



DiscoverOrg + ListenLoop

ACCOUNT-BASED MARKETING

A Playbook for Getting your Account-Based Marketing Right



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A Playbook for Getting Account-Based Marketing Right

The rising tide of account-based marketing (ABM) has drawn much attention recently and, with it, much confusion about what ABM is and how to implement it. This eBook gives you a step-by-step playbook to implement an ABM strategy that fits your company's objectives and resources.



First, let's clear the air by defining ABM. Engagio's Jon Miller has this definition:

"Everything that B2B marketers do to support sales at target accounts. This includes selecting and prioritizing account lists, generating new contacts, gathering account intelligence, building account plans, running field-marketing events, prospecting into new relationships, and engaging accounts online."

ABM

Some marketers believe ABM can also be a way of marketing to existing clients for the purpose of cross-selling or expanding their presence within an account. Other marketers see ABM as an alternative to "buyer persona marketing," whereby named accounts are micro-segmented with messaging that is hyper-specific to their needs.

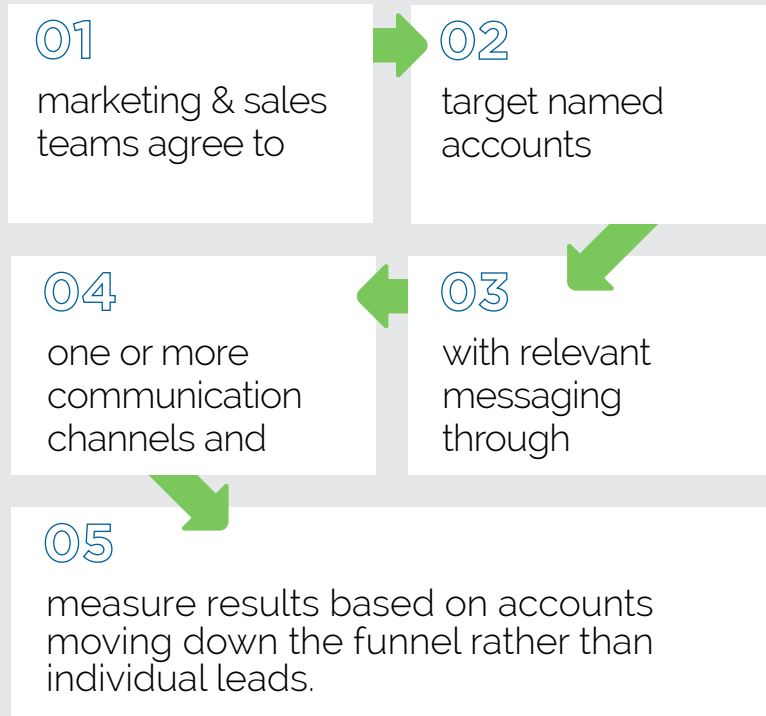
Marketers with careers rooted in the 90s view ABM as "just a name for what we've always done," noting that helping salespeople close specific accounts is how they functioned before digital marketing. On the flip side, marketers in a post-marketing automation world - circa 2006 - tend to be in awe of account-based marketing, focusing on its ability to scalably target top accounts with personalized campaigns.



Adding to the confusion and various perspectives, some vendors would have you believe that implementing their tool is tantamount to doing ABM. But expert ABM practitioners agree: "Account-Based Marketing is a strategy, not a solution."

To that end, we propose the following tactical definition of account-based marketing:

A STRATEGY WHEREBY THE



The following sections track this definition and tactical advice for implementing an account-based strategy.

"Account-Based Marketing is a strategy, not a solution."



Aligning Sales & Marketing



When first attempting to align sales and marketing, it might seem as though “Sales is from Mars and Marketing is from Venus.” If you're in marketing, you may feel that the sales team is unable to produce results from the many marketing qualified leads (MQLs) you pass over the fence every month. If you're in sales, you may feel that marketers give you too many bad leads or not enough leads altogether. Regardless, sales and marketing alignment is a cornerstone of any ABM program - and this step is crucial to the success of yours.

Typical alignment of sales and marketing leaders involves agreement on:

- What is a good lead
- How many should be generated per month
- How and how often to contact them

GET BUY-IN

When sales (and management) participate in the process, it means you have increased buy-in to adopt - and stick with - an ABM strategy. The second point cannot be overstated. Your ABM program is a long-term strategy to increase alignment, improve sales velocity, and boost sales funnel performance. However, those benefits will take time to accrue. Until that happens, you need buy-in from all parties to continue the course despite choppy waters.

STAY THE COURSE

Indeed, marketers who have tried and failed to implement an ABM strategy often cite a lack of buy-in as the principal reason for abandoning their efforts. Adopting an ABM program usually means a lower volume of "marketing qualified leads" given that you're targeting a smaller, select group of accounts, rather than a broad universe of leads. When sales and leadership are not convinced that fewer MQLs focused on target accounts produces better pipeline, the pressure on marketers to hit their quotas can be overwhelming given that ABM requires tactics inconsistent with volume.

MAKE IT OFFICIAL

To accomplish alignment between the teams, try implementing weekly (or at least monthly) meetings between sales & marketing leadership. In your initial meetings, consider *drafting and signing* a Service Level Agreement that commits the sales team to **X-actions** on leads within **Y-hours** and holds the marketing team accountable for delivering **Z-leads** or accounts. After the agreement is in effect, your meetings should focus on identifying the target accounts (further explained in the next section) and auditing each department's performance under that agreement.

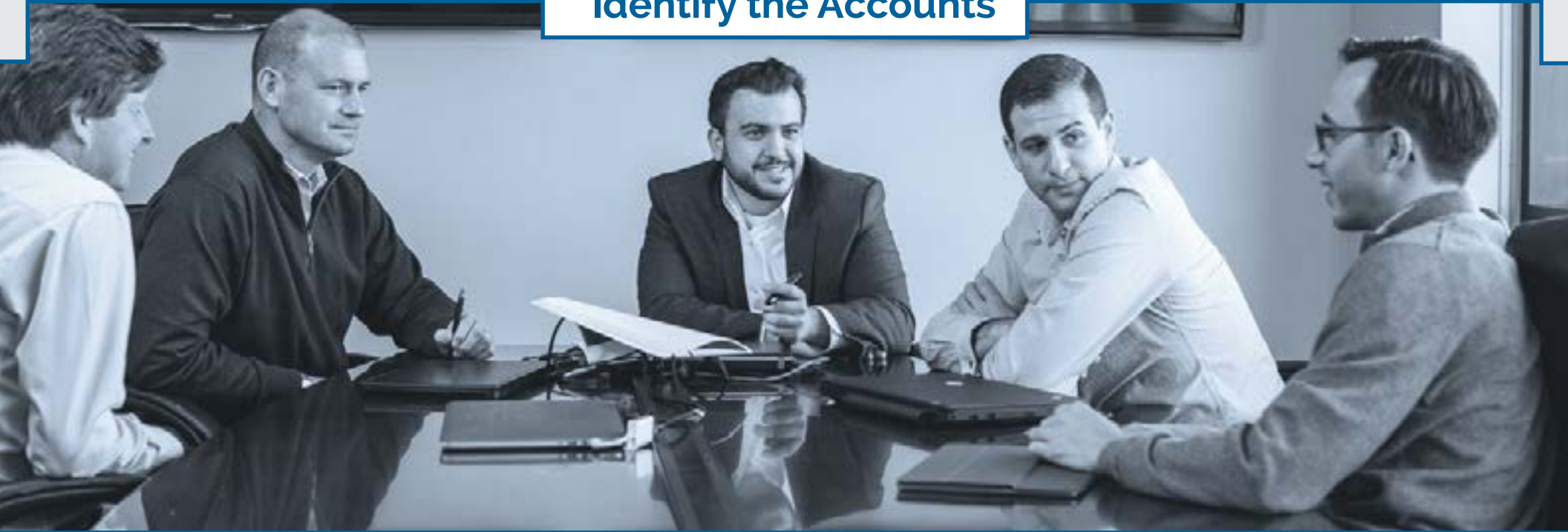


MORE TIPS FOR BETTER ALIGNMENT

Follow these suggestions for improved alignment between your sales and marketing teams and the success of your ABM program:

- ☐ Consider incentivizing the marketing team with pipeline revenue sourced from a multi-touch attribution model, rather than volume of marketing qualified leads.
- ☐ Use your weekly S&M meeting to identify tweaks in your lead scoring model.
- ☐ Coordinate sales and marketing "ride-alongs."
- ☐ Review buyer personas for alignment on messaging, channels, value proposition
- ☐ Schedule post-mortem discussions for all lost or dead opportunities to refine the ABM strategy

Identify the Accounts



LOOK TO YOUR CUSTOMERS



All successful Account-Based Marketing programs start with identifying your list of targeted accounts. This is a strategic exercise that should involve sales, marketing, and leadership - and should guide everything else that you do in your ABM program.

Simple questions to guide this process:

- Who do we sell to?
- What do the accounts we sell to look like?

To start, you could **export opportunities from your CRM**, append account data, and look for patterns - i.e. are the majority of your clients +\$100M in revenue or north of 1,000 employees or in a specific industry?

The follow up questions would be:

- Who are our **best** customers?

This information is also most likely in your CRM system. First, identify the accounts that you would classify as your most successful and happy customers. This could be based on the ROI that they have shared with you, NPS scores, retention rates, or a Customer Health Score. Your gut will even do on this one.

Then, repeat the “pattern exercise” of the above, identifying similarities in this segment of customers.

- Do they have a geographic location in common?
- Are they all organizations in the same stage of life?
- Do they have a similar employee counts?
- Are they in a similar industry?

Next, identify the accounts that are the most profitable.

This could be based on contract value. You could also deduct your Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) from that contract value to really hone in on these numbers. And, you should know the drill now: look for patterns.

Another option could be to bypass all of the above and work with a predictive analytics company — like SalesPredict, Everstring, and 6Sense — to perform a data science project to identify these patterns for you. They are basically looking at the same data (your customer lists or closed-won opportunities) and looking for similarities between customers. However, they often include data from external sources as well, such as information found on the account's website that might not be available to you in your internal CRM.



FINDING PATTERNS AND NARROWING THE LIST

Once you have some insight into the similarities and characteristics, you'll still need to actually select WHO you are going to include in your account-based marketing strategy. This can be based on your current mix of customers or new accounts or even markets that you are planning on exploring.

Some companies choose to use ABM tactics only on their enterprise accounts while others will evaluate a company by their ability to spend a certain amount or more on their

product. For example, a question that can be used while deciding whether a company fits into your ABM target account list can be: "Does this Company have a need that would drive it to spend at least \$100,000 with us?" Then you use a proxy to scale the identification of companies that meet that characteristic.



Some things you can use as a proxy for this

Company Firmographic Data:

Employee Headcount | Revenue | Industry / SIC / NAICS | Technology Stack | Number of Locations | Departmental Budgets | Location |

Buyer Demographic Data:

Seniority Level | Job Function | Title Keywords | Technology Responsibilities | Location | Levels away from Department Chief | Years on the Job |

This is a critical step to the success of your program and should be done thoughtfully. Most organizations will start an ABM strategy with 50 or fewer target accounts and then scale once they have a good process in place.

Relevant Messaging - AT SCALE

"82% of prospects value content targeted to their specific industry and 67% find content targeted to their job function valuable"

According to Marketing Sherpa, 82% of prospects value content targeted to their specific industry and 67% find content targeted to their job function valuable. **Do not forget this.** A common mistake made by ABM practitioners is that they get excited about *identifying accounts*, and shove those accounts through their email and calling cadences without changing the messaging – only to find out that those campaigns did not perform any better than their broad-based counterparts. To truly take advantage of ABM's potential, you need content that will resonate with individual accounts or at least sub-segments of those accounts and even more specifically to where they are at in the buying cycle.

Here is a simple content matrix to start developing your messaging by account or segment and identify any gaps.

Stage in Buying Cycle	Top Accounts, Segment: Finance	Top Accounts, Segment: Retail	Top Accounts, Segment: Automotive
Awareness	<i>Input relevant messaging or assets here</i>		
Consideration			
Capture			
Purchase			
Post-Purchase			



Do some research on what problems you're solving for what industries and how your messaging changes between industries and between buyers - i.e. a VP of Infrastructure in Pharma vs. a Chief Information Officer in Retail.

Surveying your clients or your market is always a good way to gather this type of qualitative and detailed insight. You'd be amazed at the type of responses you'll get to surveys by simply offering a \$10 Amazon Gift Card or a chance to win an iPad. In these surveys, you should strive to understand what issues are most pressing for your different buyer types and influencers.

Be sure your survey audience shares similar characteristics to your target account list. (or IS your target account list!) You should be able to splice the results of the survey by both company firmographic and buyer demographic information to determine themes and similarities amongst the personas.



RIGHT-SIZE YOUR ABM STRATEGY

Start building messaging focused on different personas and bucket them as much as you can without sacrificing personalization. This is an area where you need to right-size the ABM strategy to your company's resources, deciding the right balance between cost and personalized messaging. The Content Personalization Spectrum below, borrowed from Jon Miller and our friends at Engagio lays out these variations nicely:

The Content Personalization Spectrum

100% personalized	Highly personalized	Highly customized	Customized	Industry-specific	Multi-sector	Generic
Created just for this account AND persona	Created for multiple personas at a single target account	Existing content, heavily adapted for one account	Existing content with a lighter spin for one account	Content targeted to one industry	Existing content with a lighter spin for one account	Broad content for all targets, but still relevant to the account

If you've got a big team of marketers and ample resources, then go deep on your segmentation and messaging- and lean towards the "100% Personalized" end of the spectrum. If you have a large target list and average size team, you may want to draft customized messaging for your top 5-10 accounts. If you've got a small team and limited resources, then create 2-3 industry-specific broad segments.

Here's an example of how to group similar type accounts and personas if you're an Information Security Vendor:

BUCKET#1:

Vice Presidents and Directors of Information Security in Financial Services, Banking and Insurance (these buyers have similar concerns and needs so our messaging can be the same)

BUCKET#2:

Chief Information Officers and Heads of Information Technology at Leisure, Lodging, Retail, and Restaurants industries. (These are all industries where there is consumer interaction, credit card processing, loyalty systems, point of sale systems, etc)

BUCKET#3:

Vice Presidents and Directors of Software Development at Computer Software and SaaS companies (think Zillow, RedFin, Twitter, etc. all companies where technological infrastructure is key, UI/UX experience has to be flawless, availability has to be 100%)

Segmenting makes it so that you can use a similar personalized message across a broader group of companies and buyers who have similar pain points. ***This is the key to personalizing at scale.***

As the messaging map below lays out - you can do this at scale by combining Industry-Specific and Buyer/Persona-specific messaging as we did in the above buckets.

Sample Message Map by Role

VP OF SALES	Increase Revenue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve account penetration • Increase sales team's selling line • Shorten average sales cycle • Build a predictable sales pipeline
	Improve Sales Effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help sales team get to executives • Ramp up new sales people • Retain and motivate salesforce
	External Pressures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long sales cycles • Commodization • Fewer sales opportunities
VP OF MARKETING	Increase Revenue
	ROI Measurements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure lead generation performance • Get sales feedback on leads • Measure marketing contribution
	Marketing Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase revenue with less budget • Develop ideal customer/client profile • Develop a strong value proposition
	Measure and increase reputation and brand awareness

CEO	Measure and improve lead generation program
	Lower demand generation costs
	Decrease marketing spend as a percentage of revenue
	Measure and heighten reputation and brand awareness
	Increase Revenue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase sales effectiveness • Open new markets • Jump start new products and • Find most profitable opportunities • Clarify, define, and refine markets
SALES	ROI Measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead generation dashboard • Measurement of go-to market investments • Predictable revenue streams
	Shorten time to profitability
	Access to decision makers
SALES	Reduce average sales cycle
	Justify marketing investments
	Meeting quota
	Sales Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching executives is daunting • Getting foot in the door • Long sales cycle

Engage Accounts Through Multiple Channels

You've got the companies, the people, and the messaging, and you're ready to engage. At this point it will be useful to see a sample ABM campaign below.



Up to one month prior to launching your campaign, show banner ads to your target accounts. This will provide a foundation of "awareness"



that associates your brand and solution to their pain point, increasing the likelihood that they will open your emails and take your calls.



On campaign launch date:

Direct mail via Fedex with cardboard desk pop-up.



TIP: Make it flashy and branded (think: Seth Godin's Purple Cow). Send it to the highest C-level contact that's relevant for you. Goal is to have them open the package and associate the "purple cow" with your industry.



On the delivery date, SDR calls the C-Level contact, with an easy hook, "Hi, it's Rodrigo from ListenLoop. Did you like the **GREEN** pop-up calendar I sent to you?"



If call the connects, then SDR marks this complete in CRM. That triggers email marketing workflow to nurture the C-level contact. Be sure to include links in the emails so you can cookie the contact for retargeting purposes.



Same day, begin a call and email sequence to the VP and Directors in the buyer's Decision Making Unit. The goal here is to get multiple people at the target account to talk about, or at least reference, your solution at the same time.



If the call doesn't connect, leave a voicemail and try again tomorrow.

If the call doesn't connect on the third try, kick-off email and call cadences to C-Level.



Wait a few days and initiate email and call sequences to VP and Directors in the buyer's Decision Making Unit. Important: do not send the SAME email/content to each of these different personas. If your email is interesting, they'll share it with teammates, but you'll look spammy if they all got the same content.



For every two sequenced emails (spaced 2-5 days apart), follow-up with a call that offers content and measures

their buying-stage: "I thought you might be interested in a whitepaper about sales intelligence" Update the CRM to reflect the **Account's buying stage** which may trigger different engagement sequences.



If lead accepts content offer,

salesperson sends email with a link to the offered content. Clicking on the link activates retargeting campaign with messaging about the offered content, and related assets.



After 15 touches (e.g., 5 calls and 10 emails) on 2-3 contacts at a target account, send email and direct mail invitations to your field events – steak

dinners, anyone? Consider sponsoring tickets to a local conference for high-value contacts, and meet them there.



Setup website personalization campaigns to support your segments with swappable content snippets. All

landing pages in the email, direct mail, and ads should point to "personalized pages."



"If your email is interesting, they'll share it with teammates, but you'll look spammy if they all got the same content."

Multiple Channels for your ABM Strategy



DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Digital advertising is a powerful ally in your quest to build awareness. But it doesn't have to stop there. Modern advertising allows you to continue ad-based storytelling across all stages of the buyer cycle.

Once your target has engaged with your content or visited your website, a strategic retargeting campaign can help move him/her to the next stage of the buying cycle. Relating your ads to content within your email nurture or prospecting programs also helps to reiterate your message and provide your prospects with alternate avenues to engage with your company.

Three key things to remember when developing your digital advertising campaigns for your ABM program:

ROTATE. When you show the same ad in the same size in the same place over and over again, it just starts to blend in with its surroundings and get lost in the noise. Rotating ads not only increases the likelihood of them being noticed (and clicked!), but also allows you to present different calls to actions or value propositions to your prospects.

PERSONALIZE. Ads should relate to the buying stage, the buyer and/or the prospect's behavior. Initially, ads should be more generic and focused on brand awareness. However, as you learn about the buyer, ads should focus on his specific pain points and how you can solve them. Include their name or company logo in the ads for added punch.

INTEGRATE. In this digital world that we live in, we no longer have the luxury of focusing on one channel or treating each channel as a silo. Further, the old marketing adage that says that a prospect must see or hear your marketing message seven times before taking action still holds true. Prospects need to know, like, and trust your brand. You want to try and reach your prospects as consistently as possible across all mediums.

Targeting your prospects online can be done in a few different ways:

- 1 ADVERTISING PLATFORMS, BASED ON EMAIL OR COMPANY.** You can take your sales intelligence data - such as emails for leads in your account list - and prepare a CRM retargeting campaign with certain vendors, like AdRoll. Such campaigns are often successful for B2C campaigns, but your mileage may vary for B2B. Vendors match the emails you provide to an email-to-cookie database, and most of the emails in those databases are consumer emails, not business ones. According to various third-party data vendors, match rates for business emails vary between 5-25%.
- 2 SOCIAL NETWORKS, SEGMENT AUDIENCE BY DEMOGRAPHICS.** Some social networks will allow you to target prospects working at specific companies. At the very least, you are able to segment by industry, company size, and job title. LinkedIn provides the most opportunity for account-specific advertising.
- 3 RETARGETING, BASED ON BEHAVIOR.** As your prospects engage with your ads and content, your ads should become more relevant. Before you even know their name, you can base ad content and cadence off of what pages they visited on your website or what ads they had previously clicked.



DIRECT MAIL

Direct Mail is often overlooked as an engagement engine. Used as part of your integrated ABM program, however, direct mail can be highly targeted and produce a higher connect and conversion rate through subsequent emails and phone calls.

In a typical day, an executive will get 250 emails and 1 piece of direct mail. You have much more of a captive audience with direct mail than with email. **The key is making it past the “gate keeper.”** Be thoughtful when deciding what to send and make sure that it is something that would make an executive assistant hesitate before he or she threw it in the trash.

As tried-and-true option, a hand-written note or personal invitation are always a great way to start. They are inexpensive and resource-effective. Send a note to congratulate your prospect on a round of funding, a promotion, or a new product launch. Or to invite him or her to an upcoming event. You can use an external vendor, like MailLift or The Handwritten Note, to fulfill these correspondences. This service is even automated now through some marketing automation platforms.

Small-value gift cards are also becoming increasingly popular - such as ones to coffee shops - to include in these notes or in addition to a well-designed card or flyer.



Some additional good ideas for direct mail (how much you spend per recipient depends on the annual contract value of your product or service):

- Relevant Books** - even dogear a couple of pages or highlight an important passage.
- Wine / Champagne** - especially when they are new to a role - a little congratulatory champagne can go a long way
- Off-the-Wall/ Kitchy** - like Seth Godin's purple cow - something that stands out and makes them remember you

Direct Mail can be used to simply generate awareness, warm up an otherwise cold call, or encourage a call to action. Regardless, you should always give the prospects something to do - never leave the next steps up to them. The use of specific landing pages or personalized URLs (PURLs) can be powerful for both tracking the success of your campaign as well as providing a personalized, streamlined experience for your prospect.



EMAIL MARKETING PROGRAMS

The key to an effective email marketing program - especially nurture-based - is segmentation. Depending on how specifically you decided to personalize your content in the "Relevant Messaging" exercise will determine how deeply you will segment your nurture program. As a baseline, we would recommend at least segmenting by stage in the buyer's journey and by role. For example, you don't want to show a case study to a prospect who is not exactly sure what you do yet and you want to speak differently to someone who could be an end user of your product vs. the person with the purse strings. Some mature nurture programs can have dozens of unique and engaging drips or streams of email content. However, do not try and build the Great Wall of China in a day. Start small.

Look at your highest-performing Top-of-Funnel content asset and plan out your follow up from there. You can evaluate who is downloading the content the most and write specifically to that audience for starters, providing them relevant and varied ways to engage with your brand along the way.

Three key areas to focus your email marketing program around:

- 1 SEGMENTATION.** If you are like most marketers, you are looking to personalize at scale. Segmentation is your secret weapon to do just this. There are a variety of solutions available for doing this automatically, but the baseline should be to develop segments based off of known data (i.e. job title, employee size, industry, etc.). If you're using a solution that allows for dynamic content, you can write one email that is segmented based on management level, department, and industry.
- 2 CLEAN DATA.** Of course, personalized messaging only works if you are confident in the data that is fueling your messages. Be sure to deploy initiatives around the accuracy of your data, including cleaning and appending your data with a robust sales intelligence solution like DiscoverOrg and establishing processes for inactive prospects in your database.
- 3 ENGAGEMENT.** Your emails to prospects should almost always include a link to a relevant resource or call-to-action - a whitepaper, a case study, a link back to your website - something that you can track in the future to understand engagement. Build workflows around clicks - if someone clicks a whitepaper link but doesn't reply - have an email automatically go out to them the next day asking them what they thought about the whitepaper and if they'd be open to scheduling a 30 minute call.



WEB PERSONALIZATION

Following the theme of personalization and segmentation: your online content and web pages should have an element of this as well. Web personalization can take on two forms: attribute-based and behavior-based.

Key Takeaway: The key to attribute-based personalization is that this only works when you know who the person is via cookies or clicked links in an email.



ATTRIBUTE-BASED PERSONALIZATION

If you're using a marketing automation system like Marketo, Hubspot, or Act-On, this functionality is built in - using tokens or snippets. When a **known lead** visits a webpage or landing page, you can customize the content for them by referencing information that is within their record in your marketing database (i.e. Name, Company Name, Industry, etc).

Using the messaging map that you built in the "Relevant Messaging" exercise, determine where it makes sense to personalize your landing pages and web pages. For example, you can simply insert tokens to include the prospect's name, company name or even company logo onto a page.

To go a step further, you can change up the content based on additional attributes. For example, when a CIO of a mid-size Regional Hospital visits your site, use snippets and tokens on the landing page to change the copy to use terminology and pain points that are specific to mid-sized hospital CIOs.

When a Manager of Information Security at a Fortune 500 bank visits the same page, the snippet and tokens should update based on his seniority level and industry, presenting him with a page that substitutes in pain points and messaging relevant to a mid-level manager at a bank instead of CIO at a hospital.



BEHAVIOR-BASED PERSONALIZATION

Behavior-based personalization is most often referred to as Real-Time Personalization. This is due to the fact that most of the changes in the content occur in real time as the prospect moves around your site. Behavior-based personalization works even if you do not know who your prospect is yet.

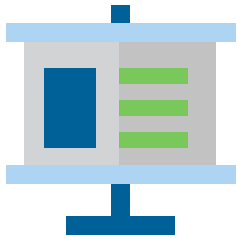
Each action of your prospect on your website tells a story. For instance, visitors that enter through your home page for the first time are probably new to your brand and need the most high-level information to understand who your brand is and why they should want to learn more. They should receive different content than those that enter the site for the first time via a secondary page, indicating that they either found the site via search or a referrer site and have a little more knowledge about the brand.



FIELD MARKETING OR EVENTS

In this digital age, we often forget how powerful face-to-face interactions can be. You can learn so much more about your prospect - and vice versa - when you are in person. Leverage these interactions by including field-marketing or events into your ABM strategy.

This can manifest itself in two ways: existing industry trade shows and conferences as well as hosted events.



INDUSTRY TRADE SHOWS & CONFERENCES

In most industries, trade shows and conferences remain aplenty and are a powerful way for you to extend your reach, getting in front of a much broader audience than you would be able to on your own. Most often, the producer of these events is able to provide you with - at the very least - a list of the companies they plan to be in attendance, based off of actual registrations or attendance at previous events. This is an easy way to help narrow down your list of possible industry events to participate in - based on the number of target accounts (or companies similar to your target account) that you would be able to have access to in one swoop.

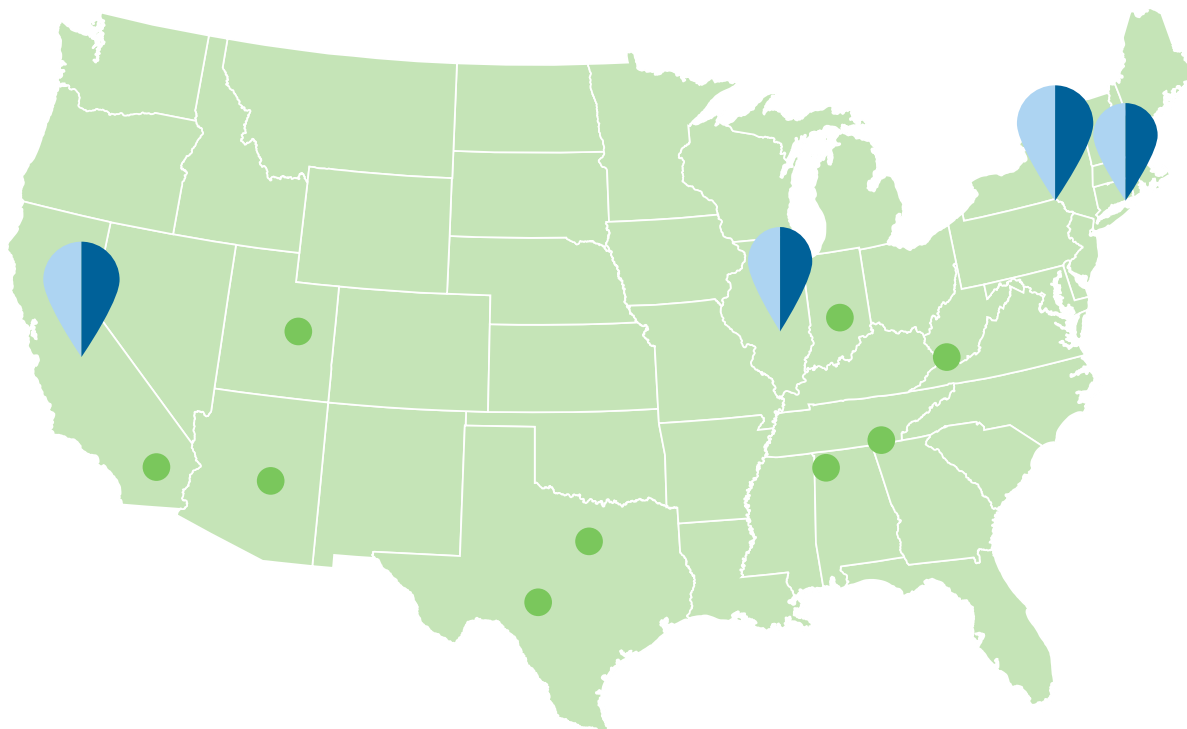
Strategies to drive attendance to the booth or pre-schedule meetings should prioritize these accounts above all others. It might be even more effective to focus solely on getting face time with contacts at these key accounts during your time there.

Of course, these tactics are dramatically different from those geared more toward increasing brand awareness and driving a large volume of the show audience to your location. Instead of enticing these targets with an iPad drawing or some cool giveaway, do one or a combination of the following:

- Focus your messaging on solving a pain point and how they can benefit from stopping by your booth
- Provide intangible value to them as a "partner" - such as providing access to thought leaders or a sneak peek of your new solution
- Make them feel special with an invite to an exclusive event or asking them to participate in a discussion to guide future product development
- Capitalize on those free passes by locating other target accounts in the area and asking them to attend "on you."

HOSTED EVENTS

Field Marketing can map the locations of the contacts in your ABM accounts to decide where to host your own events as well. For example, here is how a set of ABM Accounts layout across the United States.



San Francisco, New York City, Chicago, and Boston look like great targets for a field marketing event.

Lunch-and-Learns are popular formats for reaching targeted prospects. No more than two hours and usually for less than 30 people, they can be held in a variety of locations - everywhere from a private room at a restaurant to a conference room at your office or nearby hotel - and provide a low-commitment way for prospects to be introduced to your solution. Aim to make the event as informative and engaging as possible by choosing topics that are both educational and relevant to your audience's pain points. The intimate group size allows for easy interaction between all attendees. Be sure to invite existing (and happy) customers that are in the area as well. Advocates are your best salespeople.



Other popular formats include:

Happy Hour or Cocktail Reception. These are best suited for the awareness stage as very rarely are these events designed to focus on large-scale discussions around your solution. Make sure that you maximize the exposure with non-intrusive reminders about your brand and offerings, such as banners, table tents, and looped video.

Half-Day Workshops. These are simply longer and more robust versions of the lunch-and-learn option. They may include various sessions and will more than likely involve more attendees. However, you may be able to attract a larger audience from your target accounts with these kinds of events and be able to cover more topics related to your solution. These should also remain very educational, but it may make sense to set up several demo stations for attendees to access during breaks.



SALES DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTING

Another channel that can be used to drive ABM success is the outbound prospecting efforts of your Sales Development team. Since their activities are done at a much smaller scale, they should be able to further personalize their outreach as well as combine email marketing efforts with phone and social touch points.

Here is an example of SDR outbound prospecting cadence:

	DAY 1 Call, Email, LinkedIn Connect	DAY 2	DAY 3 Call, Email	DAY 4	DAY 5 Call, Email	DAY 6
DAY 7	DAY 8	DAY 9 Call, Email	DAY 10	DAY 11	DAY 12 Call, Email, LinkedIn Connect	DAY 13
DAY 14	DAY 15 Email	DAY 16	DAY 17	DAY 18 Email	DAY 19	DAY 20
DAY 21						

Integrating in social touch points along the way as well - a LinkedIn message and a Twitter follow - will increase your awareness and bleed into higher conversion rates on your calls and emails.

The combination of multiple mediums in one single outreach program is powerful in reaching your intended prospect and getting them to respond. There are a variety of techniques and considerations when deploying an outbound marketing program, such as how to navigate around gate-keepers and overcome objections. The answer lies in preparation and research prior to picking up the phone or sending an email. Most of the discussions up to this point around personalization are relevant here in just a hyper-scale model. SDRs should know ahead of time who they are calling and why they - **SPECIFICALLY** - should care about your solution.

However, one often overlooked key to the success of your SDR prospecting activities is coordination with your Marketing team and clear lines of responsibility.

One approach could involve having the SDR team focus on reaching out to key contacts at each of your targeted accounts while having Marketing focus on engagement from the larger audience across the entire account. This most often would be decision makers.

Another approach to SDR prospecting could be triggered by account engagement. As soon as the initial contact at an account engages with your brand, the SDR team is called to the mat to leverage that interaction by either following up with the contact or initiating discussions from within the account. Or perhaps you wait until an account is showing increased activity on your website. Regardless, the SDR team is set up for success by reaching out to accounts after they have initially engaged with your brand, confirming that at least someone within the organization is familiar with your company.

With a common goal in mind, Marketing can also support the greater SDR prospecting effort by providing the content and copy for the email templates and testing new messaging. Reps can provide feedback based on responses and performance to improve on those efforts.

Once leads go stale, they should be passed back to Marketing for re-engagement and qualification.

Measuring Results At The Account Level



MEASUREMENT CHALLENGES

Beyond typical measurement challenges, ABM faces a unique problem: who deserves what credit when several *SDRs*, *AEs*, and *marketers* have worked *multiple* leads at an account?

The most common solution is to use a **multi-touch attribution model**. Your industry and circumstances will dictate whether you should use equally-weighted or dumbbell-weighted attribution. In equal-attribution, all of your touches – email, ads, calls, events, asset downloads – receive equal credit for influencing a lead. In a multi-touch model with dumbbell-weighted attribution, the first and last touches receive more weight than the touches in between. Vendors, such as Bizible, Full Circle Insights and LeanData's Clarity, can help you setup technology and process to measure this.



Measuring any campaign is tough when you have several influencers, multiple touches, and a long sales cycle. Let's investigate how Account-Based Marketing practitioners navigate these challenges and demonstrate success.

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Next, it is important for you to **set expectations**. For instance, if you switch all of your resources to account-based marketing, you may experience a short-term drought of leads in exchange for long-term value in terms of better close rates, faster sales cycles, and bigger deals.

"My company expected big numbers out of the gate, thinking 'if we engage target accounts, we'll generate 30 more opportunities per month.' But really we're generating 2 more opportunities per month right now."

- B2B Marketer @ Fortune 500 Company

In response, most teams will conduct a hybrid approach, putting 60-80% of their resources in broad-based marketing and 20-40% of their resources in account-based marketing. ●



After closing a few opportunities from your account list, you will feel an urge to compare sales metrics from your ABM campaigns against your other broad-based marketing activities. But this is a mistake. Why should you believe that *ABM is doing better or worse*, given that your data is likely based on a small, *statistically insignificant number of accounts*? Beware of hasty conclusions about better conversion rates, faster sales cycles, and bigger deals until you have at least **30 data points** in your "Closed - Won" category.

Given that it may take time to obtain statistically significant data, your team needs **early indicators of success**.

"My sales cycle is 6-9 months. I need some early indicators that ABM is working. If I'm not getting any bites on a program within 1-2 months, I'll get nervous and pull the plug."

- B2B Marketer @ Fortune 1000 Company

In the following section, you'll learn about the simple yet powerful success metrics for your ABM campaigns.



DEMONSTRATING SUCCESS

The earliest, simplest criterion for success is to poll your team's satisfaction with the ABM strategy. If you're a marketer, you'll quickly find that, – MQL numbers and conversion rates be damned – management and sales teams love getting meetings with accounts on their kill list. Often, that feeling is enough to sustain an ABM strategy beyond rocky starts you may encounter. As a short-term indicator of success, it behooves you to get a few quick wins, even if they're just meetings with key accounts, in the first quarter of your campaign.



Naturally you want a data-driven success story. Here, ABM practitioners rely on "account-level engagement" metrics to track their campaigns. Engagement is measured for each lead by assigning a score to the amount of time on site, pageviews, asset downloads, email opens, and other CRM-sourced behaviors. Then, that engagement score is summed across multiple leads for each target account to calculate "Account Engagement." Some vendors, such as ListenLoop and Engagio, can help you track this type of engagement across multiple leads at each account.

Marketers consider visibility and account engagement as success:

"ABM delivered a big win for us. By targeting [company], we found that 6 people from [company] received 1,321 advertising impressions, which produced a collective 42 min. of website engagement, 6 asset downloads, and 142 pageviews." SVP of Marketing @ Fortune 1000 Company

The theory is that Account Engagement is correlated to buying behavior. Significant increases in Account Engagement means that multiple stakeholders are discussing your product. Think of this account engagement score as a "lead score" for the account.



For example, a common ABM tactic is for SDRs to contact leads at a target account when that company's Account Engagement spikes. Another use case for Account engagement is to guide your ABM campaign. Whereas a digital marketer creates a landing page, measures conversion rates, and tweaks accordingly, an ABM practitioner orchestrates communications, measures Account Engagement, and tweaks accordingly.

Among other things, Account Engagement can give you a snapshot of your ABM campaign's performance. Today, you likely have a quarterly goal for Sales Qualified Leads or Pipeline Revenue that are presented to management. Because of the challenges identified above, an ABM campaign may not be amenable to reporting SQL or pipeline. Instead, measure the Account Engagement and demonstrate how your team's activities have increased Account Engagement for target companies over time. **Consider this your mid-term indicator of success.**



After you have sufficient data, measure and demonstrate that your ABM strategy yielded better conversion rates, faster sales cycles, bigger deals, and improved revenue-per-employee metrics. For this, prepare two reports that compare the relevant metrics between your ABM and broad-reach campaigns. Salesforce Campaign Influence is useful here. Beyond the metrics, track your ABM-attributed revenue and divide that by your fully-burdened sales & marketing cost over the same period. This is the ROI on your ABM strategy.

Using a mix of short-term, mid-term, and long-term success criteria, you can manage expectations and demonstrate success. Until you prove ROI, consider these justifications from seasoned ABM practitioners:

"Closing target Big Brand accounts gives us more credibility and trust in our market."

"Sales and management teams are happier that we're closing accounts they want."

"It's important for target accounts to know our brand. Attention and visibility are valuable."

"I want more quality leads and a shorter sales cycle. In short, less marketing waste."



Kickstart Your ABM Campaign



In conclusion, an Account-Based Marketing approach to pipeline growth is not a silver bullet. However, when deployed effectively, it can open doors to even your most hard-to-penetrate accounts.

Get Started Checklist

- ☐ Identify your target accounts
- ☐ Develop SLA between Sales & Marketing Teams
- ☐ Build your Messaging Strategy by Persona, Industry, and/or Account
- ☐ Determine Marketing channels to deploy in initial ABM program
- ☐ Decide on Key Performance Indicators throughout the stages of your program

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Fuel Your Account-Based Marketing Program with High-Quality Data from DiscoverOrg

DiscoverOrg is the leading sales and marketing intelligence platform that helps sales, marketing, and staffing professionals sell smarter and more effectively. Marketers can plug their target accounts into DiscoverOrg to identify key contacts for specific marketing campaigns or receive alerts on prime opportunities for targeted outreach. Account-Based Marketing programs are simplified with verified email addresses, direct-dial phone numbers and up-to-date account intelligence. Offered in the form of a constantly refreshed database, DiscoverOrg provide the contacts and context necessary to identify prime opportunities and access decision makers within the IT, Finance, and Marketing departments of Fortune-Ranked, Mid-Market, and SMB companies in North America and Europe.

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