personalize: Create Customized Content and Offers

The insight you've generated is only an asset if you put it to work — in every interaction and in all the messages, offers and content you send to the buying team in each account.

Data from McKinsey & Company shows that personalization reduces acquisition costs by as much as 50 percent and increases revenues as much as 15 percent.

Fortunately, you don't have to create each piece of content specifically for each target account; that approach wouldn't scale.

Instead, think about a balanced mix of content, with each piece falling somewhere on the content personalization spectrum.

The Content Personalization Spectrum



Simple Personalization

You can turn a relevant but broad piece of content into a super-relevant piece with some simple tweaks, including:

- Targeted title or subtitle
- Imagery that reflects the target industry
- Case studies from the target market
- Tweaked introduction and conclusion
- A targeted landing page and email

This allows you to scale up your content personalization efforts without breaking the bank.

“You can create a message for 50 or so accounts in an industry, and then add something personal. This takes care of 80-90 percent of the initial effort.”

- Andres Botrero, CMO, BlackLine



Deep Personalization

Content prepared “just for you” can be the most compelling of all. Consider using your company’s unique expertise, resources, or assets to produce a special report specifically on the target account and its key challenges.

For example, OpenDNS created a custom network visualization for each target account as the core content for a highly effective campaign.

A network security company earned meetings by scanning a client’s network, finding vulnerabilities, sharing the highlights, and asking for a meeting to go into detail.

Other vendors make highly personalized ‘annual reports’ for each major account (especially powerful for existing customers).

While these may be labor-intensive exercises, you might also find an automated approach. For years, Hubspot’s Website Grader has been a top-performing content asset that auto-generated a report from the target’s website URL.

However you create it, a custom report is often an irresistible offer: “I just ran this. Here are some of the recommendations. Can we set up a 15-minute call to discuss the rest of the report?”

“If something reads like it could have been sent out to 100 other [people], then chances are that’s exactly what has happened.”

- Adam New-Watson

A print run of 12

The wholesale division of a European telephone network supported a pitch to a mobile operator with a highly-personalized printed book and eBook.

In it, the top executives of every department addressed their counterpart in the prospect company, by name, addressing the top concerns of each executive and committing to solve them.

Whether it was because of this innovative approach or the one-to-one mindset behind it, they got the deal.

The High Value Offer

TOPO defines a high value offer (HVO) as an interaction that provides such unique and timely business value that it compels a prospect to engage. These offers are typically focused on a high-priority challenge or opportunity confronting the target account (or segment). They're often personalized to the target account and provide specific, actionable insights or best practices to the buyer.

High value offers can take many forms:

- A presentation from an executive or subject matter expert on market trends
- A virtual workshop focused on the account's mission-critical priorities
- Highly customized content
- Benchmark and other research data
- High-end peer experiences

Regardless of form, a high value offer presents useful information that educates the buyers in an account and helps them solve a business challenge. We recommend developing these collaboratively, across marketing, sales, and sales development, since each department brings different perspectives about what will best resonate with the prospect.

The right customization for each tier

Tier	eBook	Infographic	Webinar
Tier 1 Accounts Highly Personalized	[Account Name] Guide to Predictive Marketing w/custom copy	How [Account Name] Can See ROI with Predictive Marketing	How [Account Name] Can Generate More Leads with Predictive Marketing
Tier 2 Accounts Personalized by Account Name and Industry	[Account Name] Guide to Predictive Marketing w/name only	How [Industry] Can See ROI with Predictive Marketing	How [Industry] Can Generate More Leads with Predictive Marketing
Tier 3 Accounts Personalized by Industry or Company Size	A [Industry] Marketer's Guide to Predictive Marketing	Custom hub featuring relevant infographics	How [Company Size] Can Generate More Leads with Predictive Marketing

Rachel Lefkowitz, LinkedIn

Personalized Content Hubs

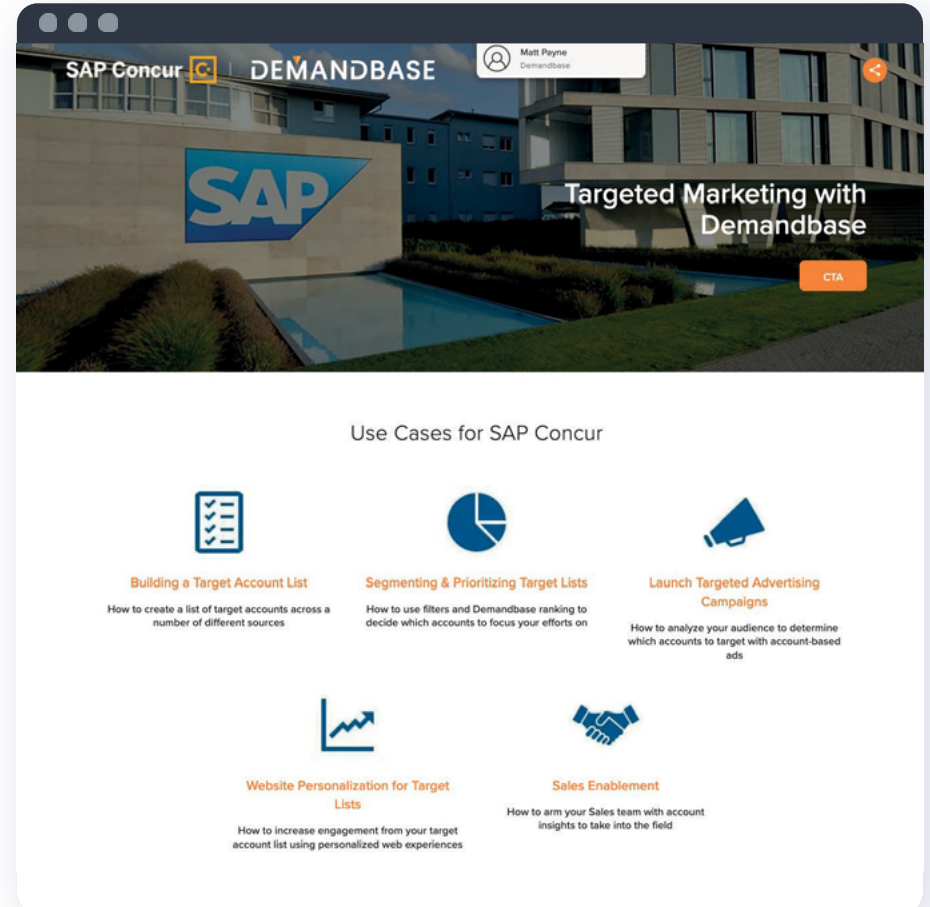
Marketers create so much content, it can be hard for an account to find the “good stuff” that’s most relevant to them. Companies can solve this problem by creating personalized content hubs that curate the most relevant assets for each target account.

These personalized, branded ABM destinations typically include:

- ▶ The target account name and logo
- ▶ Information about the account team, such as the sales rep’s photo and contact information
- ▶ Account-specific offers and calls to action
- ▶ Custom messaging mapped to the account’s priorities
- ▶ Content curated from across your website and the wider web (blogs, videos, eBooks, images, etc.)

You can then use targeted advertising, email, and social media to drive your contacts to the hub, where they’ll find the right content for them. It’s a pretty impressive experience for buyers but doesn’t take a lot of effort to produce.

Vendors like Uberflip, Folloze, and PathFactory allow you to easily create these pages using real-time personalization, defining business rules that let you dynamically customize the content by persona, intent, location, account, industry, and sales stage.



Advice



Etai Beck

CEO & Co-Founder, Folloze

Questions to ask yourself:

- What does our buyer need right now?
- What does each persona need for each role?
- What are the 3-4 key attributes we can personalize for?
- What personalization opportunity is low- effort but high-impact?

What does your buyer need right now? That's the thing to crack

Buyer needs are the most important thing to crack. What's the problem, what's the stage, and what makes them approach you? If you know that, you have a chance of personalizing that experience. This is of course difficult in practice — it's hard to break the habit of thinking of ourselves and our value proposition. You have to think wholly on the buyers' terms if you want to offer satisfying, personalized journeys.

Start personalizing with just 3-4 attributes

Personalization can seem overwhelming at first. There are so many elements. There's industry, size, geography, language, culture, role, and the list goes on. Start multiplying those by persona and you can quickly reach tens of thousands of permutations. That's impossible to manage, much less create assets for. That's why you should start small with a manageable number of attributes. Three or four elements per key buyer is enough, and you only need about 20 percent of your content to be highly tailored to begin with.

It all starts with the problem they're trying to solve

Knowing what's on your buyers' minds is the cornerstone of good personalization.

Sometimes, you can achieve great results without customizing too much of the content. For example, by creating a personalized "wrapper." One of our clients creates webinars that are mostly generic but all the outreach surrounding it is highly personal. Everyone who attends arrives in a different state of mind primed to see exactly what they want.

The 5 Smarter GTM™ Processes

3c Engage (Advertise)

1

Build your Account Intelligence foundation

Collect buying signals from an account, enrich it with reliable third-party data, and make sense of it with AI.

2

Find the accounts that drive your business

Target accounts most likely to deliver revenue, and identify which are in-market and ready to buy.

3

Engage with relevant, personalized interactions across channels

Develop account insights and use those insights to orchestrate account-specific interactions across advertising, your website, sales engagement, direct mail, and more.

4

Close opportunities by aligning marketing and sales

Connect revenue insights to action by seamlessly integrating your go-to-market.

5

Measure account progress

Prove — and improve — the impact of your efforts with account-based analytics.

Advertise: Attract Target Accounts

You've identified your target accounts.
You've generated insights about each one.
You've created relevant content and messaging that reflects that insight.

Now it's time to get these targeted messages in front of the accounts you want to meet — with account-based advertising.

This is where Smarter GTM™ gets active. Because, instead of sitting back until accounts come to you, you actively get out there and make sure your target accounts see the messages you've prepared for them. And because it's digital, it works even for buyers who don't travel to events or respond to other high-touch approaches.

An easy on-ramp

Advertising is a great way to get started with account-based engagement because it's a channel already familiar to most, if not all, enterprises. In fact, many businesses will already have a budget committed to programmatic advertising — and it's easier to shift some of that spend to account-based advertising than having to find and justify new budgets.

28%

Companies invest 28 percent of their account-based program budget on advertising.

- 2019 Account Based Benchmark Study, TOPO

The Purpose of Advertising

Paul Fedwick summarizes the purpose of advertising in his excellent article [“How Does Advertising Work?”](#) published on the Advertising Association’s site.

He notes there are two purposes of advertising: salesmanship (direct response) and subconscious associations (brand building).

With direct response, your goal is to drive immediate action from the recipient — whether that’s an e-commerce purchase, signing up for a free trial or downloading an eBook.

For brand building, there are many ways advertising helps, ranging from simply staying top of mind to building emotional preference, establishing social proof, or entertaining the audience. As explained in the earlier section on Branding Matters, emotions affect B2B decision-making, so using advertising to build positive emotional associations with your brand can have a tangible impact on your business. As Fedwick points out, advertising works by creating patterns of associations that have emotional force and, therefore, influence purchasing behavior, often unconsciously. This means that a large part of the impact is unconscious, making it harder to explain and measure how and why it works.

Many companies are used to measuring their marketing in terms of hard metrics like clicks and leads generated, but the goal of brand building is not direct response — and so it requires different metrics and a longer-term strategic view.



Advertising to reach companies showing intent

Optymyze, a worldwide provider of enterprise cloud applications and services for improving sales and channel performance, wanted to make sure they were serving ads to the right buyers at their target accounts. They worked with Demandbase to build out a campaign that used a combination of IP and cookie targeting to identify companies and intent signals from the buying committees within those companies. The campaign ran for a month and ultimately reached 99.7 percent of their targeted accounts. The majority of ad engagement (66 percent of clicks) came from Optymyze’s target accounts, underscoring the value in focusing ad dollars on those preferred accounts.

Advantages of Advertising

There are many reasons why companies use account-based advertising as a core part of their strategy.

Easy

Getting started with account-based advertising doesn't require building deep marketing and sales alignment or dramatically revamping metrics or lead-based processes. It's a channel most businesses are familiar with and already engaged in.

Automated and always on

Unlike other tactics that require your team to do manual work each time, your ads can run 24x7 without manual intervention. And when executed correctly, many optimizations can also be automated.

Reaches people not in your database

If you want to send an email or direct mail package, you need to have the person's contact information in your database. But account-based advertising lets you reach the people you don't yet know. This can be especially useful in B2B since buying committees are large and you may not have everyone in your database.

Targets by funnel stage

You can build different campaigns for different stages of the buyer journey. For example:

- Accounts that have never engaged with you should get a broad awareness campaign, focusing on emotion.
- Accounts that have visited key product pages on your website should see more rational, informational content, like a detailed case study.
- Accounts that have open opportunities can receive broad targeting to validate the decision and build consensus across the buying team.

Advertising and the Account Experience

But wait. Don't buyers hate ads?
Isn't interrupting someone while they just want to read an article or watch a video a terrible account experience?

Well, as it turns out, buyers don't hate ads — they hate bad ads. They hate ads that ruin their experience: pop-ups, auto-play videos, gaudy design, ads that interrupt the content they want to read.

Good ads don't disrupt the experience. They don't attempt to trick the buyer. They use quality creative that engages the emotions.

Good ads are also well-targeted, so they're relevant. Buyers appreciate ads that introduce them to new ideas and new products that can help them be more successful. With strong analytics and programmatic strategies (see below), marketers can now create campaigns that deliver relevance and personalization at scale — and as we know, a more relevant experience is a good experience.



Digital Account-Based Advertising Tactics

B2B companies can use many kinds of advertising, each with its strengths and weaknesses.

Banner (display) ads

Virtues: The basic banner continues to dominate the advertising medium because it is the most available and easily scaled ad format on most websites.

Considerations: Banner ads are effective for calling attention to your brand, but if you need to relay a deeper message, there are probably more effective channels for that. Which leads us to video...

Native & video

Virtues: Native and video formats continue to gain popularity as web-based advertising options. It's a compelling storytelling medium that allows brands to take buyers on an emotional journey.

Considerations: Video requires more customized real estate on websites, including a video player and, in the case of native, specific images and text placements. Also, inventory remains low and expensive compared to display ads.

Search (pay-per-click)

Virtues: Search advertising made Google the company it is today. It's valuable because it's inherently intent-driven: People only search for things they're interested in. You can design a PPC strategy that fits your budget, goals, and competition — and measure the results easily.

Considerations: There's no native concept of an account within Google search, so there's no real way to advertise to an account through search. Also, keep in mind that by the time buyers are conducting a search, they're often well into their buying process. If you aim to reach buyers that are at the top of the funnel — before they even know to do a search — you'll want to use other ad formats as well.

A Tip for Using Google's Customer Match Feature

With Google's Customer Match feature, you can upload a batch of email addresses to Google and use them to target specific customers at specific accounts. This works in search as well as YouTube, Gmail, and the Google Display Network.

This can be a manual process, but tools like Demandbase One can automate it for you using intelligent audiences based on Selectors.

Digital Account-Based Advertising Tactics (cont'd)

Social media

Virtues: Social media platforms let you target your advertising (sponsored posts) to specific individuals, companies, and personas (e.g., Custom Audiences on Facebook and Tailored Audiences on Twitter). LinkedIn goes even further, letting you target by company and professional demographics directly, which is why LinkedIn plays a role in so many account-based campaigns.

Social platforms enable super-targeted advertising opportunities — just make sure the creative you use is appropriate for the specific platform.

Considerations: You can't use the same programmatic buying platforms (see below) that you'd use for display to bid into the "walled gardens" of the tech giants. Also, for B2B you need some way to identify the right employees at the accounts you want to target. That's usually not so hard for LinkedIn since people use their work identities, though it can be very manual to keep lists updated (see Fuze case study). But with other platforms, you need some way to match the individuals you want to their social identities, such as LiveRamp's social graph.



Automating audiences at Fuze

Fuze is a global cloud communications software platform designed for the enterprise.

Fuze wanted to be smart with their ABM spend and couldn't put ads in front of everyone, so they used their intent and engagement data to determine which accounts should get ads. This required a lot of manual work to build the right audience in LinkedIn: each month, Fuze's marketing team had a calendar reminder to pull the new report from Salesforce, format it, upload it, and take the old report out of LinkedIn. Then they had to wait two days to match the audience before they could see leads coming in again.

By using Demandbase One with LinkedIn's Matched Audiences API, all of these actions are automatically updated each night. The integration saves the Fuze team countless hours of manual work and they have peace of mind, knowing that accounts are always getting the right messaging at the right time.

Digital Account-Based Advertising Tactics (cont'd)

Should B2B use Facebook?

Many B2B marketers question whether Facebook is effective for their audiences. To us, if your targets are on Facebook, it can be an effective channel. The key is to make the offers Facebooky — leading with content instead of brand promotion — so the experience isn't jarring. This is a classic example of finding your audience where they are consuming content and availing of the hyper-targeting capabilities Facebook offers (as well as with other social platforms where users are logged in).

“You can take an email and cut and paste it into a LinkedIn message, and the LinkedIn message will outperform the email with 7x response. Even further, if you send the message by InMail, you'll get a 33x increase in response.”

- Master Tactics for Exponential Growth
by InsideSales/Hubspot



Programmatic Advertising

Digital advertising can be bought and sold according to two models: traditional direct and programmatic.

Direct advertising: Humans negotiate the ad purchases directly with publishers (similar to how you sign a contract to sponsor a trade show). The publisher's sales team works directly with advertisers and agencies to come to a purchase agreement, often with manual RFPs and insertion orders.

Programmatic advertising: Programmatic refers to any technology that automates digital media buying, replacing human negotiations with machine learning and AI to make the transaction much more efficient.

Programmatic is much more common. eMarketer reports that 86.3 percent of US digital display ad spend was executed programmatically in 2020.

RTB and DSP and DMP, oh my

Roughly 90 percent of programmatic uses a process known as Real-Time Bidding (RTB).

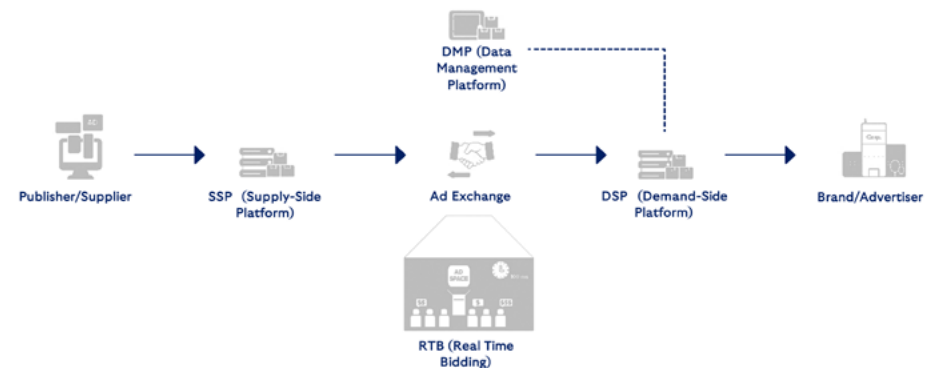
RTB uses real-time auctions to buy and sell ads in the time it takes to load a webpage. When a visitor hits a website, a request goes to an ad exchange with information about the specific page (e.g., content) and the visitor (e.g., cookies and IP address). That gets matched against the rules advertisers have shared about what

kinds of impressions they want, and what price they're willing to pay. A real-time auction takes place, and the winner gets to display its ad to that browser.

The ad exchange is the digital marketplace that connects advertisers and publishers.

Advertisers and agencies use Demand-Side Platforms (DSPs) to let the exchange know what they want to bid on. Some common DSPs include Adobe, Criteo, Display & Video 360 (Google), MediaMath, The Trade Desk, and Xandr (AppNexus). The suppliers (publishers) use Supply-Side Platforms (SSPs) to offer their inventory across one or more ad exchanges.

Just in case that's not enough acronyms for you, the DSPs connect to Data Management Platforms (DMPs), which provide the data used to fuel ad-buying decisions, including customer information, demographics, and cookie IDs or mobile identifiers. This allows advertisers to identify audience segments and target specific buyers and contexts in their campaigns.



Targeting

There are several ways advertisers can target ads with programmatic advertising.

Contextual and Keyword Targeting

Uses the context of the website. For example, if you sell security software, you might target ads on websites about cybersecurity.

Location-Based Targeting

Uses the visitor's location to target the ad. For example, if you're a retailer in New York, you would only target people based in New York. Similarly, if you're advertising internationally, you could target language-specific ads based on location.

Data / Audience Targeting

Uses information about the visitor (using cookies) to target the ad. For example, if you sell cars, you might target visitors who have shown signs of being a potential car purchaser (data that comes from the DMP). Or, as we'll see, if you are practicing account-based advertising, you might bid on visitors who work at your target accounts.

Retargeting

Uses cookies to target visitors who have previously visited your website. This is a highly efficient way to re-engage people who already have some relationship with you.

What is a CPM?

Programmatic ads are typically traded on a CPM (cost per thousand impressions, or technically, "cost per mile") basis.

CPMs can range wildly. The higher the quality of the inventory, the higher the price. A lower CPM tends to deliver inventory from the long tail of the web, which means sites that a B2B brand may not want to appear on... and can also indicate fraud. Not surprisingly, premium sites covering finance, healthcare, tech, news, etc. tend to command higher CPMs.

Be sure to ask if your vendor is taking a margin on the media, so you know if a higher CPM means better quality inventory or more vendor profit.

A higher CPM can deliver better results if it means better targeting and better brand safety. If a vendor quotes you a higher CPM, it's probably because you're getting a superior product.

Applying Programmatic to Smarter GTM™

Given the importance of programmatic, it's important to understand how to apply it to B2B go-to-market strategies in general.

With account-based advertising, the goal is to serve ads to the right people at the right accounts on your target list. This means you need to layer two types of targeting:

1. One for targeting the accounts
2. Another for identifying the right individuals within.

Both are easier said than done, since the vast majority of advertising technology has been developed to meet the needs of B2C brands focused on individual consumers, not accounts.

Targeting accounts

The same account identification technology that is used to identify which accounts are on your website can be used to target accounts for advertising. This is why account-based platforms tend to provide both capabilities in a single solution.

As discussed earlier, the best approach combines cookies and IP addresses for maximum accuracy and coverage. Vendors who maintain their own dynamic stores tend to deliver superior results vs off-the-shelf reverse look-ups which by definition are limited and quickly go stale.



Applying Programmatic to Smarter GTM™ (cont'd)

Targeting buyers within accounts

From there, the task is to focus on the individuals within those accounts who make up your buying committee.

This can be done by onboarding the specific contacts from your CRM, but low B2B match rates mean you typically lose 70 to 85 percent of your contacts in the process.

More common is to use the visitor's cookies to look up the data about them (using a DMP).

However, DMPs are built for B2C marketing, and while they may work for things like age, gender, and income, they are pretty terrible for B2B targeting based on job title, department, or seniority. They're often derived from a small core of contact records bought and sold through a chain of third parties and then modeled out to include "lookalikes" who, more often than not, look nothing like your intended B2B audience.

That's why, contrary to traditional thinking, I'd argue that the best predictor for whether an anonymous web surfer is likely to be part of your buying committee isn't some vendor's guess at job function or, department, but rather, that individual's observable behaviors.

In particular, the people showing the most intent for your solutions are the most likely to be members of the buying committee you want to reach. This is especially true when targeting enterprise-sized companies, whose broad product lines

and numerous divisions can mean there are dozens of Vice Presidents of Finance, but only one who is in-market for a solution like yours.



Applying Programmatic to Smarter GTM™ (cont'd)

At Demandbase, we find the best solution uses AI to combine all these approaches together — something that's only possible since we have our own DSP, built for B2B. The bidding rules might look like this:

- Have a basic bid for the account.
- Bid higher if you see a known contact or someone who is known to have the right title.
- Bid higher if someone is on a webpage that's contextually relevant to your keywords.
- Bid the highest when you see someone who has shown actual intent signals — either by visiting your site before (retargeting) or by consuming relevant content (intent-based advertising).

The screenshot shows a configuration window for a bidding rule. It is divided into three main sections: 'Account selection', 'Intent selection', and 'Additional targeting (optional)'.
1. **Account selection:** A dropdown menu labeled 'Select an account list (required)' with a downward arrow. Below it, a link says 'Or, create a new account list'.
2. **Intent selection:** A text block stating 'When we identify users that has shown matching intent, we will bid more. This will result in a higher CPM, and better-targeted ads.' Below this is another dropdown menu labeled 'Select an account list (required)' with a downward arrow, and a link 'Or, create a new keyword list'.
3. **Additional targeting (optional):** A text block explaining that specifying items below will result in higher CPM and laser targets. Below this are four stacked buttons, each with a green plus icon and a label: 'Contacts you already know', 'Job title', 'Functional area', and 'Seniority'.

The best of all worlds: ad targeting that combines the account list with intent keywords and optional contact or title targeting.

Why you Need a B2B DSP

Most account-based platforms other than Demandbase use a 3rd party DSP such as Xandr (AppNexus) or The Trade Desk. As noted earlier, these DSPs are built for consumer marketing and attempting to use them for B2B is inherently limiting.

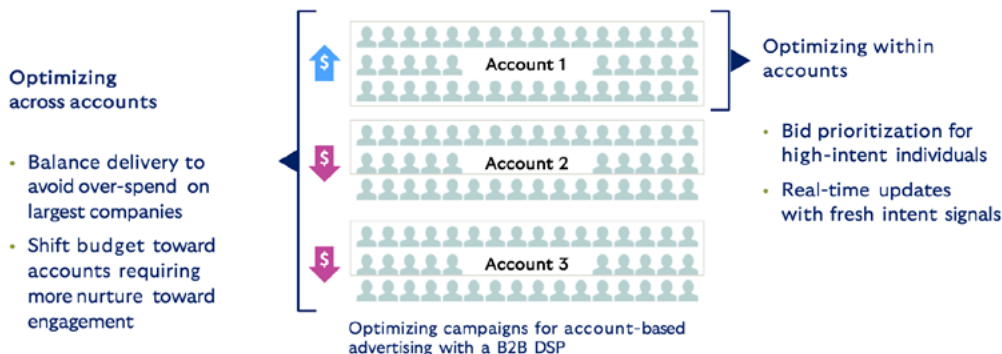
When using a 3rd-party B2C DSP for B2B (oy, so many acronyms), the algorithm isn't "account-aware." It only sees individual visitors and can't make sure the spend is balanced across the target accounts. So if you have a very large company with lots of employees on your list, the other accounts may be crowded out. We call these accounts super suckers, because they suck up a lot of budget.

This happens a lot with B2C DSPs. We've seen campaigns using other account-based platforms where 85 percent of the budget goes to just 10 percent of the total account list, and 62 percent of the accounts get fewer than 100 impressions. It's not surprising that some marketers find limited success with account-based advertising when that's how it works!

This is exactly why Demandbase took the time to build a DSP purpose-built for B2B. It gives complete control over every impression, allowing marketers to bid more when they see high intent, balance impressions across accounts, and ensure ads show only on brand safe websites: (Humblebrag alert: This is one of the reasons the most sophisticated B2B advertisers in the world use Demandbase).

	% impressions to top 10% accounts	Accounts <100 impressions	Account with clicks
B2B DSP (Demandbase)	25%	62%	36%
B2C DSP (Demandbase)	85%	62%	4%

Comparing two campaigns



Brand Safety

When the purpose of your advertising is to build your brand, one of the worst things that can happen is for your ad to show up on a sketchy website or next to inappropriate content. This is known as brand safety.

Limits of blacklisting

One way to avoid unintentionally buying impressions on less-than-ideal websites is to create a “blacklist” of domains that your platform is not to bid on. But while blacklists can avoid the known bad sites, you have to know about a site to block it. And in the vast, complex and ever changing world of exchange media, that’s impossible — there are millions of sites auctioning impressions on the ad exchanges, with new domains popping up every day. Even with an obsessively managed blacklist, advertisers still run the risk of their carefully crafted message showing up on sites featuring extreme political content, piracy, and even porn.

Advantages of whitelisting

There is a far more effective approach: whitelisting. As its name suggests, a whitelist is the opposite of a blacklist. Whereas blacklists seek to block known “bad” sites, whitelists define a discrete list of acceptable domains and tell an ad platform to restrict bidding to only those sites.

Many advertisers find their ad-tech partners are reluctant to use a whitelist. The vendor will wave their hands and tell you how it will hurt delivery or kill performance. They’ll tell you about their extra-special inventory strategy or proprietary technology that obviates the need for a whitelist.

Don’t buy it. Demand better for your brand. At Demandbase, our whitelist focuses on sites like the Wall Street Journal, CNN, New York Times, TechCrunch, Forbes, CNET, and similar.

If your vendor won’t run on a whitelist, won’t share their whitelist, won’t provide transparent reporting on site-level campaign delivery, or can’t deliver in full and drive strong performance just using quality sites — find another vendor.

Common Objections to Account Advertising

I'll admit it. In the past, I haven't been a big proponent of advertising when it came to account-based tactics. In fact, I was fairly critical of ads in the last version of this guide.

So why have I changed my mind? I've learned that not all account-based advertising solutions are equal, and, as we've discussed, a solution purpose-built for B2B can deliver results and avoid objections that other solutions simply can't.

Here are the problems with account advertising that I wrote about in the last version along with updated information that has led to my new thinking.

People don't click on ads

- **Objection:** Display ads carry an average click-through rate (CTR) of 0.06 percent. According to Solve Media, you're more likely to survive a plane crash, get accepted to Harvard, or win a lottery prize than click on a banner ad.
- **Think about it:** When's the last time you clicked on an ad? If you just look at direct clicks from ads and measure advertising on a cost-per-lead basis, the results will almost always be much worse than your other demand generation channels.
- **Response:** Just as with other media like television and outdoor advertising, the goal is to build our brand, so that eventually the buyer will visit our site—it doesn't require them to click directly on an ad. A study from comScore showed US Internet users are 49 percent more likely to visit an advertiser's site if they have previously been exposed to display ads. And research from UCSD by Hoban and Bucklin found that exposure to display advertising increased

visits to the firm's website for most stages of the purchase funnel: 74.7 percent for non-visitors, 49.7 percent for authenticated users, and 48.2 percent for converted customers, compared to control groups.

So, measure the effectiveness of account-based advertising using concepts like lift (increase in traffic from the account) and overall engagement, not clicks. I've seen this work for Demandbase customers, with an average lift in web traffic from targeted accounts of 30 percent.

Banner blindness and ad blockers Objection: Not only do people not click on ads, but they also often don't even see them. eMarketer reports that 30.1 percent of US internet users have an ad blocker enabled. On top of that, there's banner blindness — the well-documented tendency for web users to ignore page elements that they perceive (correctly or incorrectly) to be ads.

- **Response:** So what's a B2B advertiser to do? Well, Dreze and Hussherr (2003) showed that although individuals actively avoid looking at display ads, they still have a positive effect on brand awareness and advertising recall. Focus on quality creative and calls-to-action that speak to your target audiences. You can also complement banner ads with more impactful tactics units like native and video, and make sure you're allocating enough budget so that your message can reach target accounts on multiple sites with different themes and audiences. Finally, remember that the goal is raising awareness and driving more web traffic and engagement from target accounts — and if it's working (e.g., 30 percent lift), then you know your audiences are seeing your ads.

Common Objections to Account Advertising (cont'd)

Low match rates

- **Objection:** When onboarding offline databases, your reach is limited by the vendors' dataset and match rates, which can be as low as 35 percent to 40 percent — and B2B lists typically achieve less than half of that. As a result, your ads won't reach all your targeted prospects.
- **Response:** As explained earlier, today's account-based platforms take a more sophisticated approach. They're not just onboarding offline databases, they're using sophisticated account identification algorithms and intent data to pinpoint the right accounts and buyers within.

No customization

- **Objection:** Account-based advertising platforms today don't allow for real customization or personalization. (Sticking the company name in the ad doesn't count; that's no better than saying 'Dear [[FNNAME]]' in an email.)
- **Response:** It turns out that personalizing the ad creative with company name or industry does work — our benchmark data shows that personalized creatives perform 33 percent better.

Broad groups limit personalization **Objection:** By their very nature, some ad platforms force marketers into larger segments to reach enough impressions — the opposite of the smaller, more targeted segments that Smarter GTM™ is all about. In many ways, account advertising is closer to targeted demand generation than a true, customized GTM.

- **Response:** While true of some account-based platforms, this is not true of Demandbase. You can have a campaign with a single account if you want to!

Second-tier inventory

- **Objection:** The DSPs that power some advertising platforms typically only have access to the “leftover” inventory after publishers have sold their premium inventory on a guaranteed basis. This remnant inventory contains any ad units that an advertiser has not purchased.
- **Response:** This is no longer true. Most inventory — even on premium sites — is now sold programmatically. A further level of protection comes from programmatic “deals” where a buyer can get prioritized access to premium inventory by paying a slightly higher price (ask your ad vendor if they do this).

Markups and opaque pricing

- **Objection:** Only a fraction of the CPM price you pay your ad vendor actually goes to buying inventory. Some of it is margin for the vendor, and some goes to pay middle-men in the transaction (like data vendors, the DSP, and so on). A result, you have no idea how to compare CPM pricing across different vendors and channels accurately.
- **Response:** Know the breakdown of your CPMs and be wary of providers who always insist on a fixed CPM, which gives them an incentive to buy the cheapest inventory possible so they can maximize their margin. In the end, compare the lift in traffic you get from target accounts (not just clicks) to your spending, and ask yourself if you are happy with the cost per engagement. If so, the pricing is fair.

Advertising Best Practices

Phew! Now that we've covered how and why account-based advertising works, let's get into some best practices.

When setting up your ad campaigns, a media plan can help you establish the elements of your advertising program, from identifying your goals to scaling the program.

Its purpose is to help you maximize target audience engagement and ROI while staying within the parameters of the identified marketing budget. A good media plan can:

- Help establish the goals and KPIs of your campaign(s)
- Guide messaging and creative assets
- Estimate the scale of the program in terms of traffic and audience
- Shape the budget
- Ensure the campaign is set-up for success

Key components of your media plan include your:

- Program goals
- Budget
- Campaign strategy
- Creative assets
- Personalization tactics
- Let's look at each in turn...



Program Goals

Clearly articulated goals are the foundation of an account-based advertising program. Your goals should be:

- **Aligned with marketing and sales objectives.** Is your main objective to attract new accounts, convert existing opportunities, or expand existing customers? For example, if your objective is to increase revenue by acquiring new accounts, your ad campaign goal might be to attract net new logos to your website through an awareness campaign (through awareness, not clicks).
- **Focused on the accounts that are most likely to help you achieve your goals.** Build your campaign based on the journey stage. Each campaign should focus on either awareness (finding accounts), engagement (deepening relationships), consideration (closing deals), or customer expansion. If the goal is net new logos, you'll want to exclude existing customers from your campaign audience.
- **Quantifiable.** You can't measure the impact of your campaign if you aren't shooting for a specific target. For example, "We want to attract 50 new target accounts to our site per quarter."
- **Measured against business impact.** Form fills are not a good measure of business impact. That's because approximately two percent of B2B buyers complete forms and many who do provide false information. The percentage of net new accounts that visit your website or the lift in overall traffic from targeted accounts are more meaningful metrics.
- **Realistic.** A target list of just 250 accounts and a budget of \$5,000 per quarter is unlikely to get you 200 net new logos. Your goals and your budget have to be aligned.

Budget

Once the goals have been established, invest your budget to ensure your campaign is set-up for success.

Funnel stage: Identify a monthly budget for accounts within each funnel stage. You may want to assign a larger budget to top-of-funnel accounts if your objective is to attract new accounts. Or if you're looking to close existing opportunities, put more budget into accounts in the lower funnel stage.

Account priority: Start with a low monthly budget for one-to-many accounts and add more as you progress to one-to-few and to one-to-one accounts. Similarly, you can start with a low monthly budget for lower value accounts and increase it as you progress accounts with more potential value.

For example:

Tier 1 accounts—\$60-200+ / account per month

Tier 2 accounts—\$35-80 / account per month

Tier 3—\$15-40 / account per month

See <https://www.demandbase.com/calculators/advertising/> to help estimate how much budget you'll need for your campaign.

Stage	Purpose	KPIs	Budget
Top of Funnel	Awareness, consideration, prospecting, new- market entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounts reached (<x impressions) Impressions per account High-intent users reached 	\$15-50+ per account per month
Mid Funnel	Generate pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounts with increased traffic (lift) Engaged accounts Incremental opportunity generation versus control group 	\$35-\$60+ per account per month
Lower Funnel	Close pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incremental won opportunities versus control group 	\$60-\$75+ per account per month
Post Sale	Renewal, upsell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic from customer accounts (perhaps to specific pages) Incremental won opportunities versus control group 	\$15-35+ per account per month

Budget

As we've discussed, a key principle of Smarter GTM™ is delivering the right message to the right audience at the right time — which often means aligning your advertising to the journey stage.

You need different content for building awareness vs. driving immediate action. If you need to raise awareness, then your advertising should focus on entertaining people and emotion. But if your target audience is further down the funnel, then

your advertising should focus more on logic, providing thought leadership and relevant information.

Use a multi-touch approach that builds on the brand experience over time. Your buyer may not be willing to watch a 30-second ad if they have no connection to the brand. You have to have a coffee with someone before you ask them to dinner.



Creative Assets

Compelling creative is an important part of your campaign success.

Emotion and ad design

Remember, brand building is about emotion. If ads don't trigger customers' emotions, they won't remember you and they won't take any action in response. Don't just make people think something, make them feel something.

When creating multi-touch ad campaigns, tell a story with your ads. Bring your buyers on an emotional journey where possible. Make individual touches add up to something more.

A consistent design makes your ads recognizable and helps your campaign hold together. Your ads should contain elements that are recognizable for the brand (e.g., colors, imagery, and concepts) to create stickiness with the consumer.

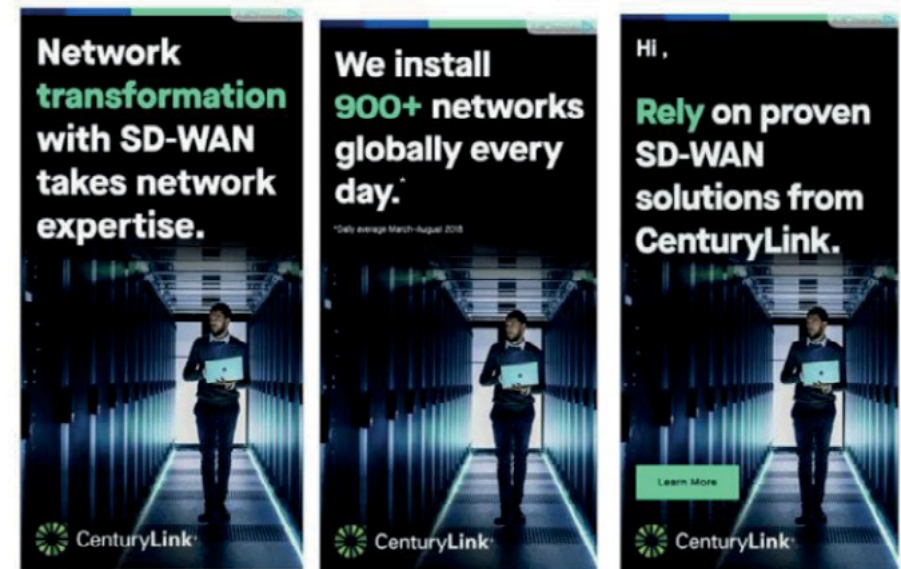
Designing for direct response

Although the goal of many ads is brand awareness, there are times you'll be trying to drive direct response (e.g., a click) from your ad. If this is the case, you'll need these five elements:

- › **Headline:** communicates a clear message
- › **Visual:** is relevant and compelling
- › **Call-to-action:** provides clear direction
- › **Body copy:** is light and just enough
- › **Landing page:** consistent with the ads (see below)

Think of the action you want your user to take. Use "Learn More" if you have an awareness campaign, but not if you want them to read an eBook. For that, say "Get the eBook" or "Read the eBook." And if it's a video, say "Watch the video." I also recommend avoiding using the word "Download", since it suggests that by clicking the ad, a file is going to download immediately to the desktop.

When it makes sense, be fun, engaging, and unexpected. There's no rule that says you have to stick to any B2B formula!



Example of a three frame campaign

Creative Assets (cont'd)

Designing the landing page

Once the consumer clicks on the ad, where do they land?
Make sure your landing page is consistent with the messaging from the ad they clicked.

Be consistent with:

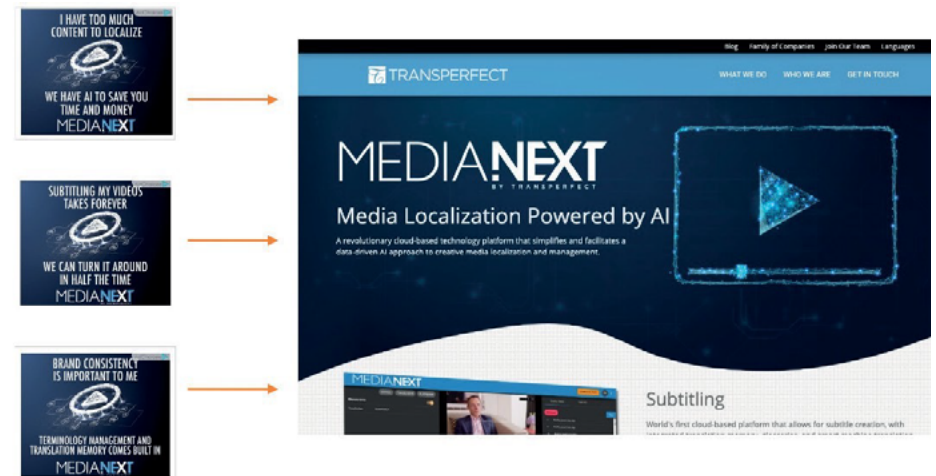
- ▶ Color: The ad is mostly blue but the landing page is mostly green.
- ▶ Typography: The ad uses a big, white sans-serif font, but the landing page uses a small grey serif font.
- ▶ Imagery: The ad uses big, people photos but the landing page uses abstract illustrations
- ▶ Assets: The ad promises an industry report but the landing page serves up an infographic.
- ▶ Messaging: The landing page features brand messaging but the landing page features a product message.

The 5 elements of an effective landing page:

- ▶ Headline: grabs attention.
- ▶ Visual: contains a visual of the offer.
- ▶ Call-to-action: is strong and provides clear direction.
- ▶ Body copy: is light and just enough.
- ▶ Short form: do you really need a form? If so, make it easy to complete and put it above the fold.

Keep in mind that landing pages with multiple offers get 266 percent fewer leads than single offer pages. Also, reducing the number of form fields to 10 or fewer increases conversion by 120 percent, and reducing the number of form fields to 4 or fewer increases conversions by 160 percent! So capture only the information you need. For example, an email address may be all you need.

All ads lead to the same web page



Example of a personalized ad campaign that's consistently designed with the landing page

Personalization Tactics

We've seen that personalized creative performs 33 percent better. This can mean a lot of things. You can insert a company's name dynamically into an ad. Or you can insert the industry or vertical, a zip code, or even a custom attribute.

Use personalization across a multi-touch ad campaign

Change up the personalization experience as the contact experiences your ads. For example, you could start with a first touch campaign using industry personalization and a general message. Then, you could follow this up with a second touch campaign using the company name with a more direct offer, fine-tuned to this account. This way, you let them know you're talking to them directly, that you know their purchasing intent, and you've got the goods they need.

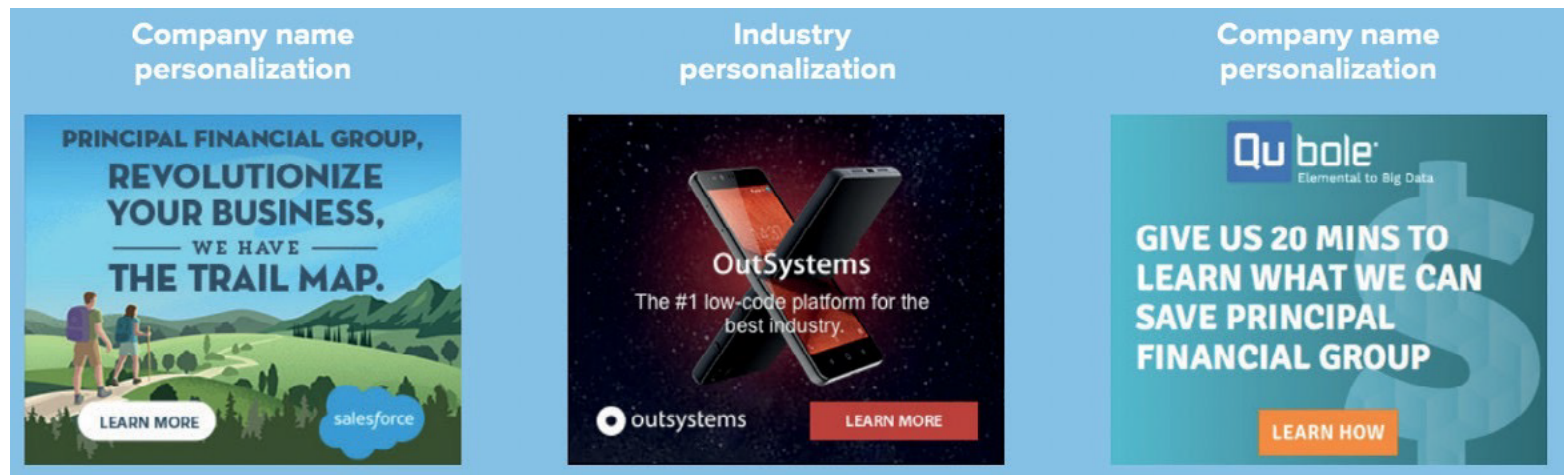
Avoid gratuitous personalization

Make sure your personalization works with the creative. Make the messaging and personalization flow and seem intentional, not tacked on as if picked from a different or generic campaign.

Think about word wrap in your personalized ads

The last thing you want your accounts to see is your carefully crafted messaging unintentionally wrapping to additional lines, causing your copy to overflow on other parts of the ad. To prevent this eyesore, use placeholder text for the personalization that takes into account long words or names.

Usually, something as simple as "{A Long Company Name Goes Here}" would suffice. Doing this guarantees a smoother production process and can avoid some embarrassing moments for your brand.



Managed Service vs. Self-Service Advertising

Different B2B teams have different levels of expertise and experience managing digital media campaigns. Sometimes you'll want to be able to log in and adjust a campaign yourself, and sometimes you'll want the assistance of a team of experts via a managed service.

If you have a simple advertising program...

You'll probably want a vendor that provides a self-serve-first solution just to get your program off the ground.

If you have (or intend to have) a more sophisticated account-based advertising program...

Find a provider that can offer a hybrid approach consisting of both managed and self-service options. This combines the benefits of employing the strategic know-how and optimization skills of an expert team with the added flexibility of letting your team be nimble and flexible in setting up campaigns, testing approaches, and running custom reports.



How to Measure Advertising Performance

This guide has a whole section on measuring your Smarter GTM™ efforts (step 5: Measure account progress). But let's take a moment to consider account-based advertising specifically.

As we've discussed, advertising is about more than just clicks and direct lead generation.



80%
Reach



0.04-
0.06%
CTR



30%
Lift



35%
Engaged

(Note: these benchmarks are specific to the Demandbase Advertising Cloud, not to other solutions using a consumer-based DSP.)

Focus on the measurable but gradual improvements, which collectively show movement towards long-term campaign goals.

Track against benchmarks like these:

- **Reach:** the percent of target accounts reached by the campaign (benchmark: 80 percent of targeted accounts).
- **CTR:** the percent of impressions that get clicked; even if this isn't the primary goal, you'll still want to see if your ads are in-line with what other companies see (benchmark: 0.04 - 0.06 percent).

- **Lift:** the increase in engagement from the baseline period to the campaign period, which includes both net-new companies (with no engagement during the baseline period 30-days prior to the start of the campaign), plus companies showing more engagement during the campaign period, compared with the baseline period (benchmark: 30 percent).
- **Engaged accounts:** accounts with three or more engagement activities in the previous 30 days (benchmark: 35 percent of target accounts).

Control groups

Control groups are a great way to really know whether your campaigns are having an impact on the business.

Ideally, for each campaign, create a “lookalike” audience that does not see ads, and then compare funnel performance — opportunities created and won, conversion/win rates, stage velocity, etc. — for each audience. Any differences can be attributed to the advertising campaign. Using control groups, at Demandbase we've shown that our ad programs increased pipeline from target accounts by 45 percent.

The 5 Smarter GTM™ Processes

3d Engage (Interact)

1

Build your Account Intelligence foundation

Collect buying signals from an account, enrich it with reliable third-party data, and make sense of it with AI.

2

Find the accounts that drive your business

Target accounts most likely to deliver revenue, and identify which are in-market and ready to buy.

3

Engage with relevant, personalized interactions across channels

Develop account insights and use those insights to orchestrate account-specific interactions across advertising, your website, sales engagement, direct mail, and more.

4

Close opportunities by aligning marketing and sales

Connect revenue insights to action by seamlessly integrating your go-to-market.

5

Measure account progress

Prove — and improve — the impact of your efforts with account-based analytics.

Interact: Engage Accounts Across Channels

It's time to put your insights to work — by reaching out to your target buying teams so you can get on their radar, earn their trust, and start to build the relationships that lead to big deals.

Beyond advertising, common tactics companies use in their account-based engagement include:

- › In-person and virtual events
- › Direct mail and gifting
- › Email (executive-to-executive and automated)
- › Sales development
- › Website personalization
- › Content syndication / paid lead generation

Yes, there are other tactics — and new ones emerging all the time — but these are the staples of any Smarter GTM™ program. It pays to be good at all of them.

Let's look at each in turn...

“What channels and tactics do you use for your account-based efforts?”

Channel	% Rate as Important	% Using	% Satisfied
SDR Outbound (email, phone)	88%	87%	82%
Events	72%	67%	78%
Executive-to-Executive Outreach	70%	64%	59%
Direct Mail	67%	73%	69%
Digital Advertising	64%	79%	85%
Content Development	63%	47%	61%
SDR Social (e.g. LinkedIn)	57%	72%	61%
Marketing Email	56%	70%	83%
Site Personalization	39%	37%	63%
Content Syndication	31%	48%	73%
SDR Personalized Video	23%	28%	50%
Site Chat/Messaging	22%	17%	74%

Source: TOPO 2019 Account Based Benchmark Report

In-person and Virtual Events

A high-quality, live interaction will always be the most powerful way to initiate a discussion, deepen a relationship or accelerate a deal.

That's why events — both in-person and virtual — are ideal for Smarter GTM™. They offer an intimate, face-to-face way to engage with specific buyers where you focus on great experiences optimized for specific contacts from the target accounts you've selected. It doesn't get much more personalized than that.

There are two kinds of events: those your company runs, and those that other companies (or organizers) run.

The pandemic rocked the events world.

When COVID-19 hit, in-person events disappeared almost overnight, and for many, the loss was a blow to pipeline.

Fortunately, marketers are a resourceful and creative bunch, so they quickly pivoted to virtual events. At Demandbase, we converted our annual ABM Innovation Summit into a massive online event in just three weeks.

We quickly replaced field events like executive dinners with virtual happy hours. In one example, each attendee who registered with their home address received a bottle of wine, which encouraged them to attend in real-time. Of the 30 people we invited, 25 attended.

In-person events are coming back, undoubtedly. But virtual events are here to stay. And a new era of hybrid events will emerge to combine the best of both. As a GTM strategist, you'll want to get to grips with all three.

Events You Run Yourself

In Smarter GTM™, the key metric for an event isn't how many people attend; it's how many of the right people from the right accounts attend — and how much they engage when they're with you.

With this in mind, a dinner, roundtable, or roadshow-style event may be much more valuable than the industry's biggest exhibition. And inviting key leaders or entire teams to your in-house executive briefing center for a whole day can be even better.

The best events tend to share these characteristics:

- A timely, relevant topic — on a specific pain point or trend.
- A balanced content mix — not just product talk — think panels, cases, chalk-talks... and fun content that's not commercial.
- Third-party participation — customers, experts, analysts, partners, etc.
- A curated audience — people who will learn from each other.
- A softer sell — not pushing sales decks to a captive audience.
- A fun element — pub quiz, wine tasting, BBQ, entertainment...

Many of the best high-level executive events include unique, money-can't-buy experiences. For example, Apttus held a high-end dinner hosted by celebrity Chef Michael Chiarello, and Marketo once held an event at Club 33, an exclusive members-only club inside Disneyland.

Tips from Maria Pergolino of ActiveCampaign:

No one does high-touch-style events better than Maria. Here are a few tips:

- Do an event for just one account — holding it in a venue close to their offices (or even in them!).
- Get a top executive from a target company to speak — it's a great way to attract others from the company.
- Hold a go live party — When a new customer goes live, hold a party at the client's offices and invite other teams from across the company (laying the foundation for a future cross-sell).

Who should do the inviting?

In traditional marketing events, sales wants marketing to do the inviting (because they want new prospects) and marketing wants sales to do the inviting (because they have the relationships and will invite people more likely to attend).

As with so many aspects of Smarter GTM™, marketing and sales must work together to draw up the list of event invitees. The invitation itself then comes from whoever is best placed to make that approach. When a relationship is already there, it will be sales. When not, marketing.

Whichever you choose, make it personal!

Tip: If you're targeting executives, the invitation should come from an executive in your company at the same — or higher — level of seniority.

Events Other Companies Run

Smarter GTM™ programs aren't confined to your company-owned events. You can also make other events work for you, including those run by partners or by third-party organizers.

You may not be the only hero of these broader events, but you can still use them to develop relationships with your target contacts.

A few tips:

- **Set up meetings in advance near the event.** This requires a lot of close work with Sales — handholding the process, giving them a list of people you know will be at the event, sending phone and text reminders, etc.
- **Invite your contacts to specific content within the event.** For example, to your speaking slot, demo room, or booth activity. The entire event may not be yours, but this part is.
- **Run a side event within or around the event.** With the organizer's permission, hold your own roundtable, dinner, or customer event.
- **Create a VIP track.** Make use of the entire event, but guide and curate the experience.
- **Earn the list of attendees.** One way to do this is to hold a raffle offering to “Upgrade the Experience” (first class airfare, a luxury suite, limo to and from the airport, VIP pass to the party). Anyone who enters the raffle is a likely attendee at the event — so use the list to reach out to the right ones.
- **Follow up.** Nurture the new relationship by extending an invitation to your own dinner, roadshow, or sales meeting.

Whichever way you go, recognize that your prospects usually aren't at the event just to meet with you. Think about how you might make their visit more enjoyable or effective beyond your own interaction.



Direct Mail and Gifting

Nothing beats tangible stuff — as long as it's relevant and on- strategy. With Smarter GTM™, you're focusing on high-value prospects, so you can justify doing something special. Get creative!

The more focused your GTM and the better your account research are, the higher value offer you can deploy. A successful mailing might cost as much as a hundred to a thousand dollars per prospect — enough to make a real impact.

Breaking through the noise: High-value and highly personalized gifting can break through a noisy marketing landscape for senior executives who may not download white papers or attend webinars. Think about how many emails you get each day compared to how many packages land on your desk. According to a Mail Print study, the response rate for targeted direct mail is 4.4 percent — almost 40 times higher than email.

Cognitive psychology: Direct mail engages the parts of the brain that have to do with visual and spatial information. Physical material is more real to the brain and connects to your prospect's memory and emotional centers. Furthermore, sending a gift to someone can increase the likelihood they'll respond to your other outreach; it gives you a reason to reach out, and according to PFL, a direct mail vendor, people who receive packages are 10 times more likely to act when asked for something in return.

Impact duration: Research shows that a gift is forever bound to the giver. Get something valuable into people's lives and they'll remember you whenever they use it or see it. Kind of the opposite of email!

Offers sent by mail are perceived as 24 percent more valuable than offers viewed only on a screen. And mail boosted ROI by 20 percent when used as part of an integrated campaign.

- U.K. Royal Mail, February 2015

“We'll start with direct mail as the centerpiece of our marketing campaign, and then layer in display advertising, social, emails and outbound calls to create a true omni-channel experience for our target accounts. We've found that high- impact direct mail pieces are one of the most effective ways to get our foot in the door at large enterprise accounts where we've previously not seen much success.”

- Julia Stead, CMO

What Kind of Gifts?

Take information from sales conversations and social profiles to identify things the prospect enjoys, such as food, outdoor activities, travel etc. (Note: Alyce, a B2B gifting vendor, uses AI to figure out a prospect's personal interests for you.)

Then, surprise and delight them with a direct mail package that ties into their interests and a note that prompts them to complete the desired behavior, whether it is to give you a call back or sign the contract.

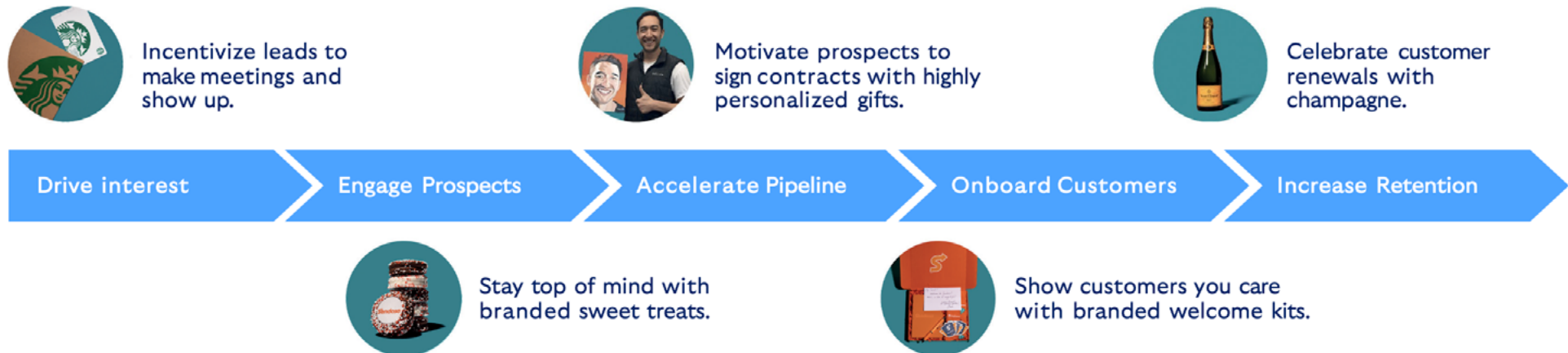
Examples:

- BT Global Services sent 100 Chief Security Officers an iPod Shuffle loaded with audio interviews and security-related tracks (Rescue Me, etc.).

- Another B2B company sent C-level executives an iPad pre-loaded with personalized video content and white papers.
- Ariba sent executives a remote-control Porsche Boxster. To get the remote controller, they had to attend an event or take a meeting (a "give to get").
- Inkling sends a package with a die-cut printout of a gift, like an Amazon Echo, with a note asking the prospect to take a demo to get the real thing.
- Uberflip used gifting to get 80 percent of their customers to complete onboarding tours.
- Create a "swag menu" that the sales team can use to send ad hoc items on their own.
- At Demandbase, we send gifts to advocates, thanking them for going on the journey with us.

Gifting experiences throughout the journey

Sendoso



Gifting Tips

What about addresses?

Many databases don't include a postal address for contacts, especially a home address. Companies can solve this simply by letting the prospect know they have a gift and asking them to confirm the correct address. Or they can leverage e-gifting, which can range from a \$5 gift card to encourage prospects to show up for a meeting, to a nice meal delivered via Uber Eats, to a significant contribution to the charity of their choice.

Don't ignore the team!

Go beyond the decision maker. If you're sending fancy direct mail to an executive, consider sending gift cards to other influencers on the account who might otherwise feel left out.

Alternatively, send packages that require people to get together and discuss your solution. We had one customer send a locked box to one stakeholder and the key to another, with a note prompting them to get together. Or, if people are together in one office, you can send a box of branded cupcakes or cookies.

The personal note

Handwritten, personal notes can have just as big an impact as the high-value direct mail piece — as long as they're timely, well-targeted, and demonstrate insight about the recipient. And direct mail vendors can generate and deliver handwritten (or apparently handwritten) notes based on automated plays.

“Sending direct mail is one of those rare creative moments most marketers dream of. At first glance you may think you're simply sending coffee mugs or assorted sweets, but what you're really sending is your brand in a box.”

- PFL

Email

Email is still the lifeblood of traditional demand generation and it plays a major role in Smarter GTM™ as well.

But here, email is not a broadcast medium or the cog in an automated campaign or nurture flow. It's a one-to-one human communications medium, with each email carrying a distinct, personal message to the prospect.

Limits of email automation

Email automation has transformed demand generation, but by definition, it provides scalability by removing the human touch from the equation. This makes deep personalization impossible, and it can result in accidents as well — every sales rep has a horror story of Marketing sending a promotional, generic email to a large deal they are about to close. Oops.

Put simply, you can't automate the human touch.

Instead of bombarding your targeted accounts, smarter teams often remove their contacts from the broader lead-gen and generic nurture programs, so they can be treated in a more personalized way.

Smarter GTM™ emails also tend to be text-based and from specific individuals (often your executives), rather than slick, HTML mails that signal “marketing.” While marketing is often the department coordinating the process, the best emails are ideally individually personalized, reviewed, and approved by a person. Yes, this takes additional effort, but the strategic nature of Smarter GTM™ accounts makes it worthwhile — the risk of a top prospect opting out is just too high.

While it's possible to use technology to automate “send-on-behalf”, many companies simply manage it manually, drafting emails and asking their executives to send them to target accounts. It's not fancy, but it works!

Personalized, human emails sent on behalf of your executives can drive response rates 10X or higher than traditional marketing emails. Isn't that worth it for the key personas at your most important accounts?

Sales Development

Because of the importance of the human touch, sales development reps (SDRs) — also known as account development reps (ADRs) or business development reps (BDRs) — are the most important and common channel for engaging accounts in Smarter GTM™. Help them succeed and you dramatically increase your overall program performance.

In many companies, outbound prospecting by sales development reps was the sales department's response to the inability of traditional demand generation tactics to make inroads into major accounts. Done poorly, sales development activities are run in a silo, completely uncoordinated with marketing.

But now, Smarter GTM™ brings marketing and outbound sales development into alignment, focusing efforts across teams in a coordinated way.

In this model, companies combine email, phone, and personalized social media interactions with marketing support and air cover to develop and deepen relationships at target accounts.

This goes way beyond simple sequences or cadences. Buyers can spot robo-spam a mile away. Smarter GTM™ done right brings deep research and personalization to ensure each touch is relevant and personalized. Instead of sending more emails, it sends better emails.

Spam is in the eye of the beholder

Smarter GTM™ is all about personal communication that delivers relevant content. That's the opposite of spam.

But in any outbound program, you're going to have to reach out to people who haven't yet reached out to you. Generally, it's considered okay for an SDR to send a relevant email from a personal account. But even this can be seen as spammy if it's essentially a broadcast message under the guise of personal outreach.

The rule of thumb must be to keep your messages as personally targeted and relevant as possible and to only mail the people who should really be receiving — and want to receive — any given message.

Avoid Templated Emails

“Dear <insert SDR Name>:
Please avoid sending me emails
that are obviously automated.” – Every
executive ever.

Sending generic, templated emails is bad enough for small deals. For the big opportunities, you’ve really got to raise your game. It’s so easy for your target to hit the spam button — why would you ever risk your ability to communicate with the most important people from the most important accounts by sending them a generic, irrelevant message?

The degree of personalization will vary by GTM style:

- **One:One** — Highly personalized, with little or no templating
- **One:Few** — Personalized, perhaps using the 10/80/10 approach (highly personalize the first and last 10 percent)
- **One:Many** — Customized rather than personalized (e.g., targeted to their industry and persona, uses their name and perhaps references an intent keyword)

The goal is to make sure the prospect feels the email really is written to him or her, as an individual. That’s not a trick, it’s the truth (if not, you’re doing it wrong). If you can swap out basic variables, such as name and company, and then send the email to someone else, then you probably have “robo-spam.”

Fortunately, given the insights you developed in the previous section, SDRs have a lot of insights available to personalize the interaction: intent keywords, web pages they’ve visited, content they’ve downloaded, and more.

“Template emails are roulette wheels. If you only get 100 rolls of the roulette wheel, then you need to increase your odds [with customization].”

- Craig Rosenberg, Co-Founder and Chief Analyst, TOPO

Demandbase Secret Sauce

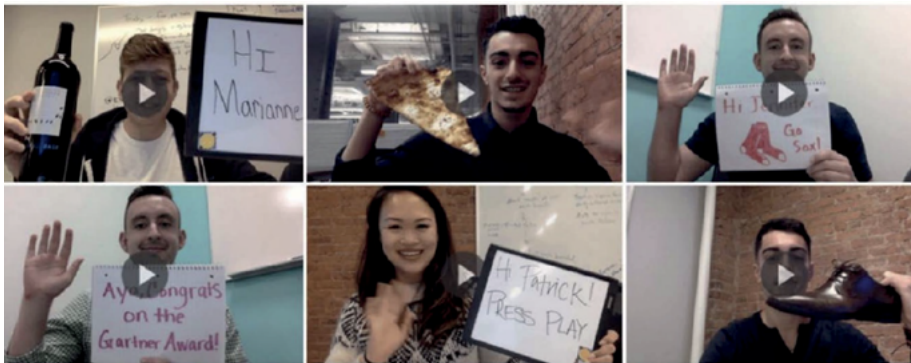
The Demandbase sales team achieves considerably higher results from personalized outreach than generic. The extra effort increases open rates from 29 percent to 53 percent and replies from 4.5 percent to 10 percent.

Personalized Video

We're all visual creatures. Sending a video breaks through the noise and helps to make more personal connections. Prospects get to see your face, hear your voice, and it gives you an opportunity to be informal and talk about their personal interests in a way that's just not possible in text. Consider sending a video introduction of yourself to a new prospect (30-60 seconds long) via email, Twitter DM, or LinkedIn InMail. The video thumbnail can show the account (or person's name), which helps them know it's personalized for them.

For engaged prospects, you might send a personalized overview of your product. Keep it relevant to their role and no longer than 45-90 seconds. End it on a cliffhanger with a CTA like asking them to book time for a longer call or a demo.

Or for top accounts, experiment with using Cameo to have a celebrity record a personalized message.



Voicemail follow-ups

Some experts say the voicemail/email combination — known as the “double touch” — can significantly increase email response rates. But don't expect a callback or leave your phone number; instead ask the prospect to review your email, e.g. “Hi, this is Mike calling from Demandbase. There's no reason to return this phone call, but if you could reply to the email I sent yesterday — I'll send it again—I'd really appreciate it...”

Recognize everyone's natural resistance to being sold to — and soften it.

“Voicemail and email are equally important. And together, they're twice as effective as all other touches combined.”

- Trish Bertuzzi, The Sales Development Playbook

A Sample SDR Play

Pre-designed plays are a way to ensure that all reps follow best practices throughout their account development work — from the first touch to the last — and that these touches are coordinated with marketing and account execs.

A sample play

Here’s a sample play based on one from TOPO, showing SDR and marketing touches. See the section below on Orchestration for many other examples.

Sales High-Value Target Account Outreach Plan

Day 1	Day 3	Day 5	Day 6	Day 8	Day 11	Day 11
Intro email + voicemail	Follow up on email with high-level value proposition (broad scope to ensure applicability)	1:1 personalized video (channel of your choice)	Email follow up on voicemail	Email calling out specific product fit	Call or voicemail	Email follow up on voicemail, call out why you offer value to their role
Day 14	Day 16	Day 20	Day 24	Day 27	Day 31	Day 31
LinkedIn connection request	Voicemail	Short video demo of solution most applicable to their role/priorities	LinkedIn message	Email citing relevant partnerships/solutions	Voicemail	Email follow up on voicemail citing Twitter bio or other social media tidbits
Day 35	Day 35	Day 38	Day 40			
Voicemail	Email follow up on voicemail with current product updates	LinkedIn follow-up note. Call + voicemail	Call + voicemail. Move prospect to nurture			

“Reps are giving up too quickly... It takes between six and ten attempts (including at least four by phone calls) to properly prospect a given contact.”

- Trish Bertuzzi, The Sales Development Playbook

“Companies are still struggling with their touch patterns. A few years ago, it was just ‘Do more touches!’ Now it’s more sophisticated: more about the mix and frequency.”

-Kristina McMillan, TOPO

Multi-Threaded Sales Development Tactics

If you have a hot marketing qualified account, a “no” from one contact is not a reason to stop. You know someone from that account is showing buying signs, so keep going until you find a “yes.” At a minimum, follow what experts call the “Two Nos” rule: An account should never be marked “no contact” until at least two of the key personas have said no.

Even then, deals that move forward on the basis of just one or two buyer contacts are the most likely to fail. Your contact can get sick, go on vacation, or leave the company — stalling or killing your deal. That’s far too high a risk for the deal sizes we’re talking about. You need to build connections with as many members of the buying / influencing team as possible.

This is called multi-threading. The term comes from the world of computer programming. It refers to a program or operating system that can handle multiple user requests — or threads — at a time. A nice metaphor for the simultaneous relationship building in Smarter GTM™.

“For deals over a certain threshold, it is unacceptable to come to the table with only one person at the target company.”

-John Gilman, VP Sales, Confluent

Top down and bottom up

There’s a lot of debate about whether an account penetration strategy should be top down (starting with the most senior executives) or bottom up (starting with actual product users or middle managers who need to get approval from above).

There are pros and cons to each: The top-down approach tends to lead to bigger deals but at a slower deal velocity. Bottom-up progresses quickly but can hit roadblocks more easily or get locked into a departmental solution rather than an enterprise-wide one.

One of the best things about an account-based approach is that you can combine both strategies in one outbound program, reaching out to the most senior decision-makers with strategic messages while targeting the pain points of the more junior buyers.

Where Should SDR Report? Marketing or Sales?

SDRs are the bridge between marketing and sales, and as such, there's always debate about where they should report.

The answer: it depends

According to The Bridge Group 2021 Sales Development Report, 68 percent of SDR teams report to Sales, 24 percent to marketing, and the rest to "other." Notably, roughly half of inbound sales development teams (who process in-bound leads) roll up to marketing, meaning outbound teams are much more likely to report to sales. (Note: the median mix is 2.3 outbound SDRs for every 1 inbound.)

In the end, TOPO's 2016 Sales Development Benchmark Report found top-performing SDR teams perform more or less the same regardless of whether they report to marketing or sales. The right answer for your organization probably comes down to the individual experience, skills, and preferences of your head of sales and head of marketing — and even then, it's not uncommon for the department to switch every few years.

Currently, at Demandbase, our SDRs rollup to sales since we want them to own hiring and promotion for their farm team. But day-to-day execution and activity coordination is heavily aligned with marketing.

Arguments for Marketing	Arguments for Sales
Marketing and sales development create opportunities, sales closes opportunities.	When SDRs are the farm team for future salespeople, having them in sales can be essential. It's a bit weird for marketing to be hiring and developing future AEs.
Is there really a difference between emails sent from a marketing campaign than from a prospecting campaign?	SDRs need a lot of ongoing training, which is best delivered by the sales enablement function.
Marketing tends to be metrics- and process-oriented, a good fit for sales development.	AEs should also prospect into accounts and should be closely coordinated with SDRs.
An account-based sales development strategy needs close coordination with marketing campaigns.	Sales may have more influence on getting the resources the SDRs need to be successful.

Website Personalization

We spend a lot of time and money driving visitors to our websites. But the game is far from over once they arrive. In Smarter GTM™, you need to turn visits into engagement — and nothing beats a personalized experience.

More than 98 percent of visitors to your website are anonymous when they arrive and still unknown when they click away.

That hurts.

But it doesn't mean you can't use your website in your Smarter GTM™ program. The best way to do it is by using your insights to personalize the web and chat experience for your chosen accounts.

Using web personalization technology, you can identify the company and industry that a visitor belongs to, then serve up images, case studies, and offers targeted to that account or industry. If you're targeting healthcare, retail, and financial services, you can create three different home pages and website paths that are optimized for each.

Or you can customize the offers and messages based on where the account is in its journey — one set of messages for early-stage prospects, one for in-market accounts and open opportunities,

one for existing customers. Or customize based on the intent the account is showing or the specific technologies it has in place. The possibilities go on and on.

And if you've created account-specific content (such as an account content hub), you'll want to feature that when a member of that account hits your site.



Think Big, Start Small

Based on our experience with thousands of B2B companies, keeping web personalization simple often gives the best outcomes. You may want to begin with small changes, like an adjustment to the home page banner to make it industry specific.

The most successful Demandbase customers focus on just four to five key segments at a time. Operationally, it's tough to serve up personalized experiences to more segments than that.

- Are your segments truly different in a meaningful way? Are they mutually exclusive?
- Do you have marketing assets / content to cover each segment?
- Do each of your target accounts fall clearly into one segment or another? (It's OK if non-target accounts don't fall into any specific segment.)

If a visitor is...	Change this visual	Change this text	Change this content
From a target hospital	Change banner image to hospital.png Replace Green Buildings Council logo with ASHE logo	Change tagline to: Cost Efficiency Savings	Replace generic case studies with: Chase Medical case study Good Samaritan case study

Example of customization rules for a website for a fictitious building automation provider (ABC Building Automation). The primary target segments for this company are hospitals and universities.

Call Them by their (Company) Name?

Many Demandbase clients ask about talking to prospects from a targeted account by using their company name. There's no definitive answer that's right for all situations. Some customers see a lift in engagement when using customer names as part of their personalization strategy, especially in advertising. Others consider it to be creepy, especially if a visitor has not identified themselves by completing a form.

Regardless, this is where accurate account identification is critical. A high match rate with lower accuracy is useless if you want to personalize website experiences. At the end of the day, it doesn't really matter if you don't match the small accounts you won't ever sell to... but getting it wrong for a big account is a big deal.

A few areas where you might consider testing it include:

- A personalized welcome to customer login
- A thank you page after a form completion
- A homepage welcome for your best customers
- Personalized advertising

A rule of thumb: If it triggers a “How did they know that?” response, you might be better off not doing it.

You should always use your insights to shape your messages to known prospects — but you don't always have to flaunt those insights!

BROCADE 

Personalization boosts engagement for Brocade

Networking solutions industry leader Brocade began their personalization strategy by focusing on one industry healthcare — and on one web page their home page. They featured banners to visitors from healthcare companies that guided them along a path of targeted healthcare content. In turn, Brocade saw a 144 percent increase in click throughs on the home page banner and a 53 percent reduction in bounce rates on the home page. By sending healthcare company visitors down a personalized path of relevant content, Brocade also saw a 36 percent increase in video views, a 46 percent increase in page views, a 86 percent increase in file downloads and a 26 percent increase in time on site.

Reduce Form Friction

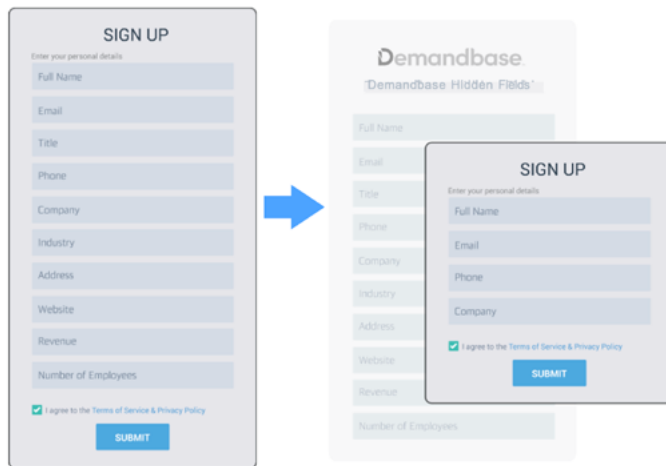
A subset of web personalization is using your ability to identify the account to remove or simplify your forms.

As we know, buyers simply don't want to fill them out, and when they do, the information is often false.

Use your ability to identify the account to bypass forms when you don't need them. And when you do need to use a form (say an event registration), keep it short with a few basic questions, such as name and email address. Then, use your Account ID to append firmographic data such as the visitor's company affiliation, mailing address, revenue and other data points.

The benefits of this approach include more form fills, triple-verified company identification, and a more manageable database with standardized and normalized data.

For each field eliminated conversion rate increases 8.5%



Industry targeting helps Progress resonate

Progress, a leading provider of products to develop, deploy, and manage high-impact business applications, delivered personalized messaging across four key industries on their home and product pages.

Showcasing relevant success stories and messages for each targeted industry, Progress was able to increase engagement by driving visitors deeper into the site, increasing pages viewed per session and decreasing exit rates. By focusing their personalization efforts on the industries that represented their best opportunities, Progress increased engagement on the home page by 55 percent, and overall by 43 percent.

Account-Based Chat

Chat allows businesses to have conversations with their website visitors and customers, often using automated chatbots. It originated as a customer support tool but it is also used to qualify leads and then book a meeting or pass the best ones over to live sales reps to continue the conversation.

Live chat can help build trust with buyers by providing subject matter expertise at the point of engagement. Buyers like the real-time response and ability to start the sales conversation on their terms, when it's right for them.

Chat personalization can be as simple as acknowledging a client by name, or a bit more advanced, aligning the chat experience to the account's intent keywords and where the company falls in the account journey. And if a high-value account wants to chat, perhaps you route them directly to the appropriate sales rep to provide the best experience possible.

Fortunately, all the major chat providers integrate with the common account-based platforms, including Demandbase, for account identification.



Content Syndication and Lead Generation

Although “lead generation” may seem antithetical to Smarter GTM™, the lead generation providers are also evolving to embrace an account-based model. While traditional lead gen programs focused on low cost- per-lead and high volume, an account-based strategy focuses the efforts on generating accurate, opt-in contacts from specific personas at target accounts.

Today, many countries have laws that protect personal data. Content-based lead generation services can be a great way to get permission to market to key contacts at your target accounts.

Partnering with a reputable content syndication partner puts your content in front of your target audience and gives you a paper trail of when and where that person opted-in to your marketing programs. Once their information is safely transferred into your database, you can add them to other programs using automation rules. The entire process eliminates the need for spreadsheets and FTP files and reduces the risk.

Start by contacting your content syndication provider and telling them you want to move to an account-based model. In this mode, you'll only pay for opt-in contacts from the right personas from your target account list. They'll be able to tell you the new cost per contact and volume you can expect.

Smarter GTM™ Everywhere

B2B marketers are an endlessly creative bunch, always looking for the next new channel or tactic to help them stand out with their target accounts.

I'd love to tell you what the next big thing will be, but my crystal ball is currently out of service. There will always be new channels and new ways to interact with target accounts— whether that means intelligent PDFs, targeted television commercials, high-end experiences in the next new social app, customized videos in your next Uber ride, personalized AR or VR, Minority Report-style billboards, or something else.

The key is to take your Smarter GTM™ lens to everything you do. Treat each new channel and tactic as an opportunity to identify buyers from your target accounts and give them the VIP treatment.

Don't be afraid to experiment. Worst case, you'll learn something, and best case, you'll discover a new way to leap ahead of your competitors. But, as we'll see in the next section, the most important thing is that you orchestrate each interaction across channels to deliver a cohesive account experience.



Advice



Harmony Anderson

Sr. Director of Demand Gen,
Outreach

Questions to ask yourself:

- Do our ads and sales emails match?
- Is our content informed by data?
- How often do we update content?

Don't just be data-driven — create data-informed content

Here at Outreach, we're really big on leveraging first- and third-party data to create better prospecting materials. We provide our reps with engagement and marketing campaign data and more or less hold their hand throughout the system. They can edit and customize messages, but our prescriptive approach guarantees that for the entire lifecycle, we've got tried and true messaging to fall back on that's consistent and appealing.

Salespeople and ads should be in alignment

We're also constantly using that data to create playbooks that align to that intent, so what salespeople say matches what's at the very top of the funnel in ad and landing page copy. This has increased our conversions substantially — by 300 percent in some programs. There's just so much of this data at your disposal these days, and so many ways to use it. For example, it means we know what the account and individual have been researching and can consistently deliver custom content via warm outreach from a sales rep with that context.

Start small and earn the Sales team's trust

Launch a playbook, pilot it with your reps, and test for yourself. If you see success with one, they'll be onboard for everything else you do in the future. That combination of marketing, messaging, sales, and data is what account-based experiences are all about. It's no longer about pouring effort into one siloed sales channel. It's no longer about pulling apart one specific workflow. It's about the entire experience of the buyer and the account the whole way through.

The 5 Smarter GTM™ Processes

3e Engage (Orchestrate)

1

Build your Account Intelligence foundation

Collect buying signals from an account, enrich it with reliable third-party data, and make sense of it with AI.

2

Find the accounts that drive your business

Target accounts most likely to deliver revenue, and identify which are in-market and ready to buy.

3

Engage with relevant, personalized interactions across channels

Develop account insights and use those insights to orchestrate account-specific interactions across advertising, your website, sales engagement, direct mail, and more.

4

Close opportunities by aligning marketing and sales

Connect revenue insights to action by seamlessly integrating your go-to-market.

5

Measure account progress

Prove — and improve — the impact of your efforts with account-based analytics.

Orchestrate: Coordinate Account-Focused Plays

The tactics discussed above are far more powerful when combined into orchestrated plays that synchronize many different interactions and channels as part of an integrated account plan.

With orchestration, you run a proactive and coordinated series of personalized interactions, some automated and some human, that span the entire customer journey. Think of the marketer as an orchestra conductor. Each individual tactic is like an instrument (strings, percussion, brass, etc.), and it's the job of the orchestra conductor to make sure they all work in harmony.

The more tactics in your plan — and the more martech in your stack — the more you need orchestration.

Orchestration is the glue that binds all your marketing and sales tools across the buyer's journey and throughout the customer experience. A well-orchestrated buyer's journey feels harmonious and natural, while a poorly-orchestrated one feels discordant and annoying. I know which one I'd rather experience.

Orchestration defined

Leading B2B marketing and sales advisory firm TOPO found that orchestration is key to a successful account-based strategy. They define orchestration as:

“The sequenced coordination of different activities, programs and campaigns across marketing, sales development, sales and customer success to drive engagement with multiple stakeholders in target accounts... [It includes] individualized outreach (e.g. executive touches) and air-cover activities by marketing (e.g. media and advertising).”

Forrester agrees: “Marketing orchestration is an approach to marketing that focuses not on delivering standalone campaigns, but instead on optimizing a set of related cross-channel interactions that, when added together, make up an individualized customer experience.”

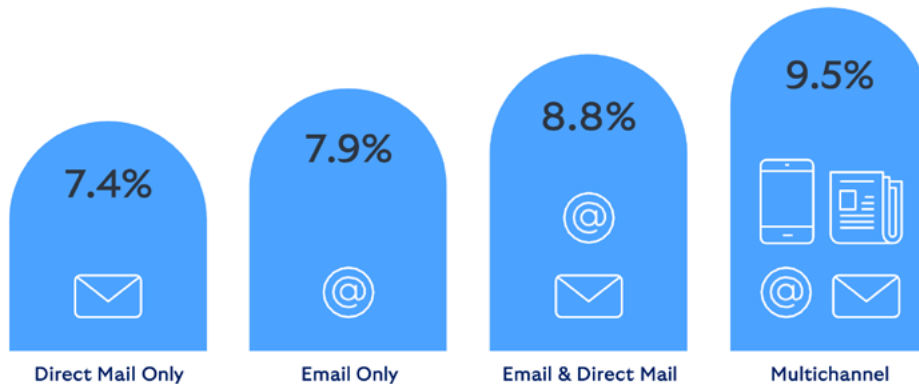
Done correctly, marketing orchestration ensures all the moving parts in a GTM play work together to achieve your business goals at a target account.

Multichannel Experiences Win

A key component of orchestration is combining different channels and different people from various departments. Buyers resonate with different tactics, so mixing it up gives you more ways to reach the target. It's like a stock portfolio: diversification spreads your risk and increases your chance of a response.

According to a recent InfoTrends report, response rates jump from 7.9 percent (email- only) to 9.5 percent when the campaigns are multi-channel — that's 20 percent more responses!

A C-level executive at a target account might not be returning your SDR's phone calls because she doesn't like phone calls. But she might respond to the right email at the right time. A multi-pronged engagement not only gives you the greatest chance to break through, it also helps you discover how each contact prefers to respond, so you can optimize future plans.



“Avoid over-dependence on a single technique. Prospectors should be experts in two to four complementary techniques and know the pros and cons of each.”

-Aaron Ross & Jason Lemkin,
From Impossible to Inevitable

“It takes an average of 9.82 touches to engage with a prospect. We also find that senior executives are 2.5 times more responsive to quality multi-touch campaigns than are junior executives.”

-Dan McDade, President & CEO, PointClear

Orchestration and Account Insights

Aligning interactions to the buyer's journey is at the core of Smarter GTM™. It's all about creating the right experience for each account, orchestrated across every channel at scale.

That's why orchestration and account insight go hand-in-hand.

Delivering the right experience depends on understanding everything you can about target accounts (and key buyers at those accounts) so you can maximize your relevance and resonance.

Account journey stage, intent, firmographics, technographics, alerts — all guide your orchestration strategy to deliver the proverbial right message, right time.

And, as we'll see, orchestration can't exist without segmentation, and segmentation relies on data and insights.

Examples of insight-driven orchestration:

- Changing the advertising message as an account moves through the journey.
- Launching a targeted direct mail for high-value accounts that show intent but no engagement.
- Alerting sales reps about highly engaged accounts that they haven't already reached out to.
- Sharing validation content such as customer reviews for accounts that are in the late Opportunity stage.
- Inviting engaged executives from high-intent accounts to a VIP experience.
- Customizing the website based on the account's key investors (showing that other portfolio companies are your customers is a strong form of social proof).
- Recommending content that shows how your solution works with the specific technologies they already own.

They're all examples of using everything you know about an account to increase your chances of engaging with them.

The Play Metaphor

A play is a series of orchestrated interactions (both human and automated) across departments and channels.

The “play” is the perfect metaphor for orchestration since it reflects the fact that there are multiple people at the target account, and multiple people at your company working together to interact with the account. That’s why we use the analogy of a football chalkboard. As in football, multiple people on your team are lining up to engage multiple people on their team, and the play is a way of orchestrating who does what — and when.

In this model, marketing is the coach writing the playbook. Sales is the quarterback, calling the specific plays on the ground. And every customer-facing department in the company has a position on the field. The team works in lockstep to ensure a buyer’s experience is positive, consistent, and in context with everything else happening at the account.

Anatomy of a Play

Every play has three key components that work together to drive success.

- **The Segment:** The target list (accounts and people) selected to be part of the play.
- **The Actions:** The specific interactions and channels.
- **The Trigger:** The conditions that launch the play (scheduled or always on).

1. The Target List: The Importance of Segmentation

In any campaign, the target list is responsible for 40-60 percent of the success.

Direct mail experts have a rule of thumb: 40 percent of success is dependent upon the list; 40 percent comes from the offer; and 20 percent is due to the creative. Others say the list alone is responsible for 60 percent of your campaign's success or failure.

When I was at Marketo, I found that 23 percent of an email's engagement can be explained solely by the size of the list! And Jupiter Research (acquired by Forrester Research) reported that targeting campaigns based on web click-stream data increased email open rates by more than 50 percent and conversion rates by more than 350 percent.

The lesson is that smaller, more targeted lists based on dynamic account behaviors perform the best.

And that's why segmentation is such a critical capability of any GTM platform. (See the section on this topic in "Build" for more.)



Automating audiences at Fuze

Fuze is a global cloud communications software platform designed for the enterprise.

Fuze wanted to be smart with their ABM spend and can't put ads in front of everyone, so they use their intent and engagement data to determine which accounts should get ads. This required a lot of manual work to build the right audience in LinkedIn: each month, Fuze's marketing team had a calendar reminder to pull the new report from Salesforce, format it, upload it, and take the old report out of LinkedIn. Then they had to wait two days to match the audience before they could see leads coming in again.

By using Demandbase One with LinkedIn's Matched Audiences API, all of these actions are automatically updated each night. The integration saves the Fuze team countless hours of manual work and they have peace of mind, knowing that accounts are always getting the right messaging at the right time.

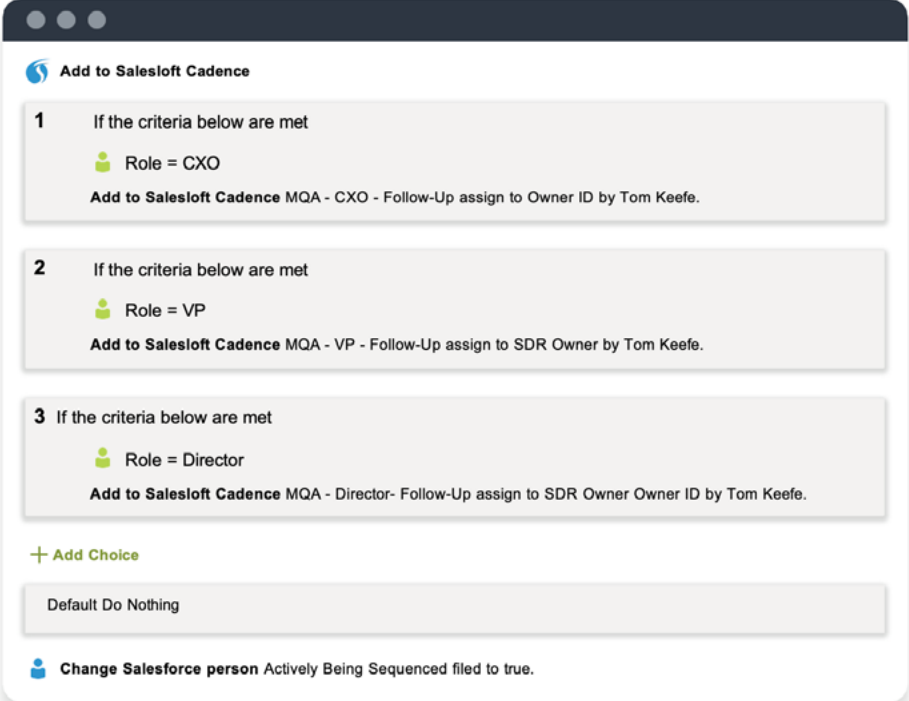
2. The Action Sequence: Interactions and Channels

Your actions are the individual instruments that orchestration weaves together into harmony. If the list is the “who” for your play, then the action sequence is the “what”.

These can include:

- › CRM: creating a task; adding, removing, or changing status in a campaign; updating fields on the person or account record
- › Marketing automation: adding or removing people from a campaign or static list
- › Sales engagement: adding or removing people from a cadence or sequence
- › Advertising: adding or removing from campaigns
- › Direct mail: triggering campaigns to specific individuals
- › Web personalization and chat: changing which accounts qualify for various experiences

Disconnected, these actions can be cacophonous and distracting, but orchestrate them correctly and you’ll create a harmonious account experience.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with a dark header. The main content area is titled "Add to Salesloft Cadence" and contains three numbered steps, each with a conditional trigger and an action:

- 1** If the criteria below are met
 - Role = CXO
 - Action: Add to Salesloft Cadence MQA - CXO - Follow-Up assign to Owner ID by Tom Keefe.
- 2** If the criteria below are met
 - Role = VP
 - Action: Add to Salesloft Cadence MQA - VP - Follow-Up assign to SDR Owner by Tom Keefe.
- 3** If the criteria below are met
 - Role = Director
 - Action: Add to Salesloft Cadence MQA - Director- Follow-Up assign to SDR Owner Owner ID by Tom Keefe.

Below the steps is a section labeled "+ Add Choice" with a "Default Do Nothing" option. At the bottom, there is a checkbox labeled "Change Salesforce person Actively Being Sequenced filed to true."

Simple action sequence in Demandbase, including “Add Choice”

Using AI in Orchestration

Artificial intelligence holds enormous potential for increasing the effectiveness of your orchestration.

Today, AI already predicts which accounts are a good fit, what intent keywords will resonate most, and which accounts are in-market and ready to enter a purchase cycle. That's a great start, and it will only get better as the technology continues to improve.

The next step is for AI to determine the right action to take at any given time. That's currently managed in marketing automation using rules and workflows: If this happens, do that, then wait, and then do this, branching to more options, and so on.

The problem is, there are simply too many possible inputs, too many possible actions, and too many channels to try to manage all that with rules. The world is becoming too complex for process diagrams on whiteboards or computer screens — your teams quickly become tangled in the spaghetti — and your rules become unintelligible to anyone trying to understand their logic.

Best of both worlds

The best approach is to combine rules-based eligibility (determining who could get this action) with artificial intelligence to choose the best action to achieve your goal from the set of allowed actions. You define the segments and set the constraints and then the machine optimizes the experience.

It's like the autopilot on a plane — the pilot sets the destination and establishes parameters like how to tradeoff between fuel consumption and arrival time, and the autopilot handles the details like controlling pitch and maintaining heading and altitude.

Ultimately, the autopilot helps the pilot focus on the overall status of the aircraft and flight, just as AI can help the marketer focus on the account experience and not the minutiae of specific touches.



3. The Schedule: Triggered and Batch Plays

There are three ways to launch orchestrated plays.

Manual

Manual plays are launched when a marketer or salesperson selects one or more people or accounts, and then manually triggers an action.

Example: “Find MQA accounts that haven’t had any sales touches and launch a sales cadence to the key decision makers in them.”

Batch

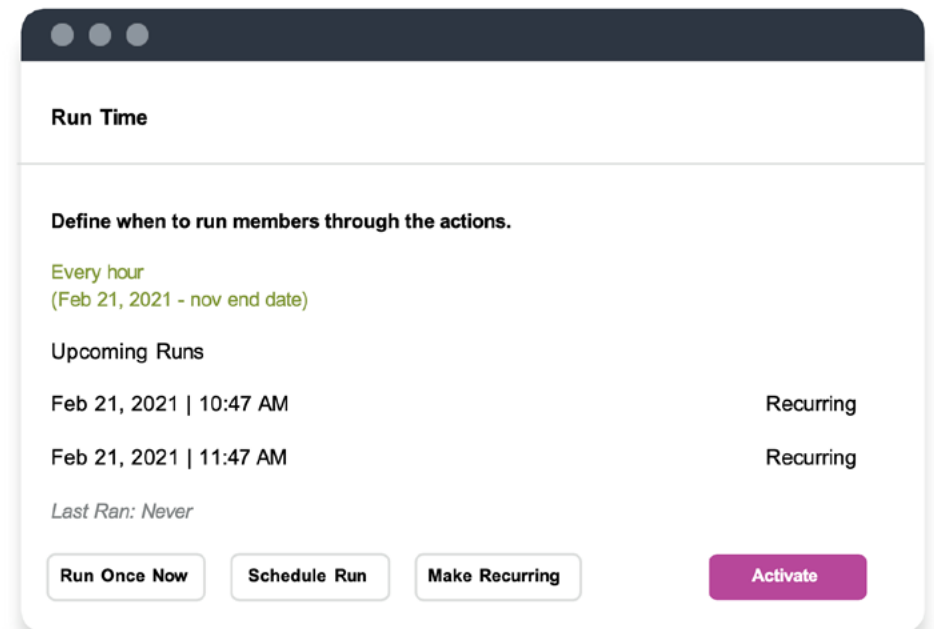
Batch plays are run against a list of accounts or people. Just as you’d build a list of people in marketing automation, here you select the exact group to target, then launch the action sequence to the entire list at the scheduled time.

Example: “Send a direct mail campaign to the key marketing and sales exec at your top 50 target accounts.”

Triggered

Once you know what works, setting up automated plays is a great way to scale your program. The plays use triggers to launch automatically when certain conditions are met. This always-on go-to-market strategy is the key to creating a truly orchestrated, cross-channel experience.

Example: “If a senior exec from a 1:One or 1:Few account registers for a webinar, trigger the AE to reach out personally and offer a customized demo instead.”



Schedule plays to run in once, recurring, or on a triggered basis.

Your Marketing Orchestration Playbook

Some proven plays you can run for every stage of the account journey. Early-stage (qualified, aware, engaged).

Awareness Play

Build brand early in the account journey.

Identify qualified accounts that are not yet engaging with you and use advertising to build awareness and attract them to your website. Then, customize the website to personalize the experience — custom content hubs for 1:One accounts, or customized by industry and/or journey stage for others.

Gifting Play

Engage with target accounts in a fun, friendly way.

If an account is early in its journey, it doesn't mean you can't reach out at all — just make sure you stand out from the crowd, in a good way (don't be salesy). Your target accounts may appreciate a personalized or fun gift (cupcakes, ice cream, something related to pop culture) — and perhaps you can throw in a valuable piece of thought leadership content as well. A version of this play also works to welcome new executives into their role.

Progress the Conversation Play

Turn engagement into interest for valuable accounts.

If a key executive-level contact from a top target downloads content or registers for a webinar, offer a meeting with your

subject matter expert or prompt the account executive to reach out to offer a personalized demo.

Field Marketing Play

Drive success for field events.

Events such as VIP dinners and experiences are a great way to engage high-value targets, but it can be hard to get executives to RSVP. The same is true for setting up meetings at major events such as tradeshow. Batch emails won't do it; the personal touch is critical to get key executives to attend your events. Use a play to orchestrate direct mail and human outreach to get the right people registered — and showing up.

Opt-In Play

Get permission to run marketing campaigns.

In Smarter GTM™, you often build out your database with contacts for target personas. But those key people may not have given you permission to send marketing emails. Use different methods to connect with them personally and get opt-in permission (e.g., a phone call offering to email them a high-value whitepaper).

New Rep Intro Play

Introduce reps to their new accounts.

When a new rep enters a territory for the first time, this play can help them introduce themselves to their new accounts. It helps new reps by sending an email on their behalf, identifying themselves as the new point of contact and offering to schedule an introductory call.

Your Marketing Orchestration Playbook (cont'd)

Mid-stage plays (marketing qualified, in-market).

Marketing Qualified Account (MQA) Play

Follow up with hot accounts.

When an account becomes marketing qualified (by being in the ICP and showing signs of being in-market), launch the right outreach to ensure that nothing slips through the cracks. Don't just talk to one persona — there are multiple members of the buying committee, so keep at it until you get a yes.

Shake the Tree Play

Use hyper-personalization to connect with valuable accounts that aren't responding over other channels.

If a valuable MQA goes quiet and isn't responding to SDR outreach, try something different: a message from another person at your company, a personalized celebrity message using Cameo, or a high-end gift to the top decision maker.

My team once had a target account that was all over our marketing materials, but their VP of Marketing was not responsive to our regular SDR outreach. Her Twitter profile said she had a “thing for tech, Cadbury's and Prosecco” and that she “loves a good bit of data.” So we sent her a package with some of her favorite things and a copy of our book on analytics, including a handwritten note saying, “Cadbury and wine for 5 minutes of your time?” This was followed up by a coordinated series of emails and phone calls

— and it led to a meeting two months later. When we get this hyper-personalized, we tend to see a 100 percent reply rate (i.e., the target account gets back to us), and an 85 percent meeting rate (i.e., we get a meeting at five out of every six accounts).

Up-level the Conversation Play

Connect with the actual decision makers.

The people who fill out an online form or come to your tradeshow booth are often influencers, recommenders and researchers, not true decision makers. Instead of treating them as hot leads to jump on, use these as signals of account-level interest. For example, if a lower-level contact from a key account attends an online demo, try also inviting a C-level exec to meet with one of your top executives.

Demo Attendance Play

Increase sales meeting attendance with gifts.

We've all experienced the challenge of our key prospects forgetting or simply not showing up for sales meetings. Sendoso customer Procure found that triggering a gift like a coffee or meal card one hour before the meeting increased the show rate by 16 percent, resulting in \$1.2 million of additional pipeline. Or, if everyone is in the same office, order lunch for the team to encourage them to show up.

Your Marketing Orchestration Playbook (cont'd)

Late-stage plays (open opportunity).

Penetrate the Account Play

Connect with the full buying committee.

When you have an open opportunity, now's the time to engage with every member of the buying committee if you haven't already.

Broaden your advertising targeting, focusing on validation and building consensus. Add contacts to your database for anyone the sales rep emails or meets with — and if you see a new key persona, launch a reach-out from one of your executives.

Deal Nurturing Play

Accelerate or un-stick opportunities.

Sales reps are compensated for driving revenue monthly or quarterly, so they rightly spend the majority of their time with later-stage deals. This means early-stage opportunities (e.g., Stage 0 or 1) are often not properly worked by Sales. But at the same time, automated marketing is often turned off once the opportunity is created. This means as many 70 percent of your opportunities are not being worked by sales or marketing! Monitor when open opportunities are showing intent or engagement from key personas, but don't have any recent sales touch, and alert the account executive to take action.

Wake the Dead Play

Wake up opportunities that have gone dark.

When an opportunity goes dark, it doesn't mean the deal is lost. If the buyer stops responding to the account executive, try bringing in new voices and channels to get the conversation going again. (This is similar to the hyper-personalized Shake the Tree play.)

Closed Lost Opportunity Play

Reactivate lost opportunities.

When you see accounts with lost opportunities that have executives who are now re-engaging, alert the sales team that timing may be right to reach back out.

Your Marketing Orchestration Playbook (cont'd)

Post-sale plays (for customers).

Account Expansion Play (cross-sell)

Get more revenue from customers.

Expanding into existing accounts is a key component of Smarter GTM™. Monitor for intent and engagement by product line and identify existing customers that start showing interest in products they don't yet own.

Leverage your team to reach out, but also work with key advocates from the customer account as well.

Renewal Play

Retain more customers.

Trigger specific actions if you see customers showing intent for competitor keywords, or if your internal champion leaves or changes roles. Interactions can come from the customer success team as well as from marketing, the original sales representative, and your top executives as appropriate.

NPS Promoter Play

Get feedback on your product, identify your champions.

When a customer responds to your NPS survey with a 9 or 10, the timing is ideal to reach out to bring them into your formal advocacy program (referrals, case studies, reviews, etc.). There's nothing more effective to achieve that than with personal outreach from your team.

NPS Detractor Play

Get feedback and save customers.

Let's face it — even the best companies sometimes end up with unhappy customers. When you come across a detractor, launch an NPS play from an executive to get feedback, give your customer a voice, and maybe even turn them into a promoter. And then, once they're happy again, follow-up with a gift to seal the deal.



Orchestration Playbook Summary

Here's a simple summary of some of the top plays you can run.

If this then that
ICP accounts that are not yet engaging with your website and campaigns	Advertise to build awareness and attract them to your website
Target account that's aware but not in-market	Send a personalized or fun gift to build brand affinity
Key executive from a top target downloads content or registers for a webinar	Offer a meeting with your subject matter expert or prompt the AE to reach out for a personalized demo
Qualified accounts that are a good fit for personal invites to an upcoming roadshow	Orchestrate direct mail and human outreach
New marketing qualified account (qualified and in-market)	Reach out to multiple personas at the account
Valuable accounts that aren't responding over other channels	Use hyper-personalized, high value offers to engage with top decision makers
Lower-level contact from key account attends an online demo	Lift the conversation by inviting a C-level exec to meet with one of your top executives
Open opportunity	Help the full buying committee drive validation and consensus with broader advertising and executive alignment
Stuck or lost opportunities that show intent or engagement from key personas, but don't have any recent sales touch	Alert the account executive to take action and/or bring in new voices and channels to get the conversation going again
Existing customers that start showing intent or engagement in products they don't yet own	Reach out to the new buying center using your team and your existing contacts at the customer
Customer showing intent for competitor keywords	Alert the CSM and account manager, set up executive alignment meeting

Advice



Marne Reed

Chief Evangelist of
Brand Experiences, PFL

Questions to ask yourself:

- › Do our messages feel human and helpful?
- › Are our metrics aligned with everyone else's metrics?
- › Is our personalization cannibalizing volume or vice versa?

Would your team's messages engage you?

Our audience's expectations for us have gone through the roof. It's critical for us to understand who we're marketing to and ensure that we're hitting that messaging on the head, whatever the channel, and having it feel really human. And then, tracking. Are they engaging with your content? Taking your calls?

Committing to that next meeting? Have you offered enough value that they're the ones taking the initiative to drive the conversation?

Align on metrics as well as accounts

It's important to occasionally stop and ask whether you're looking at the same numbers as other teams. Do they work in harmony together? Oftentimes we're so focused on our own metrics that we don't realize they're actually counter to another department's metrics and you're pulling in different directions. You need common metrics to achieve common goals.

Automate just short of diminishing engagement

The question of whether to personalize or to automate comes up a lot, and I believe it's a false dichotomy — you need both. You can't just have one or the other. When you start to get so personalized that it cannibalizes the volume you need to reach your number, it's tipped too far. But if it's so impersonal it doesn't warrant a response? Also bad. Find the balance appropriate to the level of ABX you're practicing.

The 5 Smarter GTM™ Processes

1

Build your Account Intelligence foundation

Collect buying signals from an account, enrich it with reliable third-party data, and make sense of it with AI.

2

Find the accounts that drive your business

Target accounts most likely to deliver revenue, and identify which are in-market and ready to buy.

3

Engage with relevant, personalized interactions across channels

Develop account insights and use those insights to orchestrate account-specific interactions across advertising, your website, sales engagement, direct mail, and more.

4

Close opportunities by aligning marketing and sales

Connect revenue insights to action by seamlessly integrating your go-to-market.

5

Measure account progress

Prove — and improve — the impact of your efforts with account-based analytics.

Close Opportunities by Aligning Marketing and Sales

According to TOPO's 2019 Account Based Benchmark Report, the #1 account-based success factor is the ability to coordinate programs across marketing, sales development, and sales.

SiriusDecisions found B2B organizations with tightly aligned marketing and sales operations grew their revenues 24 percent faster in a three-year period compared to those whose teams work separately. What's more, these same companies increased their profits 27 percent faster during the same three-year period.

TOPO also reports that a whopping 90 percent of companies say that an account-based strategy drives better alignment between marketing and sales than a traditional go-to-market.

In other words, it's a virtuous circle: Smarter GTM™ both requires and improves Marketing and Sales alignment.

Misalignment creates waste

If marketing embraces Smarter GTM™ without deep alignment with sales, the result is a set of isolated tactics that work against each other. Ad retargeting, direct mail pieces, and even field events are only moderately successful without full participation and enthusiasm from the entire revenue team.

On the flip side, when sales works a high-value account without support from marketing, the result is rogue reps generating their own account lists and writing their own emails—ultimately creating a disjointed customer experience.

“The companies that have had success have really positioned ABM as a strategic business initiative rather than a marketing program. Salespeople, finance, IT, as well as marketing people need to agree that this is an important investment to make for the outcome to be most beneficial.”

-Bev Burgess, Senior VP and ABM Practice Co-Lead, ITSMA

From Baton Pass to Orchestrated Team

During the marketing automation era, marketing and sales alignment resembled a “baton pass” in a relay race. Marketing owned the top of the funnel, generating leads — which they would then pass to sales who, in turn, owned the deal close and post-sale growth.

This linear model worked at the time, especially for simple lead-based go-to-market strategies. But it is looking increasingly outdated in the face of an increasingly non-linear account journey.

Marketing is no longer the sole owner of top-of-funnel activity. New privacy regulations like GDPR and the rise of sales engagement tools like Outreach and Salesloft mean that many sales teams send more email than marketing.

Marketing is playing a bigger role at the bottom of the funnel. Larger buying committees mean that sales reps can’t possibly be talking to every stakeholder 1:1 during a sales cycle — yet talking with multiple personas is exactly what marketing is good at.

Marketing must focus on post-sale revenue. The rise of recurring revenue models and the increased importance of expansion revenue mean that for most companies, the vast majority of revenue is generated after the initial sale — and yet many marketers still focus only on generating new business pipeline.

An orchestrated process

Rather than a hand-off baton pass, in Smarter GTM™ the marketing and sales departments operate as a team, unified by common Account Intelligence. Players have distinctly different positions — offense and defense — but they work together to pass the ball back and forth down the field to create and win new business and drive account growth.



Three Levels of Alignment

Companies attempting to move marketing and Sales towards the orchestrated movements of a well-practiced team go through three levels of maturity.

Level	Description	Action
1. Communication	This is a great place to start. The departments are sharing account intelligence — but acting independently from each other. It's still a baton hand-off, but they work off the same data and metrics.	Shared Data / Shared View of Accounts
2. Activation	Here, marketing alerts sales about key insights and nudges them to take the right actions. Or, to continue the sports analogy, marketing acts like the quarterback, calling the plays that prompt the team (or at least the SDRs) to act.	Proactive Alerts
3. Orchestration	True orchestration is when both departments work together as a single team, perfectly in sync, running integrated plays and coordinating everything with regular standups.	Orchestrated Plays and GTM Standups

Let's discuss each of these in turn.

Level 1. Communication Via Shared View of Accounts

74 percent of business buyers say sales' awareness of marketing campaigns is important to win their business (Salesforce, State of the Connected Customer).

And yet, without an account intelligence foundation as discussed earlier, sales reps are blind to this critical information. Reps look at accounts in the CRM while marketing campaigns touch leads — they are literally not on the same page.

The answer is to give sales access to all the awesome information you've built in your account intelligence foundation: web visits, emails, campaign responses, predictive scores, intent keywords, technologies, and contacts, all matched to the right account. But don't overwhelm the reps: make it easy by exposing the intelligence where they already spend a significant portion of their day, inside the CRM.

By creating a single view of all your account data, your sales and sales development reps can:

- › Discover in-market accounts who are ready to buy
- › Find the best people to contact next
- › Know what messages will resonate the best
- › Understand how effectively marketing is supporting their efforts
- › Prepare QBRs and other account reviews

SAP SuccessFactors

A single view generates web leads for SuccessFactors

SuccessFactors provides the SuccessFactors HCM Suite, a leading cloud-based human capital management solution. They initially deployed Demandbase to help drive target accounts to their website, but over time they were also able to prove the value to sales. “Working with Demandbase absolutely helped us align marketing with sales,” said Sean Browne, Senior Director of Web Marketing. “We can show the sales team which companies come to the site and work with them to create effective campaigns that run across the website.”

While using Demandbase, they saw a 175 percent year-over-year growth in web leads, in addition to greater visitor engagement and increased conversions. “I truly believe Demandbase can make marketing a hero to sales,” concludes Browne. “It's great to see Demandbase credited in our quarterly business reports where a program has driven growth in our pipeline.”

Territory and Single-Account Views

Give your reps a view of their territory which they can sort by the various scores from the FIRE methodology:

- Fit (e.g., Qualification Score)
- Intent (e.g., number of high intent keywords)
- Relationship (e.g., number of recent sales touches)
- Engagement (e.g., number of engagement numbers in last 2 weeks)

They should also be able to see where each account is in the account journey, and whether the account has an “in market” prediction (e.g., Pipeline Predict Score).

This can be an Account List view, a Report, and/or a Dashboard. Either way, it makes it easy for the rep to prioritize their days and know exactly where they should focus their efforts.

Reps should also be able to see all that information when looking at a single account, as well as an easy-to-understand snapshot of all the activities that have touched the account as it moves through the account journey (see next page).

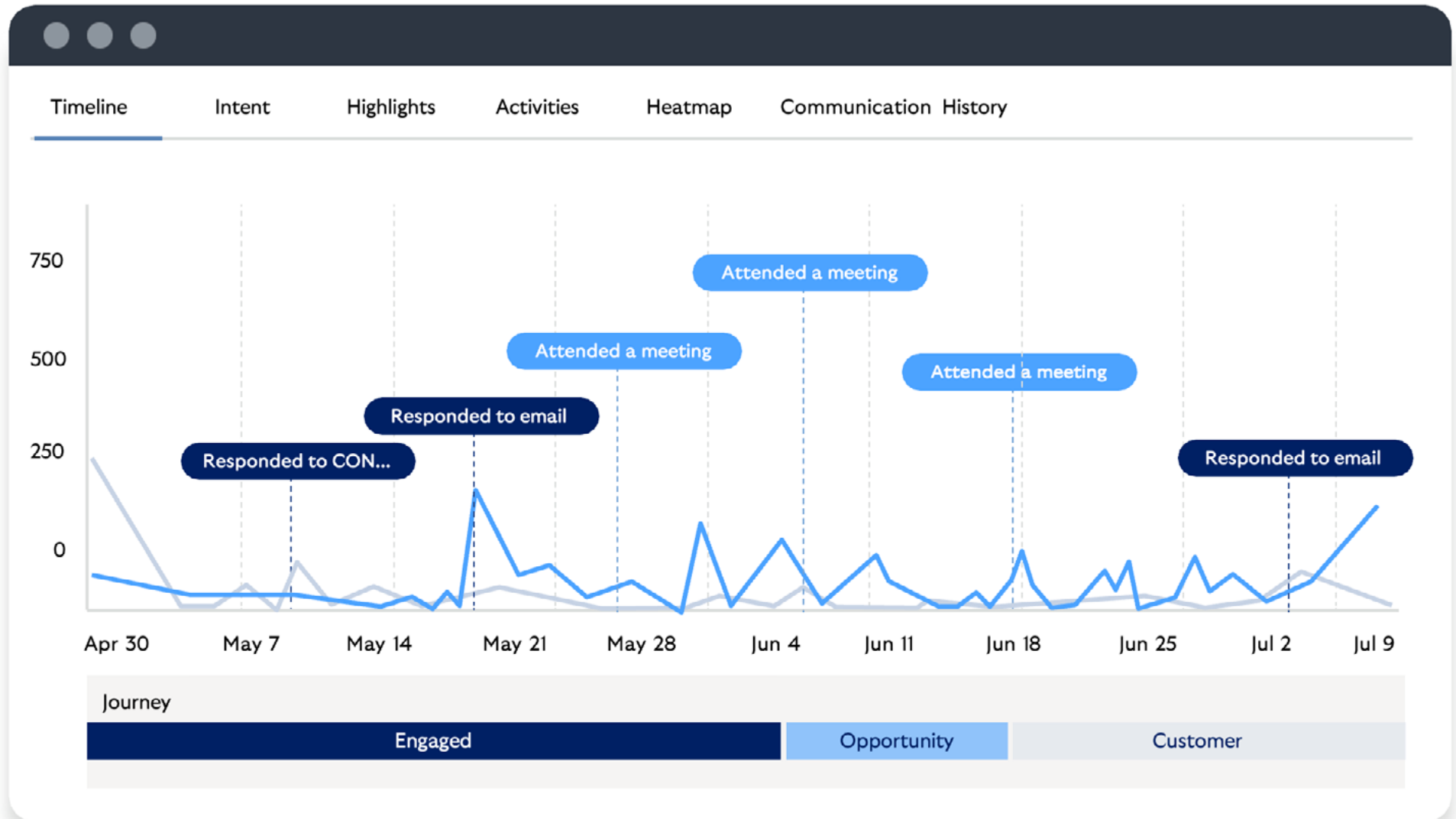
“We are erasing the lines between marketing and sales. By everyone looking at the same data, we are responding faster, improving customer experience and closing new business faster than ever before.”

-Beki Scarbrough (when she was VP Marketing at Forgerock)

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Strip...	Software	USD 525,129,000.0000	Aware	98	40	2	8	10	advertising	0
Appn...	Business Services	USD 67,810,000.0000	Aware	98	62	7	3	33	advertising	1
Elasti...	Software	USD 33,609,000.0000	Aware	98	53	7	1	24	advertising	
Inter...	Software	USD 808,400,000.0000	Qualified	98	55	31	61	182		0
Deut...	Finance	USD 27,203,795,000.0...	Engaged	98	52	3	48	78	advertising	1
Nomi...	Software	USD 28,510,000.0000	Aware	98	1	0	1	1		
Dass...	Software	USD 4,546,578,000.00...	MQA	98	85	88	117	396	advertising	1
Info-T...	Business Services	USD 101,557,000.0000	MQA	98	69	9	17	300	advertising	0
Redw...	Software	USD 46,421,000.0000	MQA	98	96	1	1	17		0
Unite...	Insurance	USD 242,155,000,000....	Engaged	98	73	41	34	265	advertising;drift	2

Single Account View

This is a powerful view that most sales reps haven't seen before. When one VP of Enterprise Sales at an Demandbase customer saw it for the first time, he said: "I feel like I've been in the desert for 15 years, and you just showed up with a hotdog cart and lemonade stand."

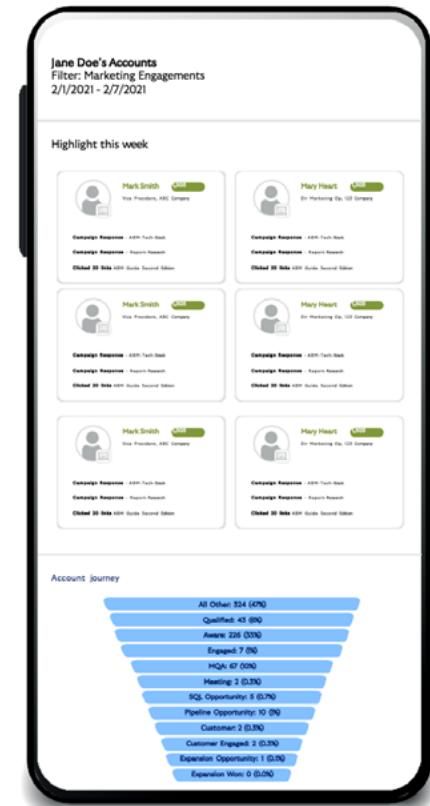


Level 2. Activation Via Proactive Alerts

85 percent of B2B sales reps who receive alerts on opportunities say the alerts help them do their job better (Salesforce, State of the Connected Customer).

Most sales reps and SDRs appreciate email or Slack alerts about engagement or other account insights. This proactively tells them where they should focus and what actions they should take, without waiting for them to log into the CRM.

The list of possible alerts is only limited by the depth of your account intelligence. Ask your best SDRs and reps what they look for when prospecting, or what they wish they could know — and set up alerts for all the reps based on that.



Demandbase Secret Sauce

Here are some of the behaviors that we alert our reps about at Demandbase:

- Target accounts visiting the website (real-time)
- Newly engaged executives
- Accounts with trending intent
- New marketing qualified accounts (high Pipeline Predict scores)
- Interactions with key content assets or campaigns (e.g. watching online demos or achieving ABM Certification)
- Open opportunities showing intent for competitors
- Upcoming renewals showing intent for competitors
- Closed lost opportunities that are waking back up
- Potential cross-sell opportunities

Level 3. Orchestration Via Integrated Plays

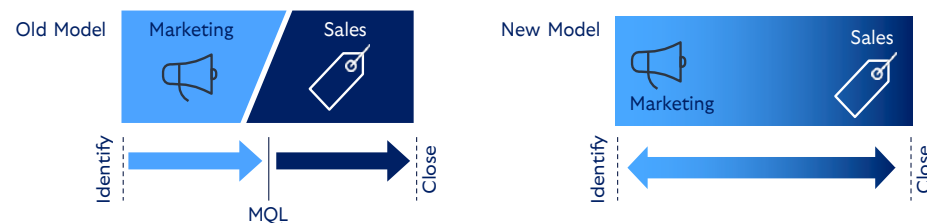
“It’s easier to work in silos. You just don’t make as much money.” (Peter Herbert, CMO)

Breaking down the silos between Marketing and Sales isn’t easy — but it is always worth it. And it creates a much smarter account experience when interactions are orchestrated over time and across channels.

We covered orchestration heavily in the last section, but here we focus on the dance between the departments.

At the most basic level, sales reps should check if there is a marketing program running before calling an account. If marketing already emailed today, sales should use social media or the phone. When the sales rep delivers a consistent message in a complementary fashion, you get two touches for the price of one.

From there, design integrated GTM plays that combine touches from marketing and sales Development, perhaps also sales and



executives. Some simple examples:

- Create air cover by having marketing advertise to accounts and sending a direct mail package, then have SDRs follow-up with a timely sequence of phone calls and emails when the package arrives.
- Coordinate outreach to the account, with executives emailing executives, sales reps and SDRs reaching out to other key personas, and marketing driving broad awareness with advertising and nurturing.
- Trigger a marketing campaign if the account goes cold on the sales rep.

Like a good football coach, we recommend that companies create a “playbook” of integrated plays that different accounts are entitled to, and then have marketing, sales, and SDRs meet regularly to discuss the accounts and “call the plays” they want to run. We call these meetings GTM Standups.

Organizations executing marketing-SDR orchestrated campaigns typically realize a 30-50 percent lift in ‘meetings set’ at target accounts, with some organizations reporting a 100 percent increase.

-TOPO, Marketing and Sales Development
Orchestration, January 2017

Marketing and Sales Standups: The Secret GTM Weapon

One of the easiest and most-impactful processes you can implement to drive your Smarter GTM™ program and improve alignment is to set regular Marketing and Sales stand-ups.

In these standups, every week or two, a marketer meets 1:1 with each account executive and sales development rep for 5-10 minutes to share account intelligence, discuss how they are jointly going after accounts, and agree on go-forward actions. Nobody else should attend these meetings. These are not forecast meetings or management reviews; they are focused on sharing information and taking shared action.

Note: Your Marketing team may not have the resources to meet with each account executive every week or two. Try to maximize the number of reps you can support by keeping the standups short, but if necessary, pilot GTM Standups with a subset of reps, perhaps new ones or those with the biggest pipeline gaps.

We recommend not reducing the frequency to less than every two weeks so you don't lose momentum.

Topics for each meeting include:

1. Progress made since last standup:

- What's happening at the accounts?
- Who did you talk to? What did you learn?

2. Plan going forward:

- Focus on the top 3 to 5 target accounts to penetrate, and 2 existing opportunities to accelerate.
- What actions will marketing take? The AE? ADR? What integrated plays will you run?

3. Blockages

At Demandbase, our teams log into our application and review recent account activity and engagement looking at the same screen.

In addition to the regular stand-up meeting, it's also useful to hold monthly Smarter GTM™ “win rooms” to review metrics and set actions across the entire program, and quarterly business reviews (QBRs) to assess the entire program, consider changes to the account list, dive into metrics, and so on. These should involve leadership from both marketing and sales teams.

What if You're Not Aligned Yet?

On the account-based journey, total alignment is the goal. But the important thing is to always make progress towards it. You can't stop your revenue machine and put Smarter GTM™ on hold until you've achieved perfect alignment.

So, get going now:

Start with a Smarter GTM™ workshop — sit down together and discuss the account-based approach and why you need to change the way you work.

Use FIRE to align on target accounts — make sure you're all aiming at the same target account list.

Agree on account entitlements and key metrics — agree on what commitments you'll make to each other and how you'll track success.

Pilot GTM Standups — nothing drives faster GTM success than just having marketing and sales meet regularly to talk about accounts.

Deliver intent and engagement insights to sales — deliver fast value by providing intelligence on the accounts you all care about.

If you do these five pretty easy things, you'll be ahead of 80 percent of companies out there.



Advice



Sydney Sloan
Chief Marketing Officer

Questions to ask yourself:

- Are marketing and sales looking at the same dashboards?
- Is marketing helping all the way to close?
- Is marketing continuing the journey beyond close?
- Are we keeping an ear to the ground on why deals close?

Align your language and the team will follow

You have to create the same reports and use the same terminology across your revenue team. It's as simple as that. Marketing can't talk about influence or marketing-qualified leads while sales talks about pipeline and deals. You have to share terms and reports and collectively participate in the pipeline conversation and also know that for salespeople, pipeline means something slightly different than it does for marketers, which is why you should look at both pipeline creation and pipeline coverage goals.

With account selection comes great responsibility

Change doesn't come easy and what seems simple to the people planning things isn't always easy for those asked to execute. No salesperson wants to pick the wrong accounts and wind up with no opportunities while the organization "figures it out." That's their livelihood. Selecting those accounts is an awesome responsibility. To do it well you must believe in the program, believe in the data, advocate for it, and continuously check in and refine it.

Understand what closes deals

A CMO group I'm part of recently asked what was top of mind and nobody mentioned marketing automation. Instead, people talked about how they're partnering with sales and talking to SDR teams, and wherever you see that wall come down, companies are creating winning experiences. The more marketers understand and act on the motives, needs, and challenges that drive deals to close, the more they're prospecting even better accounts at the top.

The 5 Smarter GTM™ Processes

1

Build your Account Intelligence foundation

Collect buying signals from an account, enrich it with reliable third-party data, and make sense of it with AI.

2

Find the accounts that drive your business

Target accounts most likely to deliver revenue, and identify which are in-market and ready to buy.

3

Engage with relevant, personalized interactions across channels

Develop account insights and use those insights to orchestrate account-specific interactions across advertising, your website, sales engagement, direct mail, and more.

4

Close opportunities by aligning marketing and sales

Connect revenue insights to action by seamlessly integrating your go-to-market.

5

Measure account progress

Prove — and improve — the impact of your efforts with account-based analytics.

Measure Account Progress

For years, marketing has measured effectiveness by counting leads and opportunities. But the rise of account-based strategies demands new ways of thinking about marketing.

While leads and opportunities are important and even necessary metrics, they are not sufficient to measure Smarter GTM™.

That's why it's no surprise that the most common response to "What are the top challenges your organization faces today in your ABM program(s)?" was "Tracking and measuring ABM results" in the ABM 2020 Benchmark Study from the ITSMA and ABM Leadership Alliance.

Smarter GTM™ is a fundamentally different approach that requires fundamentally different metrics. Here's why:

- **Account-based strategies calls for account-based metrics.** When you focus on key accounts, your metrics must do the same. You need to measure Smarter GTM™ with an account-centric lens.
- **Smarter GTM™ is about quality, not quantity.** In Smarter GTM™, marketing probably won't be generating as many leads. A sales rep with 20 accounts can't accept a 5 percent conversion rate — she needs to be thinking about growing revenue from every single account. In short, marketing needs to create influence with the accounts that matter. That's a new and different mindset about how marketing is measured.

"If you believe ABM success is measured only on lead volume... think again."

-SiriusDecisions

Which would the sales rep value more — 20 random low-level professionals downloading your whitepaper, or one meaningful conversation with a decision maker at one of her target accounts?

Measure Account Progress (cont'd)

Smarter GTM™ can take a long time to show results. Ideally, we would always be able to measure using closed deals and revenue (and marketing certainly should measure those things.) But when starting an ABX initiative, you need to set expectations that it won't deliver clear revenue immediately.

If you hide this fact when you make your business case, you're putting a time bomb inside your program.

That's why leading indicators based on middle- of-the-funnel metrics are so important to Smarter GTM™. By tracking how the right people at target accounts engage with your company, and how accounts move through a complex buying journey, marketers have a quantifiable way of showing progress through a potentially long development process.

In Smarter GTM™, marketing and sales work as a team to generate pipeline. It's not "marketing sourced" but "everyone sourced."

In Smarter GTM™, marketing supports and influences pipeline creation. The larger and more complex the deal, the less

we can measure marketing in terms of "marketing sourced" leads and pipeline. According to SiriusDecisions, marketing directly sources 25-45 percent of pipeline for companies selling to non-named accounts, but less than 10 percent of pipeline at strategic or enterprise accounts. Also, many Smarter GTM™ plays are about accelerating existing pipeline, not creating new revenue.

So instead of relying on marketing-generated pipeline as a way to prove value, account- based marketers need to show their impact on revenue by demonstrating how well they influence deals and improve key business outcomes such as win rates, deal velocity, and average contract value (ACV).

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"Make a long-term commitment; ABM results improve with experience."

- ITSMA and ABM Leadership Alliance

Measure Account Progress (cont'd)

Smarter GTM™ is about the entire customer journey, not just new pipeline. Deepening your relationships with existing customers is a big part of Smarter GTM™, but traditional marketing funnel metrics focus almost exclusively on new business.

This means we need metrics for every stage of the funnel: not only new business and pipeline acceleration, but also post-sale (expansion and retention) as well as advocacy, referrals, customer satisfaction, and net promoter scores.

55 percent of respondents noted they are using ABM for both new revenue and existing customer expansion revenue.

- 2021 Account-Based Marketing Benchmark Report, RevOps Squared and Demandbase

The New Metrics for Smarter GTM™

So, if account-based marketers can't claim victory on the wrong metrics (e.g., leads) and they can't claim it exclusively on long-term metrics (e.g., revenue), what can they do?

Fundamentally, three questions arise in Smarter GTM™ measurement:

1. Am I creating and deepening relationships with target accounts?
2. How are accounts moving through buying journeys to desired outcomes (e.g., pipeline and revenue)?
3. What is the return on investment of my GTM budget?

The New Metrics for Smarter GTM™ (cont'd)

The three questions map to three types of analytics.

Relationship Analytics

Think about what matters to sales. Reps want relationships with the right people at the right accounts. They want decision makers to know who your company is when they call. Hence, relationship analytics use engagement to measure quality, not quantity. They answer the question: Are we creating and deepening relationships with target accounts?

Journey Analytics

While revenue is the holy grail of metrics, measuring Smarter GTM™ also requires leading indicators to show progress during long sales

cycles. To achieve this, define stages of the account journey towards outcomes you care about, and measure funnel dynamics using the key metrics of Volume, Value, conVersion, and Velocity (aka the “4Vs”). These leading indicators show when, how, and why target accounts become aware, engaged, qualified, closed, and more.

Attribution Analytics

Smart practitioners use attribution analytics to measure the return on their investments and make better decisions about budget allocation. By investing in the highest-performing programs, they maximize overall return and answer one fundamental question: “Did my investment lead to more revenue?”

Type	Metric	Description
Relationship	Engagement	Am I creating and deepening relationships with target accounts?
Journey	4Vs	How do accounts move through the buying journey towards desired outcomes (pipeline, revenue)?
Attribution	ROI	What is the ROI on my investment budget?

Research on Account-Based Metrics

The annual benchmark study from the ITSMA and ABM Leadership Alliance finds that account-based metrics cover three categories:

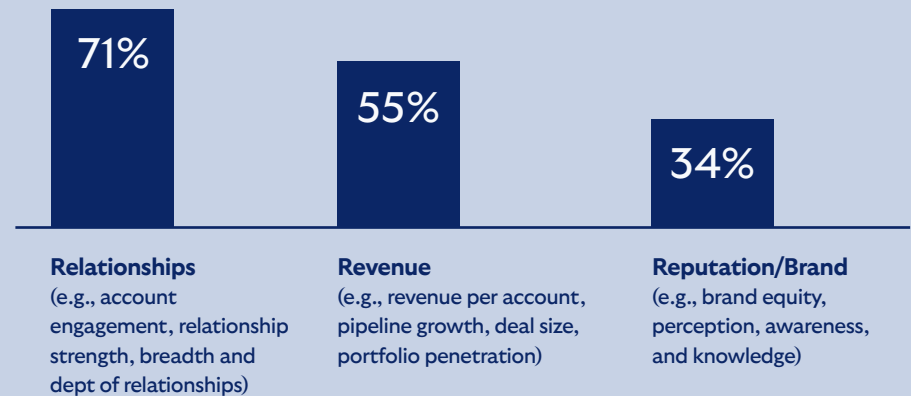
1. Relationships: Deeper account penetration
2. Reputation: Perception and/or education about offering and capabilities
3. Revenue: Pipeline and specific identified sales opportunities

The study also asked companies which metrics are most important to measure the success of their initiative. The top responses were:

- › Pipeline growth (increase in sales funnel)
- › Revenue growth
- › Engagement: Events, campaigns, meetings, opt-ins, web traffic, downloads
- › Return on the account investment (ROI)
- › Total revenue tied directly to ABM initiatives
- › Win rate/number of deals closed

In which of the following areas have you seen measurable business improvement due to ABM?

% of respondents (N=218)



Note: Multiple responses allowed
ITSMA and ABM Leadership Alliance, 2020 ABM Benchmark Study

“Account metrics usually also include a number of soft metrics which serve as leading indicators of ABM performance, including the number of executive relationships within the account, the number of executive meetings, the number of new relationships in new lines of business, and the quality of the relationships. These metrics are predictors of future success, particularly where ABM has not been in place long enough to deliver concrete financial results.”

- A Practitioner’s Guide to Account Based Marketing, Bev Burgess and Dave Munn, ITSMA

Relationship Analytics

Smarter GTM™ metrics focus on relationship quality, not quantity. As discussed in the earlier FIRE section, engagement is a great way to measure relationship quality.

In this section, we'll show how to measure engagement in two critical ways: web traffic and overall engagement minutes.

“Don't count the people that you reach; reach the people that count.”

- David Ogilvy



Tracking what matters at SmartRecruiters

SmartRecruiters, an enterprise applicant tracking platform, was looking for a better way to view and measure the buying journey. They turned to Demandbase for analytics and insights into how accounts were engaging with them. The increased visibility from Demandbase makes large enterprise deals significantly easier to manage, since it lets them keep track of who is taking what action and when. The SmartRecruiters RevOps team became so confident in Demandbase reporting that 100 percent of their ABM reporting for executive and board reports is now done with the Demandbase platform.

Web Traffic

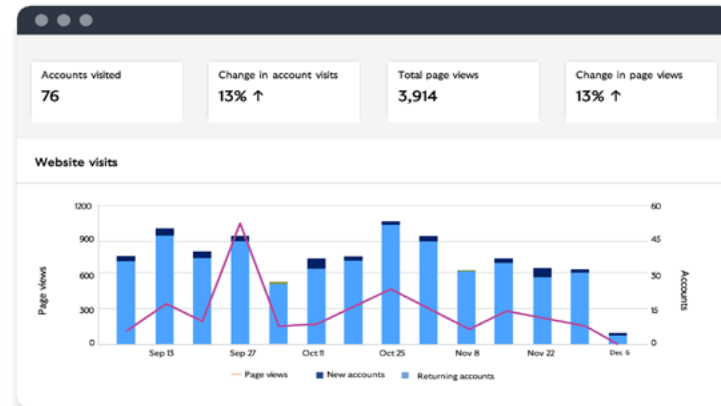
Your efforts are likely improving awareness if web traffic increases, especially compared to traffic from non-targeted accounts.

Use account identification technology to de-anonymize which accounts are visiting your website, and then track the key web engagement metrics by account:

- ▶ **Accounts visited:** which accounts visits the site
- ▶ **Change in account visits:** did you increase the number of target accounts visiting the site
- ▶ **Total page views:** how much web engagement did you get from target accounts
- ▶ **Change in page views:** did you increase web engagement from target accounts
- ▶ **Unique visitors per account:** which accounts are showing the broadest engagement

Perhaps the most interesting metric is trending onsite engagement, which finds accounts where recent traffic shows a big jump over prior periods (e.g., compare the last seven days to the prior two months).

Increasing web traffic usually indicates increasing awareness



Measuring Account-Based Advertising

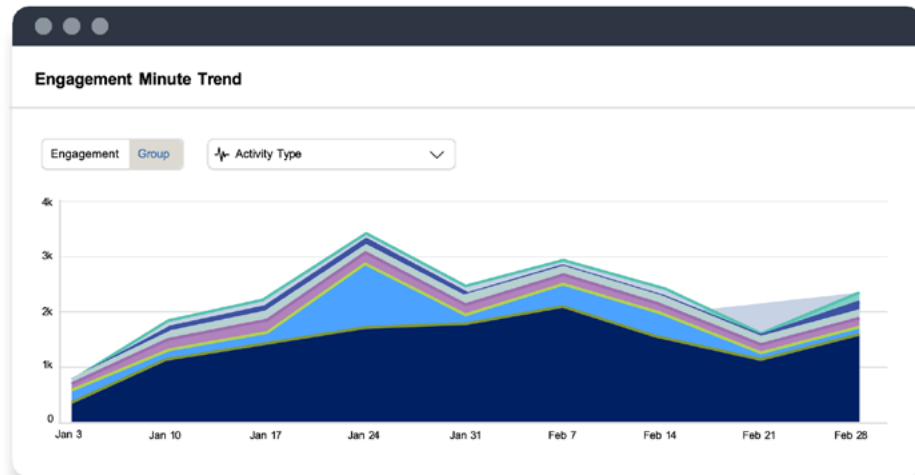
Web traffic is also a good way to measure your Advertising results:

- ▶ Accounts reached: which accounts saw ads
- ▶ Accounts visited: which accounts visited the site after seeing ads (regardless of how they got there)
- ▶ Accounts clicked: which accounts clicked on the ads
- ▶ New accounts on site: number/percent of targeted accounts visiting the site during the campaign that did not during baseline period
- ▶ Lifted accounts: number/percent of targeted accounts with significantly more web traffic during the campaign than the baseline period

Engagement Minutes

Engagement minutes are useful for account scoring selection, but they're also a powerful way to measure GTM impact. Just as an EKG is a leading indicator of heart health, engagement minutes are leading indicators of positive business outcomes. They're mid-funnel, forward-looking diagnostics that tell you how you're likely to perform down the road at the bottom of the funnel.

Target accounts with increasing engagement illuminate your effectiveness



Imagine being able to report that your most important accounts spent 4,289 minutes engaging with activities this quarter, up 122 percent from only 1,932 last quarter. And imagine being able to drill into the data to show the specific sales territories, industry segments, and personas with the biggest growth. These are pretty clear signs that your efforts are progressing in the right direction!

Heatmaps show where the engagement is coming from, by persona, geography, product line, and so on

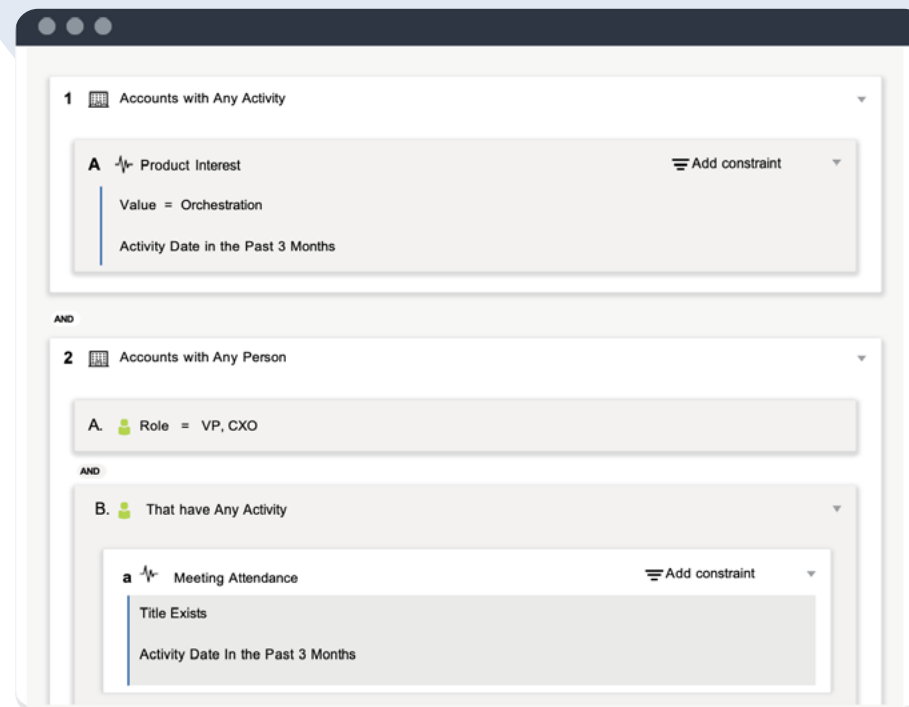
	CXO	VP	Director	Manager	Other
Totals	733	1,796	1,983	5,537	8,760
Marketing	108	740	1,618	3,631	2,831
Sales	0	108	122	681	317
Unclassified	122	523	9	154	60
Administration	502	0	0	0	0
R&D	0	15	5	0	128

Advanced Filtering and Selectors

Filtering engagement data can answer interesting questions about target accounts. For example:

- Which accounts are showing marketing engagement but have no sales activity?
- Which accounts are showing intent or engagement for my new product line?
- Which target accounts did we have meetings with last month?
- Which target accounts had someone visit the pricing page?

Use advanced selector logic like this to find and target the right accounts for your needs. You can send alerts, identify accounts for campaigns, and automate actions based on how accounts move in and out of your selectors.



Journey Analytics

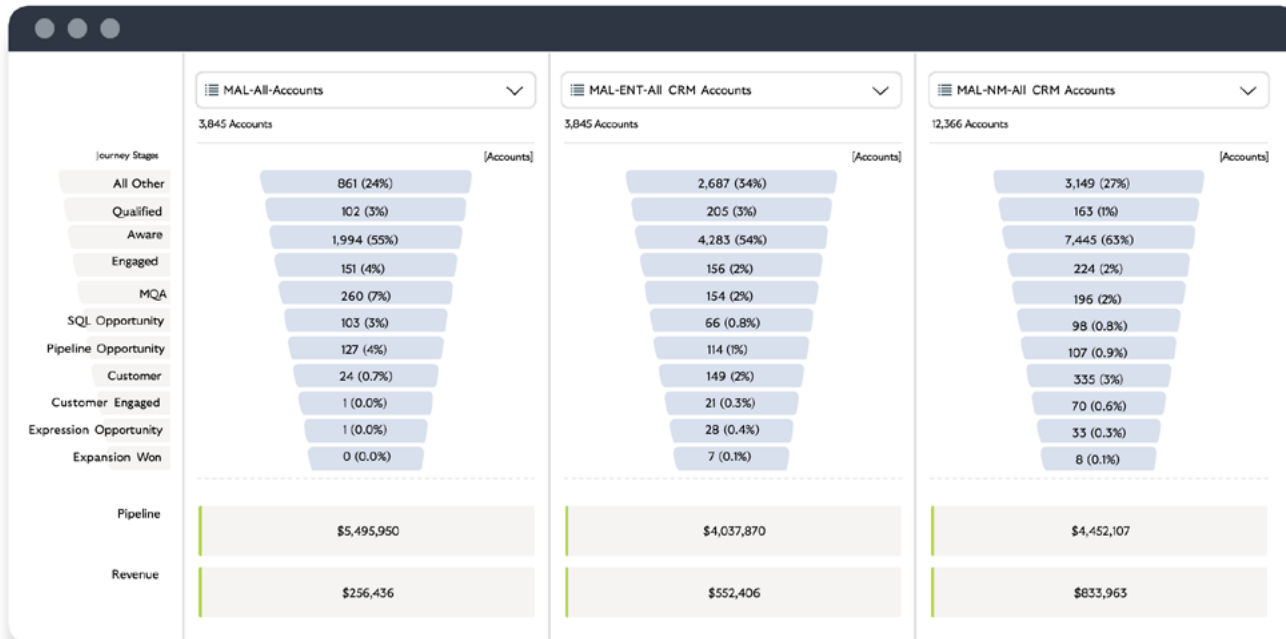
As we've seen, in Smarter GTM™ we don't track lead journeys — we measure account journeys.

Whereas tracking things like MQLs created and SQL-to-opportunity conversion rates were critical to demand generation measurement, tracking marketing qualified accounts (MQAs) and account conversion rates are critical to Smarter GTM™.

Journey metrics like these are the most important way you'll measure and report on your Smarter GTM™ efforts. At Demandbase, we use journey metrics to report to the Board. (And they love it!)

Every ABM program should include the measurement and ultimate analysis of the customer buying journey on a stage-by-stage basis, thereby illuminating opportunities to increase conversion rate at each stage.

- 2021 ABM Benchmark Study, RevOps Squared and Demandbase



The Four vs Journey Metrics

Once you define your funnel stages, you can begin to track and measure account journeys with four KPIs I call the Four Vs: Volume, Value, conVersion, and Velocity. (Yeah, I cheated on conVersion.)

Journey KPI's	Example Metric	Questions It Will Answer
Volume	Number of accounts that move into a stage Pipeline value of accounts that move into a stage	How many MQAs did we create this month? How many opportunities did we create over time? What is the value of the sales pipeline generated?
Value	Number of accounts in each stage Monetary value of accounts in each stage	How many target accounts are engaged? How many open opportunities are there? Do we have enough pipeline to achieve our bookings targets?
ConVersion Rate	Percentage of accounts that move from one stage to another	What percentage of target accounts become opportunities? What percentage of MQAs become customers? What type of accounts convert the best?
Velocity	Average number of days between any two stages	How long does it take to move an account from MQA to opportunity? Do certain types of accounts move through the funnel faster than others? What is the average time spent in each stage?

Reviewing the Data

When reporting on account journeys, you'll want to look at the data in different ways so executives can put the results into context.

Operationally	Look at data weekly, monthly, quarterly.
Over time	See if you're improving or getting worse.
Versus goals	Are you achieving what you said you'd do?
Versus benchmarks	How do you compare to similar companies?

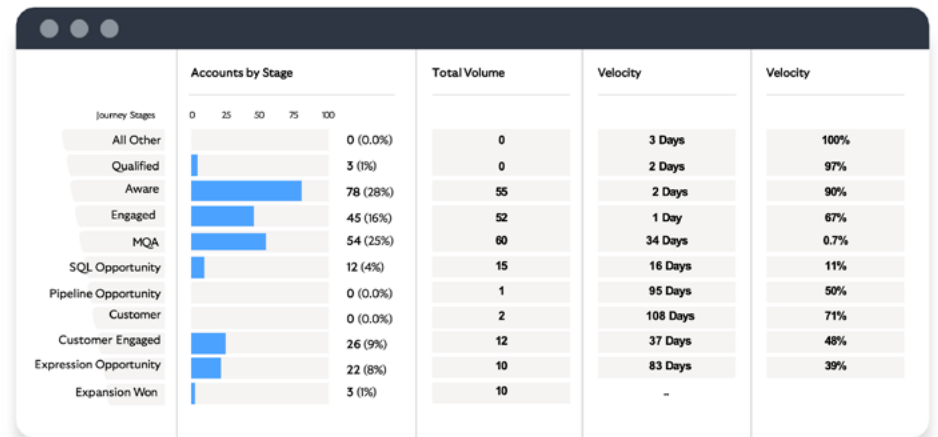
Snapshots needed

These analytics require a way to track historical values (e.g. which accounts were in the MQA stage last November). Since CRMs usually only store a field's current value, you have two options:

1. Manually "snapshot" the data each period. This can be tedious.
2. Use additional technology (like Demandbase).

Bringing it together

A good way to review account journey data is with a dashboard, showing the key metrics for each stage of the journey. Be sure you can drill down by account segment, territory, vertical, and so on (I guarantee you'll want to).



ROI Analytics (Attribution)

Measuring impact has been marketing's holy grail since John Wanamaker famously admitted he didn't know which half of his advertising dollars were wasted.

With account-based multi-touch attribution, it's finally possible for B2B marketers to determine which programs work and which don't, and see how each affects revenue and profits. Armed with knowledge about individual and aggregated program ROI, you can allocate budget for maximum impact.

ROI's purpose: improve (not prove) marketing

ROI is most valuable when evaluating marketing investments, not justifying marketing. Given the reality of budget limitations, CMOs need to make trade-offs about where to focus resources — and ROI provides a framework to improve these decisions.

Don't use ROI analytics to “prove” marketing works, use them to “improve” decisions about where to focus resources. Energy spent justifying marketing only wastes time and resources.

Multi-Touch Attribution

Attribution connects marketing and sales activities to their intended outcomes. It examines all significant interactions that touched the account (or buying center) — from first touch to deal closed and beyond — and then distributes value to individual touches.

Say four campaigns influenced a \$40,000 deal. An equal-weight attribution model would assign \$10,000 to each campaign.

Do that for each outcome, and then calculate total program return by adding up the contributions from all influenced outcomes. Combined with accurate investment data, you can calculate program ROI!

Attribution models

Different attribution models allocate the value in different ways:

- Single Source Attribution Models assign 100 percent credit to one touch — usually either first touch or last touch.
- Fractional Attribution Models distribute value across multiple touches. Examples include equal weight and position-based (U-shaped).
- Algorithmic Attribution Models use statistics and machine learning to calculate the marginal contribution of various touches.

They all have their place and can answer different questions, so it's not uncommon to look at different models side-by-side.

Account attribution

Of course, in Smarter GTM™ there are multiple people involved in almost every outcome, so account-based attribution must choose who to analyze. The approach you take here can substantially shape results.

- Narrow Attribution includes only contacts with roles in account opportunities. Here, data integrity can be limited, as sales reps rarely attach all the right people.
- Broad Attribution analyzes all contacts at accounts — or all leads and contacts via Lead-to-Account Matching (L2A) technology. Broad attribution tends to be more accurate than narrow attribution for deals at small and mid-sized companies. As company size grows, results become diluted, as broad attribution might include touches with people who didn't impact a specific deal.
- Buying Center Attribution: Some companies now analyze specific buying centers. The approach is broader than narrow attribution (e.g. contact roles), and more focused than broad attribution (e.g. the entire company).

Again, all three have their place — and you'll often find a mix of approaches, depending on the use case.

Calculating ROI

By bringing all the data together, you can see which programs have the highest ROI. Many teams find pipeline to investment is the best way to judge marketing programs. Also known as marketing's Golden Ratio, this concept shows CMOs how much pipeline each dollar produces for individual program investments.

This pipeline to investment report shows The Golden Ratio. (Webinars are looking awesome.)

	Actual Cost in Campaign	Pipeline Created (Equal Weight)	Marketing Golden Ratio
Type: Event Live (852 records)	\$408,118	\$2,368,625.83	5.80
Type: Event VIP via PlayMaker (104 records)	\$43,000	\$205,059.05	4.77
Type: Webinar (515 records)	\$36,250	\$2,225,496.93	61.39
Type: Event Virtual Sponsored (17 records)	\$16,500	\$37,422.79	2.27
Type: Event Party (40 records)	\$11,300	\$76,714.23	6.79
Type: Content — Partner (5 records)	\$10,000	\$20,636.36	2.06
Type: ABE (11 records)	\$10,000	\$45,604.86	4.56

Conclusion: Alignment Above All

One of the key sources of misalignment between marketing and sales is the disconnect between the way the two teams measure success.

Smarter GTM™ brings the two teams closer, aligning focus on a specific list of named accounts. But you need to align on metrics too. By evolving your metrics in the ways we discussed here, marketing and sales can begin to speak the same language and collaborate — rather than fight for credit. Once it's clicking, it feels amazing.

For some, the movement away from tried-and-true lead-based metrics may feel unnerving, but if you're going to embrace Smarter GTM™, the change and its implications are unavoidable: an GTM program without account-based programs will always be judged by the wrong yardsticks.

From	To
People	Accounts
Leads	Opportunities
Personas	Specific Buyers
Quantity	Quality

Advice



Kaitlin Bellay

Head of Channel Marketing,
LinkedIn

Questions to ask yourself:

- What are we hoping our measurements tell us?
- How reliant are we on funnel metrics?
- How do our sample sizes alter how we interpret our data?

Ask yourself why measure?

Measurement begins with asking why you're doing it. For me, it's always been about three things: budget allocation, optimization, and business impact. All of my measurements must roll up to one of those areas and tell me where to spend, how to improve, or what result we're having. This framework can help you have conversations with executives. If they tell you they need more qualified accounts but can't have more budget, you can say, "Okay, well if you need more qualified accounts, it looks like the only lever we have is optimization, so here's what we can do."

All models are wrong, some are useful

Models are useful, but models — like a funnel — don't have all the answers. In fact, they can prevent us from being really agile. No marketing model predicted the pandemic.

None of them told marketers how to deal with it. Measure your funnel and use it as guidance where it tells you specifically how to budget, how to make campaigns more efficient, or how to forecast. But don't let it limit your creativity— use it to expand it.

Do you have statistically valid data?

When calculating conversions, you have to factor in your sample size. Funnels were built for volume operations and are reliant on averages. If you're looking at funnel metrics that only take into account 50 opportunities at a time, you have to ask yourself whether that data is actually compelling. The same goes for attribution. If you're looking at attribution for five opportunities, how certain are you that it should be telling you how to budget, optimize, or forecast? To make lasting decisions, you need a statistically significant corpus of data, and, in the absence of that, don't forget your intuition.

PART SIX

Implementing Smarter GTM: The Road to Success

Implementing Smarter GTM™: The Road to Success

Smarter GTM™ powered by Account Intelligence isn't only a philosophical idea whose time has come. It's a sound strategy that's proven to work for every kind of B2B company looking to land the big accounts.

But just because it makes sense doesn't mean it's easy to do. Companies with a traditional go-to-market operation need a game plan to execute Smarter GTM™ well.

This section is about making Smarter GTM™ work in the real world. It's about culture and change. And it's about the people, processes, technologies, and attitudes that make Smarter GTM™ programs successful.

A new discipline within your existing operation

Smarter GTM™ doesn't necessarily replace a company's traditional GTM. Instead, it can complement your normal lead generation activities, taking your key, high-value accounts out of everyday marketing flows and giving them special treatment.

Most GTM programs start by layering onto current processes, e.g.:

- **Pilot:** Test Smarter GTM™ for a few accounts
- **Segment:** Implement it for one or more segments (e.g., enterprise accounts or healthcare)
- **Focus:** Apply existing programs (e.g., outbound sales development) to specific accounts

Companies with both demand generation and account-based programs will need to set goals and measure results separately, aligning on how much pipeline and revenue will come from account-based and how much from traditional marketing efforts.

Getting Buy-In

Account-based programs can't happen without resources. And resources don't get marshaled without senior executives making it happen. In fact, in Demandbase's 2018 ABM Outlook Survey, respondents anticipated that their #1 challenge for ABM would be getting buy-in.

Here's how you can rally support for your Smarter GTM™ program.



Getting Buy-In (cont'd)

Talk to Executives

Often, the spark comes from a change in the company or market that affects fundamental revenue performance:

- Sales to existing major accounts are slowing or existing revenues are declining
- Share-of-wallet within large accounts is not known or competitors are gaining share
- Account teams are not stretching beyond established comfort zones nor developing business in new areas
- Growth in (or retention of) strategic accounts is a priority

If your leaders are finding that hiring more sales reps to hit their revenue goals isn't working anymore, they could be open to trying a more strategic approach focused on account intelligence and relationship building with key accounts.

Talk to Sales

If you're in marketing, you need to recruit sales to join your vision.

Consider these tips:

- Outline the need for change — Maybe revenue is slowing. Or wallet share is declining. Or there's an untapped opportunity, or growth from big accounts is a necessity. If the status quo is working, why change?
- Show what's in it for them — Better account intelligence and a marketing team dedicated to helping them win the big deals instead of throwing thousands of low-quality leads their way.

- Make the journey clear — Not just that you'll be targeting big accounts together, but also how you'll do it. (This guide should help!)
- Make a commitment to their success — Show how you will each win only if you win together.
- Make sure their bosses are on board — And that everyone knows the metrics and timescales are different from ordinary selling.

Talk to Marketing

If you're in sales and approaching the marketing team to get them on board, remember to:

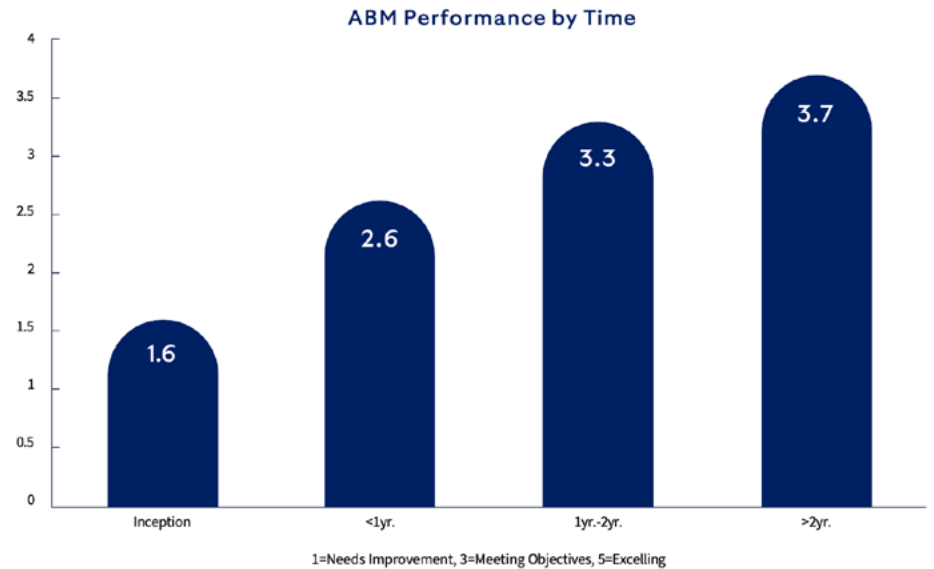
- Sell the need for change — Show that the current lead-centric view is missing major revenue opportunities.
- Show what's in it for them — A Sales team willing to work side-by-side with them and an opportunity to be associated with major wins.
- Show what Smarter GTM™ looks like for marketers — And how it's different from traditional demand generation.
- Commit to working together — Show that you're in it for the long haul, not just the quarter.
- Make sure the senior execs are in — Remind them they really won't be measured by lead volume.

Funding

With Smarter GTM™, being strategic about budgeting is particularly important because you're planning for a marathon, not a sprint. Your program probably won't deliver clear revenue immediately — possibly for a long time — so you need to plan accordingly.

If you hide this fact when you make your business case, you're sticking a time bomb inside your ABX program. Instead, make sure all executives understand the timescales and leading metrics you'll be using to ensure you're making progress towards revenue.

TOPO's 2019 Account Based Benchmark Report says that organizations invest from 0.5 percent to 2 percent of expected ACV for each target account. See the Appendix on marketing budgets for more benchmarks on how much you should plan to invest in GTM.



Stick with your program — results improve continuously over time.

The Smarter GTM™ Alignment Checklist

We've seen programs fly and we've seen them flop. As you implement your Smarter GTM™ program, follow these best practices and keep an eye out for the warning signs.

Best practices

- Get senior executive buy-in. Your team will need their understanding and protection.
- Be a tester not a cheerleader. Position the program as a new, collaborative, and ongoing approach to acquire and expand big accounts, not as “the next big marketing campaign.”
- Get 100 percent strategy commitment from the account executives, SDRs, and marketers. Anything less is a recipe for friction.
- Agree on the criteria for choosing accounts and the governance for when to add or remove accounts. (Don't just agree on which accounts to target).
- Align on the fraction of all resources that will go to your target accounts, perhaps starting with a pilot program.
- Agree on short-, medium-, and long-term metrics that everyone will track together. Also agree on the metrics that don't matter. Document this.
- Hold regular meetings, weekly in the early stages and relaxing to monthly meetings as the machine starts to hum.
- Let everyone know what's happening. Tell the rest of the marketing and sales teams about what you'll be doing and how they can help. Market your marketing.

The Smarter GTM™ Alignment Checklist (cont'd)

Common warning signs

- The account executive views Smarter GTM™ as a tactic to fit in with the normal way of selling.
- Top management sees the program as a sales drive or campaign.
- People describe Smarter GTM™ as “the next big marketing campaign.”
- Senior sales executives don’t see it as a long-term investment — they just want to hit this quarter’s numbers at all costs.
- Management expects quick results and doesn’t have the patience for leading indicators.
- Any team members think they already know all they need to know about the account.
- The account executive thinks he or she already knows every single person that matters inside each account.
- Sales is not involved in the target account selection.
- The Smarter GTM™ sponsor leaves the company or an acquisition shifts priorities.
- The change management part of the journey is undervalued.
- The target accounts are still being bombarded with the mainstream lead generation programs.
- If you see these things happening, speak up! You can still keep this thing on track.



Pilots

We get it: all the best practices in this guide can be overwhelming. That's why many companies that have deployed ABX successfully started their journey with a pilot.

By playing a long game, pilots help you incrementally build momentum and support for broader rollout of Smarter GTM. The benefits are clear:

- › Learn how Smarter GTM works for your business
- › Lower the risk
- › Iron out any issues before you scale
- › Earn stronger executive and stakeholder support
- › Lessen the change management challenge

We've seen pilots structured in many ways:

- › One sales rep and one marketer targeting five accounts (One-to-One GTM)
- › Three reps and a marketer targeting one industry sector (One-to-Few GTM)
- › A full GTM program in one territory or region
- › A full GTM program for one product line

Get started fast

Making the transition to Smarter GTM can be especially hard when you need to grow pipeline and revenue right now. Here are some

things you can do to show some benefit right away:

- › **Advertise to in-market accounts:** Use intent to identify which accounts are in-market and then advertise to those accounts.
- › **Map leads to accounts:** L2A is the foundation of any Smarter GTM initiative.
- › **Account scoring:** Show the sales team which accounts are in-market and engaging so they know where to invest their time and energy.
- › **Launch a simple, integrated play:** TOPO recommends a play that combines SDR outreach with marketing air cover like direct mail to generate meetings.

You can see benefit in a little as one quarter with an aggressive approach like this.

Pro Tip: Pilots often begin with just intent data and advertising, or simple lead-to-account matching, especially at large enterprises. One global software company succeeded by starting with just five sales reps, then expanded to 30, and so on. They worked through technical barriers, got the IT department on-board, and created some quick wins. The sales reps' enthusiasm supported the broader rollout.

Pro Tip: Don't wait to "perfectly" clean your database or define your ideal customer profile. You'll need those eventually, but in the meantime just pick some companies similar to your current best customers and go after them.

Smarter GTM™ in Enterprise vs SMB Companies

Smarter GTM looks different in larger enterprises than within small- and mid-sized companies.

Features	Enterprises	SMBs
Growth focus	Significant focus on post-sale expansion as well as new logos	More likely to focus primarily on new-business acquisition
Existing know-how	Already have field marketing teams in place, experience reaching out to target accounts, QBR processes, etc.	More likely that Smarter GTM is an entirely new muscle
Staffing	Can invest in specialists	More likely need to use existing staff
Marketing and sales alignment	Alignment is harder, especially when teams work in remote locations	Alignment is not easy but at least teams are more likely to work in the same location
Benefits	<p>Improved collaboration between distributed teams through a focus on defined accounts</p> <p>Clearer metrics and engagement analytics for enterprise decision-making</p>	<p>More strategic use of limited marketing and sales resources, where it matters most</p> <p>Improved revenue without hiring more staff</p>

Smarter GTM™ Maturity

The path to Smarter GTM™ is incremental. As your experience increases, so can your program's level of complexity. Steadily gain momentum, and before you know it, your Smarter GTM™ program will be running smoothly along your go-to-market track.

The Path to Smarter GTM™ Maturity

	Establish	Operationalize	Grow	Optimize
Goal	Create a pilot of one or a handful of accounts.	Add accounts to your pilot and establish best practices.	Scale your program with the different approaches.	Align interactions across the account journey.
People	Identify key people on your current marketing and sales teams to dedicate a percentage of their time to the program.	Your identified team continues to dedicate a percentage of their time to your ABX program.	Dedicate headcount to your program.	Grow your headcount as needed.
Foundation	Create your goals and objectives, establish your definitions (e.g., target accounts, personas, buying centers, and journey stages), and determine your initial scope and metrics for success.	Obtain executive sponsorship, create strategic KPIs, integrate your CRM and adtech/martech, match leads to accounts, develop account plans, and document strategies.	Build a center of excellence by creating a cross-functional leadership team, enterprise goals, transparent dashboards, and an account-centric go-to-market.	The entire revenue team is running orchestrated campaigns and is working to meet the same goals. Incorporate attribution insights.
Programs	Execute simple marketing touches (like direct mail or email), and use existing content, if possible. Add simple personalization with a top-of-funnel advertising pilot.	Execute campaigns (including upsell, cross-sell, and competitive preemptive campaigns) across multiple channels. Make small changes to existing content and develop new assets for different journey stages.	Execute orchestrated, multi-segmented campaigns based on journey stages. Create dedicated content for one-to-one, one-to-few, and one-to-many approaches.	Deepen the personalized journey experience through multi-segmented campaigns with short- and long-term goals.
Objectives	Understand in-market intent and engagement, uncover net new accounts, and deliver intent and engagement insights to sales.	Understand content consumption trends, empower sales with account and individual engagement insights across channels, and personalize the account journey experience.	Incorporate predictive modeling, big data, and AI for deeper insights and expanded opportunities. Understand account personas and buying centers.	Focus on optimizing plays and continue scaling new ones. Identify opportunities for faster conversion. Expand reach with content syndication and offsite SEO.

People, Roles, and Responsibilities

Smarter GTM™ is a resource-intensive, cross-functional strategy. The team you choose will make or break your early account-based efforts and determine whether your GTM program gets scaled up or held back.

Who does what on your team

Each department plays a role in Smarter GTM™. Remember, Smarter GTM™ isn't just a marketing campaign. Your respective levels of involvement will deepen as your program matures. (See the worksheet “Build Your All Star ABX Team” in the appendix for a deeper dive.)

Sales	Operations	Marketing	Customer Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify inputs (e.g., ICP, target accounts, segmentation) Generate valuable insights Leverage account insights to develop account plans Prioritize accounts based on rank and score Define sales follow up process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and manage reporting Implement account matching, segmented audiences, and intent keywords Customize scoring models and journey stages Integrate ancillary and third-party technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define initial scope and allocate budget Document strategies Identify inputs for (e.g., ICP, target accounts, intent keywords) Execute campaigns Track key metrics Communicate outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify attributes of best customers for ICP and target accounts Identify streamlined content experiences Identify opportunities for upsell and cross-sell

Detailed Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Account-Based Lead (e.g., Head of Marketing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Spearheads the account-based initiative ▸ Develops customized value propositions, messaging docs and playbooks ▸ Orchestrates all interactions ▸ Tracks the metrics and communicates the program's successes
Marketing Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Runs the ABM program mix ▸ Crafts account-specific messages ▸ Supports sales
Marketing Operations (or Sales Operations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Leads the account selection process ▸ Implements lead-to-account matching ▸ Maintains account and contact data ▸ Implements technology
Account Executive and Sales team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Manages the relationship with the client ▸ Helps shape the strategy and each account plan ▸ Quarterbacks the plan with the team and at the account ▸ Aligns all conversations around account needs ▸ Is the customer's trusted advisor
Sales Development Rep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Helps research the account and build contacts ▸ Reaches out to the account to build relationships ▸ Crafts account-specific emails and messages ▸ Nurtures relationships over time ▸ Supports the account executive as needed

Role	Responsibility
Field Marketer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Works with the account-based marketers to execute campaigns at the local level
Corporate Marketer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Works with the account-based marketers to collaborate on corporate communications and campaigns ▸ Understands what to customize for the customer and what programs can be included in the account's communication strategy
Product / Industry Marketer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Helps figure out the ICP ▸ Provides insight into the industry view ▸ Creates account- and industry-specific content
Product Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Provides product roadmap insights to the account team and/or customer ▸ Works with the team to understand if custom solutions are required and what's possible
Support Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Reports on and can escalate support items when they become consequential to customer satisfaction scores
Executive Sponsors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Provides deal/account support to drive engagement and deal closings

Evolving the Current Team

Don't let your team feel like Smarter GTM is "yet another thing" for them to take on. The last thing you want to do is overwhelm teams that are already being pushed to do more with less.

Instead, start with identifying the critical plays your current teams need to tackle, and give them light duty that takes up to a certain percentage of their time and focuses on building the basics. Product marketing can help determine the ICP, MOPS can acquire and manage the data, SDRs can research accounts, field marketing can run plays, and so on.

You can evolve the team as you prove results. Over time, you may find the need for dedicated leads and even a global Demand Center of Excellence. But you just need the basics to get started.

“Management often has a difficult time justifying a full-time marketer focused on 3-5 ABM accounts that might help generate 20 new contacts and 5 opportunities when a junior marketer may create 500 new contacts and 100 opportunities. Of course, the value between those scenarios is vast, but the change in mindset is significant.”

- Kathy Macchi, Vice President of Consulting Services, Inverta

Interview Questions to Ask Account-Based Leaders

More than two-thirds (69 percent) of top-performing account-based organizations now have a dedicated account-based leader, and according to TOPO, top-performing organizations are 33 percent more likely to have a dedicated account-based leader. The market has caught on — 70 percent of those who started their account-based initiatives in the last six months have dedicated leaders.

Account-based leaders not only oversee planning and execution, they drive the organizational change needed to adopt account-based programming, shift organizational resources, and change the way companies measure their results.

Whether you promote from within or hire from the outside, use these questions to evaluate candidates to run your account-based program:

- **What's your definition of ABM/ABX?** What you're looking for is alignment with your vision.
- **Why do you think ABX is a good strategy for our business?** This shows their ability to map generic account-based concepts to the specifics of your business. Look for an understanding of the importance of account intelligence.
- **Describe your process for launching an account-based program.** Find out whether or not this person could hit the ground running.
- **If you had an unlimited budget and could buy any technology to help execute your ABX strategy, what would it be?** Once the candidate offers a response, dig deeper to ensure they can really get into the weeds with the technology and are not just looking for new toys to play with.
- **How do you gauge engagement with and movement within target accounts?** Look for proof that the candidate understands the complexities of a lengthy account purchase process and how to pinpoint meaningful milestones.
- **Describe your experience working with other departments executing account-based programs.** Make sure they understand, appreciate, and respect the other departments, especially sales.
- **Walk me through, from start to finish, the most successful account-based campaign you've executed.** Spend the most time on this question. Don't let the candidate gloss over any details. Ask them to explain what they did and why they did it. Look for multi-channel engagement, examples of experimentation, and meaningful measures of success. You want to see a deep understanding of the Smarter GTM™ process, but you're also looking for grit, teamwork, curiosity, and critical thinking.

Advice



Oleg Solodyankin

CEO, Ignitium

Questions to ask yourself:

- › Can we speed things up with a pilot?
- › In what region might our pilot see the greatest success?
- › Do we have data, content, and callers?

Start with a targeted pilot

To earn buy-in, the best thing you can do is run an analysis of the ideal customer profile (ICP) for your top accounts. Maybe that's the 20 percent of companies generating 80 percent of your revenue. Look at your total addressable market (TAM) and find other companies that look like them — ideally more than 100 businesses but less than 10,000! Then, reduce your risk by using an experienced partner to run a turnkey pilot and get it done in six months rather than three years. Once you prove success in one small area, you'll have earned the credibility to expand.

Top-down support is key, but anyone can start a pilot

Your CMO, CRO, sales, operations, and customer success teams all need to be involved to see the biggest return on your investment. If it's a strategic initiative, it should start with the CMO or CRO. If it's just a regional pilot, someone like a motivated director of field marketing can pull it off with the budget they already have.

To start, you'll need data, content, and callers

There are three things you'll need in place: data, content, and a sales development team. You need the data because you need to be certain you have viable targets. You need content because your message will rapidly change and you'll need more than a few weeks worth of assets to keep things personalized.

And third, it helps to have already stood-up a sales development team. Without active sales development reps calling constantly and acting on intent signals, it's difficult to capitalize on the opportunities you produce to actually see success.

PART SEVEN

GTM Technologies

Smarter GTM™ Technology

You can run a successful Smarter GTM™ pilot with very little additional technology. But technology can be hugely valuable when you want to scale your program beyond a few accounts.

In fact, TOPO's Account-Based Technology Report found that account-based "leaders" (defined as companies outperforming their objectives) spend 46 percent more on account-based technology than "laggards."

But few marketing tools or platforms have been designed from the ground up to support this new view of the world. As a recent ITSMA report states, "It requires creative thinking to adapt tools that were not necessarily designed to support an account-based view of the world."

That's why so many companies realize they need to go beyond their marketing automation tools and invest in additional GTM technology.

Marketing Automation is Not Enough

It's pretty much guaranteed that your existing marketing technology is holding you back. Trust me, I should know — I was instrumental in building them.

The current marketing platforms were designed with a specific marketing process in mind: marketing generates leads for new business, nurtures them, and passes them to sales when they're ready. And they're very good at this process. But they were not built to handle what's needed today:

- Navigating across accounts and people
- Tracking intent behaviors away from your website to identify in-market accounts
- Expanding existing customer relationships by cross-selling additional products
- Managing sophisticated digital advertising programs
- Supporting a dynamic, synchronized process where marketing and sales work as a team

Put simply, you won't be able to deliver on B2B go-to-market today and for the next decade using technology that was built more than a decade ago. Trying to do so results in the pains many of you are so familiar with today: the struggle to create enough pipeline, poor marketing and sales alignment, difficulty moving upmarket, sluggish expansion revenue.

Fortunately, it's all solvable.



Marketing Automation is Not Enough (cont'd)

Current marketing automation technology prevents teams from embracing true B2B, account-based growth due to the following major gaps:

- **Traditional rules-based workflows don't scale.** Marketing has gotten more complex since 2005 when marketing automation was first designed. Simple linear journeys may have worked then, but today, there are simply too many possibilities: multiple personas at thousands of accounts, each needing a different offer at different times in the journey, delivered over an exploding number of possible channels. Traditional workflow visualizations can't handle all that complexity, further exacerbating the "spaghetti campaign" problem.
- **"Person-only" systems create unnecessary complexity.** Traditional marketing automation is built around the person, not the account. Lead-only systems struggle to make sense of where the broader account is in the buying journey, which makes it hard to deliver the right experience for each persona and buying stage. And, even with lead-to-account matching (L2A) in place, marketers still end up building complex networks of campaigns to ensure people get the right interactions based on account status. Marketing operations professionals are familiar with the resulting mess we call "spaghetti campaigns." These are often so confusing that when an admin moves to another company, nobody understands how to manage the custom system left behind.
- **Fragmented data prevents teamwork.** With traditional marketing automation, the information you need about people and accounts is scattered and fragmented. Sales is often operating in an account-based mindset, while much of marketing remains lead-based; the two teams are working in different systems and looking at different data. There's no comprehensive view of people, accounts, and buying centers; there's no single source of truth. Because of this, sales can't see what marketing is doing with their accounts and marketing doesn't know what sales is doing (because we all know reps never log their activities, right?). Your teams can't work together if they can't even see what the other team is doing.
- **Quantity-focused metrics measure the wrong things.** You can't manage what you can't measure, but the analytics built into existing marketing automation focus on counting things (# leads, # responses, # opportunities, etc.) and not measuring the quality or value of each relationship. They also only measure marketing touches, ignoring critical sales interactions. What's more, they focus on the initial sale, not beyond (expansion, retention, etc.). The result is that marketers struggle to show the value of their account-based efforts and spend hours in spreadsheets to demonstrate the impact of their efforts.

Smarter GTM™ Technologies

Companies that want to scale Smarter GTM™ strategies quickly realize they need some additional technology to make it happen. Here are the core capabilities you'll need to consider:

Build Create an account-intelligence foundation	
CRM	Marketing Automation
Customer Data Platform (CDP)	Email and Calendar Logging
Account Identification / Deanonymization	Lead to Account Matching (L2A)

Find Identify the accounts that drive your business	
Intent Data	Account Data
Contact Data	Predictive Analytics

Engage				
Engage — Understand Develop account insights	Engage — Personalize Create customized content and offers	Engage — Advertise Attract target accounts	Engage — Interact Engage accounts across channels	Engage — Orchestrate Coordinate account-focused plays
Account Profiling	Content Hubs	Account-Based Advertising	Live and Virtual Events	Segmentation
Account Planning	Personalized Videos	Social Advertising and Search	Direct Mail and Gifting	Account-Based Orchestration
		Content Syndication	Sales Engagement	
			Website Personalization	
			Chat	

Close Align Marketing and Sales

Sales Insights

Measure Prove — and improve — the impact of GTM efforts
--

Account-Based Analytics

Technology to Build an Account-Based Foundation

CRM

You must have a CRM platform. With few exceptions, you can't do Smarter GTM™ without one since it serves as the system of record for your accounts and opportunities. Microsoft Dynamics and Salesforce are the most common choices, although Hubspot, Oracle, SAP, SugarCRM, and others also provide CRM solutions.

Marketing Automation

Despite its limitations for account-based strategies, companies today still need marketing automation to send emails, capture leads, and manage programs. Leading marketing automation vendors include Hubspot, Marketo (Adobe), Oracle Eloqua, and Salesforce Pardot.

Customer Data Platform (CDP)

Smarter GTM™ requires a single view of your accounts, the people at them, and the associated behaviors and opportunities — and for all the reasons discussed, CRM plus marketing automation alone doesn't cut it. This is why CDPs can be an important part of your Account Intelligence foundation.

There are standalone and embedded CDPs: a standalone CDP is a separate tool that integrates into the rest of the stack and typically requires a large investment, while an embedded CDP is a capability of another solution, delivering the benefit with much less work. Generally, we see larger enterprises investing to build

their own CDPs while fast-growing mid-market companies tend to use CDPs embedded into their account-based platform.

Demandbase and 6sense both provide embedded CDPs as part of their platforms. D&B Lattice, Leadspace, Hull, Segment, and Zylotech (now part of Terminus) provide standalone B2B CDPs; many of the CRM vendors and Adobe are also starting to offer CDP solutions; and the B2C CDP providers such as Amperity, Emarsys, Lytics, Tealium, Treasure Data, and many more are entering the B2B space.

Build Create an account intelligence foundation	
CRM	Marketing Automation
Customer Data Platform (CDP)	Email and Calendar Logging
Account Identification / Deanonimization	Lead to Account Matching (L2A)

Technology to Build an Account-Based Foundation (cont'd)

Email and Calendar Logging

There is a goldmine of account insights buried in your emails and meetings, but sales reps are notoriously bad about logging this information. Software that can attach to the email and calendar server and automatically log interactions goes a long way to help here.

Demandbase includes this natively in our account-based platform, but there are many other vendors out there who provide this capability as well: BoostUp, Clari, InsightSquared, People.ai, Salesforce Einstein, and more.

Account Identification / Deanonymization

Since buyers want to remain anonymous during much of the buying process, the ability to identify which account is on your website is critical to delivering the right experiences. It's also necessary to match third-party intent signals and target accounts for advertising.

When evaluating account identification providers, pay attention to both match rate (the percent of visitors that can be identified) as well as match accuracy (how often is it right). A match rate can be artificially boosted by sacrificing accuracy.

At Demandbase, we're enormously proud of our account identification solution (and we'd love to show it to you).

Apparently, 6sense, Clearbit, Dun & Bradstreet, and Kickfire also provide deanonymization as part of their solutions. (Can't vouch for those.)

Lead to Account Matching (L2A)

Lead-to-account matching associates leads with the correct accounts in your CRM, making that data available for analytics, lead routing, engagement scoring, and so on. TOPO writes that "Lead-to-account matching is absolutely required for high-growth organizations running account-based programs" and indicates that it has relatively high impact and satisfaction from companies that use it. Demandbase provides L2A natively in our platform, and we also have many customers using LeanData for this capability.

Technology to Find Accounts that Drive your Business

Account Data

Account data provides insights with firmographic (e.g. industry, location, and size) and technographic data, and is essential for building accurate account lists. Demandbase provides both firmographic and technographic data, as does ZoomInfo. Other account data providers include Clearbit, Dun & Bradstreet, and Oracle DataFox, and other technographic providers include BuiltWith, DemandMatrix, HG Insights, and Slintel (now part of 6sense). Some account-based platforms OEM account data and provide it in their solution.

Find Identify the accounts that drive your business	
Intent Data	Account Data
Contact Data	Predictive Analytics

Intent Data

Intent data tells you what topics a company is researching on the internet. Companies use intent data to find the magic moments when buyers are in-market and actually interested in hearing from them, and to identify the specific topics the account will find most relevant. While intent is not required to practice account-based marketing, it's pretty critical to any Smarter GTM™ strategy.

Intent data is one of the fastest growing areas of account-based technology. Demandbase is a leading provider of intent data, and also integrates with other top providers including Bombora, G2, TechTarget, and TrustRadius. 6sense provides intent data in its platform, and other account-based platforms such as Terminus embed Bombora into their solution for intent. Other intent providers include Bilin, IntentData.io, Intentisfy, MRP Prelytix, and True Influence.

Contact Data

Contact data vendors provide just that: contact information and insights for individuals at accounts, which makes it pretty essential. The top providers are Demandbase, LinkedIn, and ZoomInfo, with other players including Clearbit, Dun & Bradstreet, Leadspace, and Synthio.

Predictive Analytics

This takes the data foundation you've built and adds machine learning to help you focus on the right accounts. As discussed, you may have one model that determines which accounts are a good fit with your ideal customer profile (ICP), and another that predicts when accounts are in market and ready to move into an opportunity stage. Ideally, these models are built automatically — otherwise, you'll need to go back to the vendor every time you want to make a small change. At Demandbase, we provide predictive analytics via our Qualification Score and Pipeline Predict Score analytics. Other vendors include 6sense, D&B Lattice, Minitgo (Anaplan), and ZoomInfo.

Technology to Understand and Personalize to Accounts

Account Profiling

There are many vendors that can help you build account profiles, often simply by calling and asking the account. These vendors include By Appointment Only (BAO), SimplyDIRECT, and Ziff Davis.

Vendors such as Owler, G2 and TrustRadius can tell you which companies compete with your target account, and vendors like Demandbase (InsideView) and Crunchbase can provide account triggers and other profile information such as amount of capital raised.

Account Planning

While many companies create account plans as simple documents and put them into a shared drive, it's quite useful to have that information live right in the CRM — a capability provided by vendors such as Altify and Revegy, as well as DemandFarm, Kapta, and Prolifiq.

Account Content Hubs

Vendors like Uberflip, Folloze, and PathFactory allow you to create account-specific web pages using real-time personalization, defining business rules that let you dynamically customize the content by persona, intent, location, account, industry and sales stage.

Personalized Videos

An increasingly popular tactic for engaging accounts is to create personalized videos you can send to the account. Popular tools for this include BombBomb, Loom, and Vidyard, or try using Cameo to have celebrities record personalized messages for your target accounts.

Engage	
Engage — Understand Develop account insights	Engage — Personalize Create customized content and offers
Account Profiling	Content Hubs
Account Planning	Personalized Videos

Technology to Advertise to Accounts

Account-Based Advertising

Account-based advertising is when you target ads to specific named accounts. It is one of the high-impact / high-satisfaction categories identified by TOPO. It is often purchased along with an account-based platform, though not always.

The top providers are Demandbase and LinkedIn. Others include 6sense, Advertaze, Influ2, Integrate, Jabmo, Kwanzoo, Madison Logic, Metadata.io, Rollworks, Triblio, and Terminus.

Social Advertising and Search

Many companies complement their account-based advertising with additional advertising, often targeting roles or titles. LinkedIn is the most common for B2B social ads, and not surprisingly, Google for search. Less common is Bing, Facebook, and Twitter.

Content Syndication

Using content syndication is a great way to generate opt-in contacts at target accounts. Some of the more common vendors are Integrate, Madison Logic, and TechTarget; others include BrightTALK, IDG, Netline, PureB2B, Salsify, TechPro Media, True Influence, and ZiffDavisB2B.

Engage

Engage — Advertise
Attract target accounts

Account-Based Advertising

Social Advertising and Search

Content Syndication

Technology to Engage Accounts Across Channels

Other than advertising, the core channels used to create engagement with target accounts are events, direct mail and gifting, human email (via sales engagement software tools), and website personalization (including chat).

Live and Virtual Events

There is a growing list of companies that support live and virtual events, handling everything from registration and streaming to audience engagement, virtual booths, and analytics. Vendors for live events include Attend, Bizzabo, Certain, Cvent, Eventbase, Eventbrite, Slido, and Splash. Virtual event vendors include BrightTALK, INXPO, GoToWebinar, Hopin, ON24, WebEx, and Zoom.

Direct Mail and Gifting

While you can always send a package or handwritten note to a customer manually, many vendors have emerged to scale and automate the program. Top players include Alyce, PFL, and Sendoso; others include Enthusem, Printfection, Reachdesk, and Rocket Notes.

Sales Engagement

Sales engagement tools evolved from sales email tracking tools to provide scale to personalized sales and SDR outreach. They let companies design and automate activity sequences across multiple touchpoints and channels, including email, phone calls, social media, SMS/text, video, meeting scheduling, and live chat. The top vendors are Outreach and Salesloft, other players include Groove, Hubspot, PersistIQ, Prospect.io, Salesforce, VanillaSoft, Xant, and Yesware.

Website Personalization

This is the ability to change the website content based on the account visiting the page. It can include serving account-specific content, such as an account content hub, or changing the page based on industry, journey stage, intent, and so on. Top providers are Adobe Target, Demandbase, and Optimizely. The content hub providers like Folloze, PathFactory and Uberflip can also provide this capability. Others include Google Optimize, Intellimize, Salesforce Interaction Studio, Triblio, and VWO.

Chat

Chat allows businesses to have conversations with their website visitors and customers in real-time, often using automation. It originated as a customer support tool but is also used to qualify leads and then pass the best ones to live sales reps to continue the conversation. Drift and Intercom are the best known vendors, others include Conversica, Exceed.ai, and Qualified (plus many more focused on support chat).

Engage
Engage — Interact Engage accounts across channels
Live and Virtual Events
Direct Mail and Gifting
Sales Engagement
Website Personalization
Chat

Technology to Orchestrate Account-Focused Plays

Segmentation

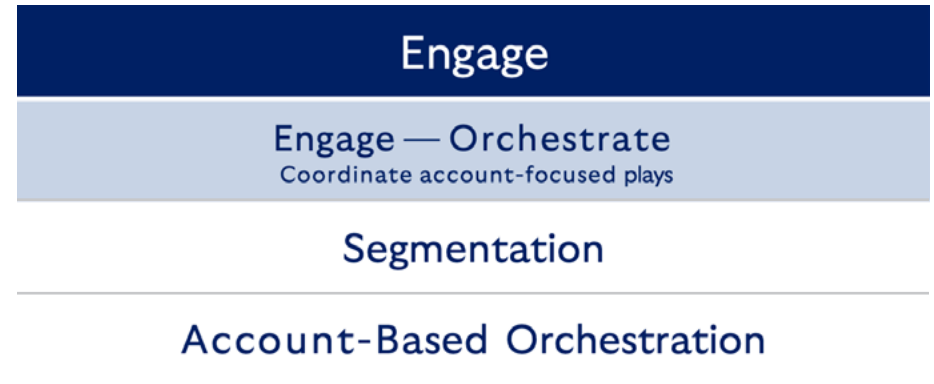
We know that smaller, more targeted lists based on dynamic account behaviors will perform the best. Segmentation is how you slice and dice all your data into those specific audiences for campaigns and analytics. The trick is to make it easy to get simple audiences without losing the flexibility to get the precision you need for more sophisticated plays.

Instead of being a category, segmentation is a feature of an account-based platform like Demandbase or a CDP. Just be sure you really understand the power and limitations of whatever tool you are considering, as well as how the audiences get activated into other platforms.

Account-Based Orchestration

Smarter GTM™ is not about any one channel — it's about coordinating experiences across multiple channels, and doing so in harmony, at scale. That's what orchestration is all about.

Orchestration is a feature of leading account-based platforms, especially Demandbase (6sense, Terminus, and Triblio provide some capability as well). The traditional marketing automation platforms also have limited account orchestration functionality. As always, check whether any vendor you are considering meets your requirements for today as well as what you'll want tomorrow.



Technology to Align Marketing and Sales and Measure Smarter GTM™

Sales Insights

This is all about providing actionable insights to enable customer-facing reps to prioritize their time on the best opportunities. That could mean focusing on in-market accounts who are ready to buy, accelerating an existing opportunity, or protecting a customer from a competitive attack. And it's about providing account intelligence so the reps know what action they should take and what messages they should use. The insights are delivered where the reps already work: in CRM, in email, in messaging (e.g. Slack). This is a common feature of account-based platforms including Demandbase, 6sense, and Terminus. There are also many other complementary sales intelligence vendors, including Aviso, Clari, People.ai, and Salesforce Einstein.

Account-Based Analytics

The metrics for your account-based efforts are different than traditional lead-based marketing. Often delivered as part of the account-based platform, these tools measure the impact of your account-based programs, focusing on engagement, journey, and ROI analytics.



Account-Based Platforms

It's not surprising that some vendor names show up repeatedly in the lists above — many of these disparate categories are coalescing into a single category known as account-based platforms.

While the early days of ABM were characterized by dozens of point solutions, we're now seeing the market coalesce around a few account-based platforms that provide all the essential capabilities: single view of the account, intent, scoring, advertising, segmentation, orchestration, sales insights, and measurement.

This is similar to how the marketing automation category evolved in the mid 2000s to become a “must have” piece of the stack. There will always be additional point solutions that integrate into the platform, but increasingly companies will choose a single account-based platform to serve as the anchor of their account-based efforts.

Forrester writes that:

“B2B marketers choosing an ABM platform can avoid the operational and technical drag that comes from purchasing and integrating several individual products and start generating results from their ABM programs more quickly.”

- The Forrester New Wave™: ABM Platforms

TOPO agrees:

“Account-based platforms will be the single-most important category in the stack in 2018 and beyond. These solutions will bring together planning, orchestration management and measurement into a single solution.”

- TOPO Account-Based Technology Report

And Gartner says:

“ABM platforms can bolster internal capabilities and fill execution gaps in systems of record such as marketing automation and sales force automation (SFA). As such, they are becoming a critical component of efficient and effective martech ecosystems in B2B organizations.”

- Gartner, Market Guide for Account-Based Marketing Platforms, Noah Elkin and Todd Berkowitz, 5 December 2019¹

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What Technology Do You Need?

Don't be overwhelmed. Sure, there are a lot of technologies that support Smarter GTM™, but you don't need to buy technology from each category to embrace an account-based go-to-market! You can dip your toe in the water with a pilot using limited technology (perhaps intent data + LinkedIn), and then invest in an account-based platform when looking to scale to the next stage.

When asked about which technologies companies use to support their ABM programs, the most common answers are general marketing technologies: email, web, CRM, social. The most common account-based technologies were advertising, account insights, direct mail, and intent (ABM 2020 Benchmark Study from the ITSMA and ABM Leadership Alliance).

TOPO's Marketing Technology Report also analyzed the categories with the greatest impact and satisfaction. They found that the four categories with the highest impact and satisfaction were:

- Account Based Platforms
- Lead-to-Account Matching & Routing
- Account Based Advertising
- Contact Data

Which types of technologies do you currently use to support your ABM programs?

% of respondents (N=300)



Note: Multiple responses allowed. ITSMA and ABM Leadership Alliance, 2020 ABM Benchmark Study, September 2020

Top planned investments for 2021

- ABM platform
- Attribution and reporting
- Intent
- Direct mail
- Content syndication
- Third party data
- Events

Strategy Before Technology

In the world of technology, it's tempting to buy technology to solve a strategy problem. But that invariably leads to disillusionment. You have to define your account-based strategy before considering what technologies you need or what vendors have to offer.

At a minimum, answer these questions before investing in new technology:

1. Why is this the right strategy for your business?
2. Is there executive alignment and organizational buy-in on an account-based go-to-market strategy?
3. What criteria makes a good target account? How will you decide on your target account list?

“Remember that ABM is foremost an engagement strategy, not a new technology. You will improve your success rate by defining your business objectives first and then assessing whether you already have the right tools in place to execute.”

- Steven Casey, Principal Analyst, Forrester

4. What does success with Smarter GTM™ look like? How will you measure your progress?
5. What are the roles and responsibilities of the players on your ABX team?

“Using your business strategy to guide technology purchases is a best practice in all cases, but it is an absolute requirement in emerging markets such as ABM platforms, where product capabilities vary widely. Only after you have defined your ABM strategy can you properly prioritize and evaluate the capabilities each vendor offers. To use two simplified examples, a small tech startup that focuses on landing net new accounts will need an ABM platform with robust capabilities for account discovery, while a large manufacturer that focuses on account expansion will need an optimized platform to find early signals of buying intent and create compelling digital engagement throughout a lengthy purchase cycle.”

- Forrester: Define Your ABM Strategy First, And Then Choose A Platform

Choose the Right Vendor

Training and customer support

Make sure to understand how much training is needed to use the software, and what kind of training is available. Ask vendors what level of customer support they offer, and when is it available (i.e., 24/7 vs. 8/5)? Ask about professional services or support for the transition to new GTM approaches, as well as the long-term product roadmap and dates.

Ask your peers

Customer references are an important source of insight, either from your network or supplied by the vendor.

Ask:

- Why did you select this tool over others?
- How long did the system take to implement?
- Were there any surprises that you wish you'd known about beforehand?
- Where have you seen the most success? The biggest challenges?
- Why would you recommend this tool?

Account-Based Marketing Tools: A Marketer's Guide, A MarTech Today Research Report

What should be included in your RFP? You may want or need to use an RFP to manage your buying process.

“When written properly, an RFP will facilitate the sales process and ensure that everyone involved on both sides comes to a shared understanding of the purpose, requirements, scope and structure of the intended purchase.”

- Account-Based Marketing Tools: A Marketer's Guide, A MarTech Today Research Report

Make sure your RFP covers all the key account-based capabilities you'll need, including data, predictive models, sales insights, advertising, website personalization, orchestration, analytics, and integrations.

Advice



**Kathy
Macchi**

Vice President
of Consulting
Services,
Inverta



**Ashley
Shailer**

Vice President
of Marketing,
Inverta

Questions to ask yourself:

- What is our specific, measurable goal with this technology?
- What will happen if it doesn't work?
- How will it integrate?
- How will we ensure adoption?
- Can a platform help us consolidate?

Beware of buying technology to avoid people-process stuff

Every tech purchase needs a goal. Otherwise, how will you know the system you purchased works? You have to force yourself to define the problem you're trying to solve so you don't wind up acquiring technology because it was easier than tackling a political issue.

For each solution, ask, why is this important? How will it integrate? What are the opportunity costs? What happens if it doesn't work? Without clear answers you're only adding complication. And while you can afford to experiment with 20 percent of your technology stack, the core 80 percent can't be there because it looked fun.

Change management is often the most difficult part

If a new technology changes a process people are used to, it can be a challenge to get it adopted. If I'm a business development rep, I want to continue doing things as I've always done them because they're muscle memory and that's how I avoid a dip in productivity. I, and everyone like me, needs to know what's coming, how we benefit, and to feel part of that vision. This is why it's better to involve more people in the evaluation — they'll have skin in the game. (And there, see how the buying committee increases?).

There is no ideal tech stack

Your ABM technology will look very different depending on who you're targeting and how. Do you need to focus on scale and automation for thousands of accounts? Bespoke outreach for 50? Both? Knowing determines the technology you should use. If you can get all those approaches in one platform that lets you act on those insights in a timely manner, that technology is worth its weight in gold.

Appendices

ABXperts

Analysts and journalists

Steven Casey — Forrester
Alisa Groocock — Forrester
Malachi Threadgill — Forrester
John Arnold — Forrester
Nicky Briggs — Forrester
Jeff Sands — ITSMA
Bev Burgess — ITSMA Europe
Mark Ogne — ABM Consortium
David Raab — Raab Associates
Scott Brinker — Chief Marketing Technologist
Peter O'Neill — Research in Action
Bruce Daley — 451 Research
Michael Levy — GZ Consulting
Joel Harrison — B2B Marketing
Barb Mosher Zinck — diginomica
Klaudia Tirico — Demand Gen Report
Kim Davis — Martech Today
Steve Books — Enterprise Times
Stephanie Vaugn — CMSWire

Practitioners

Dorothea Gosling — DXC Technology
Avi Bhatnagar — Metallic.io
Maria Pergolino — ActiveCampaign
Kaitlin Bellay — LinkedIn
Brandee Sanders — Modal
Nicole DiNicola — Qualtrics
Jennifer Leaver — Bazaarvoice
Alex Stojkovic — Process & Steam Specialties
Bob Samuels — TechConnectr
Christelle Flahaux — FortressIQ
Rozanne Bonavito — BlackLine
Rob Israch — Tipalti
Heidi Bullock — Tealium
Mike Cichon — 1Kosmos
Rishi Dave — MongoDB
Gabe Paley — Carefull
Kelvin Gee — Oracle
Crissy Nadal — PayPal
Laura Vitaro — Gong.io
Dannielle Beaupré — Siemens PLM
Adena DeMonte — Coupa Software
Meaghan Sullivan — SAP
Kyle Gudgeon — Confluent

Stephanie Losee — Autodesk
Amy Vosko — Behavox
Meghan Flannery — Drift
Marissa Dacay — Adobe
Shetal Shah — SurveyMonkey
Sonja Gray — Verizon
Caryne Say — Cedar
Meg McGrath — Snowflake
Eileen Egan — Red Hat
Gemma Davies — ServiceNow
Rebecca Martins — Zuora
Julie Bolton — BMC Software
Kathryn Powell Mowry — Sage
Jenna Keegan — Flywire
Larry Srader — Unisys
Stacey Peterson — Microsoft
Jason Stewart — PwC
Beki Scarbrough — Demandbase
Donna Davis — Demandbase
Gareth Noonan — Demandbase

ABXperts (cont'd)

Other Vendors

Mark Godley — LeadGenius
Henry Schuck — ZoomInfo
Mike Kelly — Intentsify
Mike Burton — Bombora
Clive Armitage — Agent3
Daniel Gaugler — PFL
Marne Reed — PFL
Kris Rudeegraap — Sendoso
Nick Bennett — Alyce
Sydney Sloan — SalesLoft
Harmony Hickman Anderson — Outreach
Sean Whitely — Qualified
Etaï Beck — Folloze
Randy Frisch — UberFlip
Rene Asis — LiveRamp
Tom O'Regan — Madison Logic
Sangram Vajre — Terminus
Courtney Smith — 6sense
Mani Iyer — Kwanzoo
Scott Vaughan — Integrate

ABX Consultants

Matt Heinz — Heinz Marketing
Megan Heuer — Winning by Design
Shari Johnston — Winning by Design
Justin Gray — LeadMD
David Lewis — BDO / DemandGen
Alisha Lyndon — Momentum ABM
Pam Didner — Relentless Pursuit
Lorena Harris — The Pedowitz Group
Kathy Macchi — Inverta
Jessica Fewless — Inverta
Robin Tobin — ITSMA
Kelly Waffle — Hinge Research Institute
Trish Bertuzzi — The Bridge Group
Regan George — The Social Effect
Howard Sewell — Spear Marketing Group
Jon Russo — B2B Fusion
Christopher Rack — PureB2B
Alexandre Pelletier — Perkuto
Ian Kirk — 1827 Marketing
Mike Lieberman — Square 2
Oleg A. Solodyankin — Ignitium
Alex Embling — strategicabm
Michael Fung — ABMarketing Leads

Crissy Saunders — CS2 Marketing
Vincent DeCastro — The ABM Agency
James Regan — MRP
Nicholas Bequette — The ABM Company
Jack Thompson — ABM Alliance
Michael McLaren — Merkle B2B
Adam Mincham — Merkle B2B

Marketing Budgets

We're often asked how much companies should invest in marketing and their account-based programs.

One way to look at it is marketing budget as a percentage of total company revenues.

CMOsurvey is a great source for this data. In February 2021, marketing spending as a percentage of a overall company-wide budget was 11.7 percent, while marketing spending as a percentage of firm revenue was at 13.2 percent.

Marketing spend at Software-as-a- Service (SaaS) companies

Let's do a deep dive into Software-as-a- Service Companies specifically. A common way to look at the budget is using the "CAC ratio," the fully-loaded amount spent on marketing and sales divided by the ARR from customer bookings in the period.

According to the KeyBanc Capital Markets SaaS survey, the average blended CAC ratio is \$1.13. Furthermore, sales receives on average 70 percent of the CAC budget, and marketing receives

30 percent. In other words, the marketing budget in people and programs is about 34 cents per dollar of ARR. (Also, the fully-loaded marketing budget is on average 43 percent of the fully-loaded sales budget.)

What percent of the marketing budget should ABX receive?

The Demandbase 2020 ABM Market Research Study found that companies spent 39 percent of the total marketing budget on account-based efforts in 2020, up from 33 percent in 2019. This may be because companies increase the percentage of their marketing budget as their account-based implementation matures; TOPO's Account-Based Technology Report (April 2018) reported the percentage of the marketing budget starts at 16 percent during pilot stage and more than doubles for programs two or more years old.

As another data point, the TOPO 2019 Account Based Benchmark Report reported that companies invest between 0.5 percent to 2 percent of expected ACV for each target account.

Industry Sector															
Industry	Banking Finance Insurance	Communications Media	Consumer Packaged Goods	Consumer Services	Education	Energy	Healthcare	Pharma Biotech	Manufacturing	Mining Construction	Service Consulting	Real Estate	Tech Software Platform	Transportation	Retail Wholesale
Percent of revenues	8.18	16.78	18.70	23.43	23.36	4.83	8.04	15.65	9.75	13.16	20.60	-	8.61	20.48	13.51

CMOsurvey.org, February 2021

Other Account Journey Models

The New SiriusDecisions Demand Unit Waterfall®

When SiriusDecisions introduced its iconic Demand Waterfall in 2006, the analyst firm led the way in teaching the world how to quantify the traditional lead-based demand generation process. It was powerful and helped teach a generation of B2B marketers how to measure and communicate their results.

Inspired by new processes and technologies like ABM, SiriusDecisions released a new version in 2017: The Demand Unit Waterfall®. This was a major change away from lead-based funnels.

The Demand Unit Waterfall tracks how discrete buying groups called Demand Units, not leads, move through the Waterfall. (Demand units are like buying centers.)

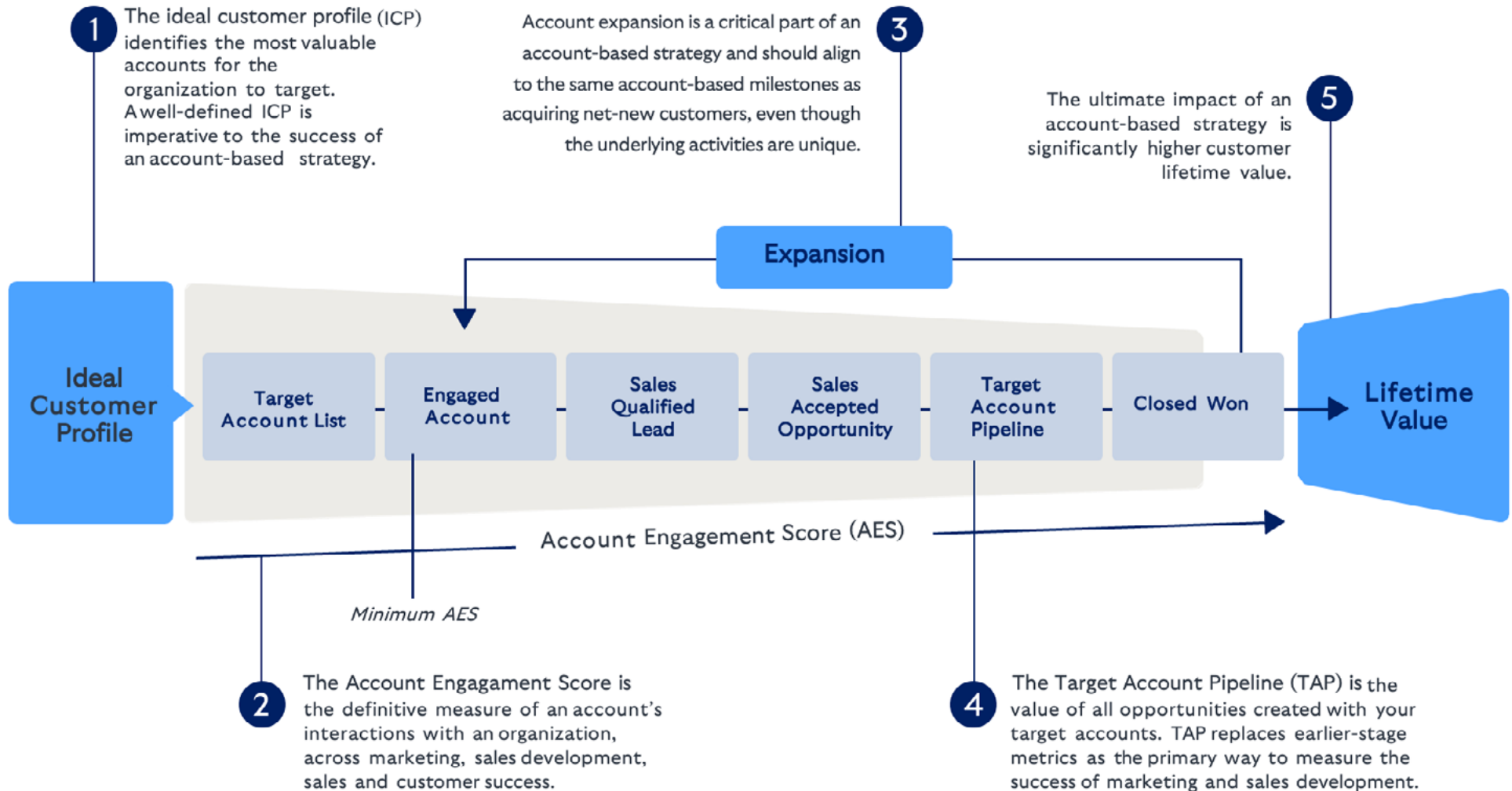
SiriusDecisions changed its Demand Waterfall to incorporate ABM.



1. Potential Demand Units that could purchase company solutions (e.g.: total addressable market).
2. Demand Units showing evidence of being, or needing to be, in the market for company solutions. (Often driven by intent data.)
3. Demand Units where at least one designated buyer persona opts-in to company campaigns and/or responds to marketing actions.
4. Demand Units where at least one designated buyer persona opts-in to company campaigns and/or responds to marketing actions.
5. Demand Units showing sufficient engagement to justify sales contact (e.g.: a marketing qualified account).
6. Demand Units qualified as Sales-ready by humans (e.g.: need and timing or other criteria).
7. Demand Units with active sales opportunities. Demand Units with closed-won opportunities.

The TOPO Account-Based Funnel

Analyst firm TOPO's Account-Based Funnel.



Build Your All-Star ABM Team

Many B2B Marketing organizations are investigating account-based marketing (ABM). But some don't know how to get started. Overwhelmed by thoughts of changing their programs and hiring new staff, many marketing leaders put aside their plans. But delaying ABM means you are leaving revenue on the table. In a recent ITSMA benchmark survey, 92 percent of respondents with mature ABM programs reported "higher ROI than other types of marketing."

Use this worksheet as a guide to building your all-star ABM team. Start with leveraging your current marketing team. Then, determine how you can get support from the rest of your organization. Finally, build your core ABM team.

1. Leverage Your Current Team

The reality is that you can get started with ABM right away and increase your marketing and sales teams' involvement over time. In fact, integrating an ABM strategy into your current strategy doesn't require a wholesale change. Call upon your current marketing team to spin up a pilot program to prove ABM success before fully investing in an ABM practice.

For your pilot, identify a few places in your marketing organization where you could achieve success with minimal lift and disruption.

Corporate Marketing	Product Marketing	Revenue Marketing	Field Marketing/ Partner	Events	Marketing Operations
PR Website Design Customer Loyalty Social Media	Product Marketing Analyst Relations	Marketing Programs Marketing Automation Customer X-sell, Up-sell Digital Marketing Content Marketing	Regional Field Marketing and Sales Support Partner Marketing	Tradeshows User Conferences Road Shows Virtual Events	Planning Metrics Review Program Reporting Systems Performance

Build Your All-Star ABM Team (cont'd)

2. Get Your Entire Organization Involved

ABM isn't just a marketing campaign. It's a strategic business initiative that involves full participation and support from all departments.

Oftentimes, marketing and sales can call on other departments to contribute at critical moments. Everyone will bring their unique skillsets to support your ABM initiative. Here's an overview of the roles that key departments play in ABM:

Sales	Operations	Marketing	Customer Success
Select key accounts by tier Work on account plans for top tier	Set up account foundation, like CRM Review account data	Ensure a clear list of target accounts is identified and prioritized	Collaborate with marketing for content strategy and creation
Prioritize time and effort for outbound to tiered accounts	Have a process for adding new contact and account data	Work with sales on level of support and program roll-out	Help plan experiences that are consistent and streamlined
Collaborate with marketing on programs, intelligence, and reporting Have a way to look at account progression — e.g., engagement	Help teams with weekly and monthly reporting	Allocate budget Help provide intelligence for account plans Have plan for early, mid, and late stage goals and reporting	Identify opportunities for upsell and cross-sell Identify the attributes of the best customers for account selection and help prioritize accounts Identify a customer-first approach that is promoted across ABM plays

Build Your All-Star ABM Team (cont'd)

3. Build Your ABM Team

Now, it's time to build your ABM team. Whether you're starting from scratch or filling in the gaps, these are the essential roles and responsibilities of a high-performing ABM team.

ABM Lead (e.g., Head of Marketing)	Product Marketing Manager	Marketing Manager	Marketing Ops or Sales Ops Manager	Strategic Account Manager (AE)	Executive Sponsors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spearheads the initiative Develops playbooks and the technology infrastructure needed Tracks metrics and communicates program successes Facilitates cooperation with other departments Communicates across the entire team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps figure out the ICP Ranks accounts based on best fit for your company Gathers intelligence on the marketing and competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Runs the program mix: for highly, somewhat, and limited personalization Crafts account-specific emails and messages Nurtures relationships Supports sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads the account selection progress Implements lead-to-account matching Maintains account and contact data quality Owns and integrates technology to support ABM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drives the plan forward with sales team Helps shape the ABM strategy and each tier-one (1:1) account plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides deal and account support to drive engagement and close deals

Worksheet

Account Entitlement Worksheet

In the spreadsheet below, simply find the type of program, enter the program name, and then fill in the appropriate entitlement for each style of ABM.

Type of Program	Program	Entitlements		
		Style 1 (1-to-1)	Style 2 (1-to-few)	Style 3 (1-to-many)
Account Plans				
Nurture				
Executive Support				
Partner Support				
Additional Tools / Software				
Additional Budget				
Direct Mail				
Field Events				
Tradeshows				
Personalized Plays				
Database Sends				
Targeted Ads				
Content Syndication				
Sales Outreach				
Appointment Setting				
Contact Discovery				
Custom Content				
Custom Hubs				

Account Planning Template

This is a living document that you should keep up to date for your key strategic accounts. Continuously refer back to it to stay apprised of the account's purchase path with your company. Consider updating this template on a quarterly basis so that it aligns with the account's quarterly report results.

Section I: Account Overview

Use this section to give a brief overview of the account.

Overview: Explain what they do

Employees

Revenue

Key Facts: (e.g., backed by Norwest, growing 30% y/y, new CMO, etc.)

Account Planning Template (cont'd)

Section II: Deal Overview

Use this section to give an overview of the deal, your position within the account, and the plan to drive growth within the account.

If the account is an enterprise with multiple divisions, duplicate this page and write the name of the division here:

Division Name:

Their Team

Key Persona 1:

Key Persona 2:

Key Persona 3:

Key Persona 4:

Selling Personas

Economic buyer:

Economic user:

Technical approve

Coach:

Major Subsidiaries And/Or Divisions

Subsidiary 1 Name

Location

Information on Subsidiary

Subsidiary 2 Name

Location

Information on Subsidiary

Subsidiary 3 Name

Location

Information on Subsidiary

Forecast Amount: List products

Account Planning Template (cont'd)

Section III: Building and Closing the Deal

How do you see this deal happening? This section should be detailed and intensive. From start to finish, HOW are you going to build a deal? Think of this as a close plan to a deal that hasn't started.

Example Ideas:

- Create and fill out your discovery guide.
- Find a key problem that needs to be solved and understand the impact of that problem on the company if it's not solved.
- Prepare a follow-up email based on discovery that is confirmed and validated by your initial touch point.
- Prepare an initial presentation and custom demo to entry point. (If you prepare a group demo, confirm with your entry point that the content and flow is in-line with the account's expectations.)
- Make sure that in your first presentation there is at least one person that is likely to become one of the 4 key buying personas (Buyer, User, Technical, Coach).

List 3-5 objectives you want to achieve for two consecutive quarters and the key actions you're going to take to reach those objectives.

Quarter: Objective #1:

Description of key actions

Date	Status	Risks/barriers
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Objective #2 Description of key actions

Date	Status	Risks/barriers
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Account Planning Template (cont'd)

Objective #3

Description of

key actions

Date

Status

Risks/barriers

Objective #2

Description of

key actions

Date

Status

Risks/barriers

Quarter:

Objective #1:

Description of

key actions

Date

Status

Risks/barriers

Objective #3

Description of

key actions

Date

Status

Risks/barriers

Account Planning Template (cont'd)

Risks and Obstacles: Overall, what three things of most consequence could stand in the way of this deal closing?

Company Assets: What current customer-facing assets do we have to grab their attention?

Section IV: Relevant Account Insights

List any success stories, testimonials, or case studies that you need to know about and reference with your target account.

Business Drivers based on public data: What are the current pains and how does that map to the business driver?

Asks: What content/assets don't we have that you would use?

Organize Your ABM Data

Good account-based marketing doesn't just happen. B2B marketers must first build a solid foundation to support their teams in an account-based world. As Harvard Business Review explains, "Only when data is organized and integrated does it open up a true perspective on every touch point and allow organizations to optimize each step of the customer's journey."

When account-level information is spread across numerous disconnected systems and leads don't tie to accounts, you're unnecessarily wasting your time, energy and resources. Stale data and duplicate records cause just as much of a problem for ABM teams.

This checklist will help you identify if you've met all the foundational data aspects of your ABM practice.

Account Selection: Define your target accounts

- Identify your total addressable market (TAM)
- Establish your ideal client profiles (ICPs)
- Create your target account list (TAL)
- Tier your accounts for personalization for 1:1, 1:few, and 1:many
- Define resource allocation for each account tier

Account and contact data: Fill in the gaps

- Build out the buying committee within each account
- Fill in missing firmographic and technographic information
- Map buying committee members to key personas

Design an ongoing contact acquisition strategy

(4 options — mix and match)

- Manual SDR research
- List buys
- Technology plays (AI automation and machine learning)
- Outsourcing

Lead-to-Account Matching: (3 options — choose one)

- Manual L2A process
- Basic domain-based L2A automation
- Sophisticated L2A technology

Organize Your ABM Data (cont'd)

Campaigns: Standardize how your campaigns are defined and tracked

Synthesize account activity history across channels in one place (e.g., your CRM)

Define and document the following attributes of your campaigns in your CRM:

▸ Program Date	▸ Secondary Execution Channel	▸ Segment
▸ Program Owner	▸ Asset Type	▸ Program Status
▸ Program Owner Contact Info	▸ Event Name	▸ Program Details
▸ Primary Execution Channel	▸ Activity Name	▸ Program Costs

Campaigns: Standardize how your campaigns are defined and tracked

Standardize your campaign naming convention. First, identify which of the above categories you will incorporate in the naming convention. Then, create standard abbreviations for the categories and their elements (e.g., Asset Type can include content (CON), webinars (WBN), direct mail (DM), etc.).

Example: If you were to use the convention Program Date-Primary Execution Channel-Asset Type-Event Name-Segment, a campaign name could look like Q220-CON-eBook-ABM SalesPlaybook-All.

ABM funnel: Build your account funnel

- ▢ Define your account funnel stages
- ▢ Determine your tools for measurement
- ▢ Establish stage performance benchmarks
- ▢ Put service level agreements into place

“Only 6.6 percent of B2B marketers believe their data are complete and up-to-date. You put your company in that top tier when you build a solid ABM foundation.”

- LinkedIn Marketing Solutions

Check the Health of Your Market Segmentation

Market segments are smaller groupings of your company's target account list (TAL), and each segment is tied to a marketing initiative. We recommend starting with just two or three targeted segments. But if you are in a large, complex marketing department, then you may need more.

Once you settle on an audience segmentation approach, put a critical eye to it. Use this checklist to determine the viability of each segment. If the answer to any of the questions is no, revisit your strategy until you arrive at a model where each segment is uniquely differentiated and includes your best opportunities.

15-Point Market Segmentation Healthcheck

Are the segments different in meaningful ways?

Yes No

Are the segments large enough? (Have you segmented a segment too thinly?)

Yes No

Does each of your target accounts clearly fall into one segment or another?

Yes No

Do you have enough bandwidth to tackle all of the accounts in the segments? (Are they manageable?)

Yes No

Do the segments you've chosen represent your best opportunities?

Yes No

Are your solutions for them uniquely differentiated from the competition?

Yes No

Can you make significant and profitable inroads into the segments?

Yes No

Do the segments represent growth opportunities?

Yes No

Are they industries, categories, or companies that will expand over time?

Yes No

Do you need to do more research on the key pain points and challenges for your chosen segments? (*Likely, the answer is yes. And that's a healthy response. Stay abreast of current industry trends to demonstrate you know and care about what your customers care about, and regularly monitor the intent of the buying team in your target accounts.*)

Yes No

Check the Health of Your Market Segmentation (cont'd)

Have you identified the goals, needs, and motivations among buyers in each of your segments and how your solutions help them to achieve them?

Yes No

Is there proof that your offering is a good fit for your chosen segments? Do you already have customers in the segments on which you've chosen to focus?

Yes No

Have you run your segmentation strategy past sales leadership?

Yes No

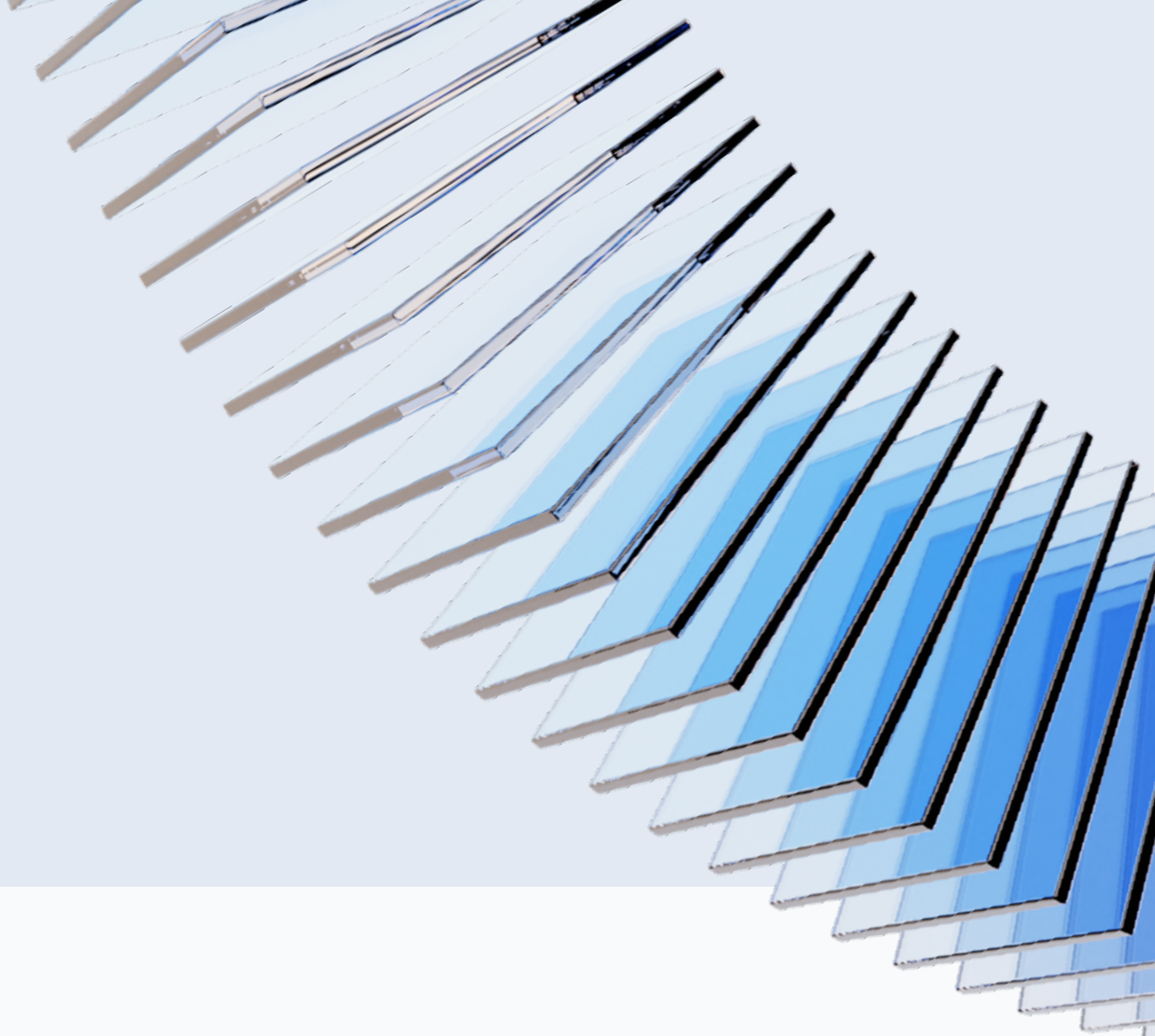
Does leadership agree that these segments represent the best opportunities for your business?

Yes No

Do you have a process in place for iterating or updating your segmentation strategy on a regular basis?

Yes No

Once you've built your audience segments, you can rank them from high to low priority and focus on building personalized resources based on their level of priority. Lower priority accounts might be great for one-to-few or one-to-many personalized campaigns, while one-to-one marketing methods can be reserved for your highest priority accounts.



DEMANDBASE

Demandbase is the leading account-based GTM platform for B2B enterprises to identify and target the right customers, at the right time, with the right message. With a unified view of intent data, AI-powered insights, and prescriptive actions, go-to-market teams can seamlessly align and execute with confidence. Thousands of businesses depend on Demandbase to maximize revenue, minimize waste, and consolidate their data and technology stacks - all in one platform.

For more information about how Demandbase can help you scale your GTM strategy, visit www.demandbase.com.

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