

THE ABM ROADMAP FOR 2017:

Five Steps To Activate Your Best Customer Accounts

Q & A

Q: I'm already doing ABM, but the leads coming through are not converting. Are they just bad leads, or am I doing something wrong?

A: We hear this from marketers all the time. When we started the presentation, we talked about the five ABM tactics and how to use data insights to drive you through the tactics. But, what usually happens is that we are in a rush to drive revenue. So as soon as we generate leads, we want to pass them to sales as quickly as we can and say, "Hey, we generated these leads, go call them!" But, unless you are paying large amounts of money to generate HQLs or appointment setting leads, these leads are NOT sales ready. It's very important that you nurture those leads more effectively and you drive more content to those leads so that you're engaging them. Also, as we said earlier, it's not just about those leads, it's about the entire account. So how do I nurture the entire account with effective messaging? You must use data insights to power your marketing automation program so that you are providing more effective content to the entire account, over time, for multi-touch engagement, before you can pass the leads to sales.

Q: Can you explain more about the data and how it helps guide the ABM and nurturing process?

A: When you're nurturing your target accounts, you don't want to create a messaging strategy that's about yourself. By looking at data and surging analytics, you can identify topics that those accounts are showing the most interest in, and then create content that is more effective to that account. I am not suggesting that if you are targeting several thousand accounts you should create a custom content strategy that is unique to every account. Rather, you can detect patterns throughout your target accounts in terms of specific topics, so you can create messaging strategy that is relevant to that specific group of accounts. Then, you can detect another pattern within a different group of accounts and create a content strategy based on the topics they are showing interest in. Grouping accounts based on level of engagement and topics they are showing interest in helps you create a more effective content strategy in a more efficient way.

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Q: Data is all well and good, but how do I make use of it? I know a lot about my audience, but I'm having a hard time applying it to my ABM program.

A: It is very difficult. There is a difference between data and insights. How do you take that data and distill it down into actionable insights? The answers that you want to identify are: 1) How can you use data to identify who the right target prospects are? 2) When is the right time to engage those prospects? 3) What message will be most effective with those prospects? 4) How do you optimize your other marketing initiatives behind just your media programs to make marketing initiatives across channels more effective? The ability to access data and solutions to create feed those insights into your media, marketing automation, CRM and sales systems is key.

Q: You mentioned that using ABM and surge data can bring sales and marketing together. How can sales make the best use of all of this information?

A: ABM is all about creating more alignment between marketing and sales. It's not just about passing leads on to sales saying, "Marketing has done its job!," it's about creating a unified program. If you are using different providers and technologies to drive the performance of each of your ABM tactics, you will have a disjointed program. Your program will not be unified, and in turn you will not be working effectively and efficiently, and you will not have alignment between marketing and sales. You need to be using integrated technologies across all five of the ABM stages that will ultimately drive insights into your marketing automation programs and CRM sales tools to make them more effective. For example, you can use insights such as the level of engagement at account level and surging topic information to create a more dynamic nurturing strategy so that you can engage target accounts based on categories we talked about earlier. Additionally, you can pass data insights into CRM tools, and use other insights to help sales be more effective in engaging target accounts. You must collect all of the data you have available to you, create insights, and then integrate these insights into the tools that sales wants to see them in. The key to success is the integration of all those technologies across your different tactics.

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Q: How do you recommend bridging the gap between marketing and sales - especially if there is a tricky relationship there?

A: That 'tricky' relationship is more common than you think; I can't tell you the number of times I've heard how Marketing and sales are not working in alignment. The goal is to set a common framework on goals. At the end of the day, sales wants more effective marketing so they can drive more revenue. If you start with that approach, sales has to agree with that common goal. Next you should review the current target accounts, and share objective details with sales identifying which accounts are surging (or actively researching) topics related to their products, then you can identify a supplementary list of accounts based on the same objective data. This way you are developing a partnership with sales based on a common set of goals.

Q: Can you elaborate more on how to customize content and execute campaigns? What are the tactics/platforms to use?

A: Madison Logic offers its customers Surging Topics reports which help marketers identify the topics that their target companies are showing increased activity towards. Using these insights helps marketers identify the most effective content strategies to increase engagement with their target accounts. Madison Logic's *Activate ABM™* is a comprehensive ABM platform that gives marketers the insights to identify the right target accounts, optimize content towards those accounts, execute both Display and Lead Gen programs against those accounts, and then provide the best measurements to validate attribution and engagement towards your target accounts.

Q: Does ABM work...What are the options for using ABM when you have 1000's of small customers (contractors \$2-10 million) with buying centers of 2-5 people?

A: Yes, ABM certainly works. There's a reason why 2016 has been the year for marketers to start completely shifting their strategies towards ABM solutions. You need to find the right tools that are designed towards the SMB markets. Many providers focus on enterprise audiences. There are providers like AdRoll and Madison Logic that have more effective data platforms to identify and reach SMB companies.