INTENT IS EVERYTHING

How Intent Topics Drive Engagement and Maximize Marketing Impact

Webinar Q & A

Q: What are good ABM metrics to focus on?

Lori Wizdo: I think the objective of metrics are going to be influenced by the reasons you are engaging in ABM. Companies that invest in ABM are often looking for better sales/ marketing alignment, the ability to increase average deal size, to increase cross-sell or upsell, or increase retention. Leading indicators might include the number of engaged participants in the account, and it never gets too far away from the number of new opportunities created.

Tom Koletas: One of the things I hear from marketers is that there's a lot of data out there: data that helps you programmatically, data that you're pumping into your marketing automation CRM, but what you want are insights. So if your ABM can give you insights into how to drive your content marketing and answer "who's in market?" and "what do I say to them when I get ahold of them?" Then you have the data you need to execute an impactful marketing campaign.

Q: You mentioned that you can use intent interactions to find prospects that are in-market. Do you derive intent from the title of the content piece? How do you determine intent?

Tom: It's just not the asset title. It's the entire interaction. Intent is determined by a multitude of factors. It's the title of the person doing the research; it's the type of content (whitepaper, webinar, case study, etc.). The content itself is assigned a set of relevant topics that reveal in a very granular way what is being researched. All these things are weighted to determine intent.

Q: You referenced 40% turnover on companies surging every two weeks. Does this mean the topics they are researching are changing by 40% every two weeks?

Tom: This data reflects that the list of accounts interested in your solution (and those you should target) are not static across time. Due to their progression through the buying cycle, accounts move through a research phase. An account showing up in this phase today may not be in that phase 2 weeks from now. We actually see that 40% of the accounts that show up in the research phase do not appear in that list 2 weeks later. Research is a moving target, which is why your content marketing strategies have to be always on. You don't turn off your website. Likewise, you have to be consistently in-market to be able to identify which companies are surging.

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Q: Lori mentioned that the buyer's journey is not sequential, but the process of sales and marketing alignment works with a waterfall funnel model, with opportunity stages, etc. How is it possible to reconcile these? Do we need to look at our lead progression in a different way?

Lori: Yes, we do need to start looking at lead progression in a different way. The problem with the funnel is that it is really just a model for measuring an internal process. If you don't like the metrics, the waterfall funnel provides very little insight that can be used to improve the outcomes. So keep your funnel, but recognize that it is a monitoring construct to measure the volume, the velocity and even the value of our pipeline at key measurement points – like leads, MQL, SQLs.

However, to improve 'funnel outcomes" marketing should be designing a deliberate engagement strategy that aims to lead a buyer through the buying process and then operationalize that strategy through your marketing automation platform triggering all sorts of buyer signals into account, behavior, intent, and content consumption.

Q: Lead nurturing is a grey area for some marketers. When should you call to follow up? Should you call or send an e-mail? What are the best practices for nurturing a lead if you don't call?

Lori: There's no one right strategy. You need to take your buyer's journey into consideration. But, let's just take an example: If your sale is generally made through a quick decision process, you will want to have a quick (and possibly human) follow up. If your buyer prefers digital engagement versus phone engagement, then you might want to send an email rather than have a call.

You really have to think about your lead's buying process and what the preferred engagement strategy would be. A lot of this knowledge comes from surveying your buyers and understanding your buyers. However, one of the cool things about intent data is that often the buyers tell us when it's a good time to follow up because they have gone quiet for a while and then you get a behavioral signal that they are back researching. We now have the ability to have triggered outreaches because of the marketing automation platform. So I think that will have a big impact on improving lead nurturing effectiveness.

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Q: For ABM, can you select an account and then get a topic that is being researched?

Tom: Yes, we can. Part of our account-based marketing solution is being able to help marketers predict what accounts are going to be in-market. I'll employ the term "surging." What surging means is that Madison Logic is observing a statistical rise in the amount of research that a company is doing on specific topics. What this means for our clients is that they have the ability to pinpoint every company and decision maker currently in market for your offerings, at every stage of the buyer journey. That's one of the things that customers like about our ABM solution.

Q: Rather than a standard purchase journey - would you suggest creating separate intent clusters and custom content for each intent cluster?

Tom: That's the goal. It's about segmenting your prospects into buckets of interest and then sending them the appropriate content. It's what your marketing automation should be currently doing. But outside intent sources are essential to have the most impact. On the display side the market is moving towards dynamic creative which will achieve the same goal.

Q: If current lead nurturing approaches are not working (too much info/useless content just got scanned and tossed) what do you recommend for improving lead nurturing?

Lori: There are a lot of marketers who are doing a good job using data to understand their customers. The first thing I would say is learn as much as you can from every interaction with the client/prospect. Use progressive profiling to not just gather another set of firmographic data or demographic data, but to gather intent data or contextual data.

Let's say you have two prospects. It is possible to ask some questions using the progressive profiling capabilities to find out more about them. Both are interested in my product, but they are actually trying to use it for two different outcomes. The short answer is the way you make it better is thinking through the buyer journey and being as aggressive as you can to try to gain customer insight from behavioral triggers and things like intent data.