

MADISON LOGIC.

# ABM PLAYBOOK

Everything today's data-driven marketer needs to identify, activate, and convert their best accounts faster



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# Introduction

Effective marketing requires placing the right message in front of the right audience at the right time. As a marketer, you've spent a lot of time building content like whitepapers, case studies, product sheets and newsletters to increase engagement with your brand, but how can you be sure your content is reaching the right contacts?

You can take a data-driven approach to targeting with the myriad of marketing tools available, making the process far easier than manually scraping websites and looking through a company's About pages. However, the problem with using these data-driven tools is that every marketer uses them. If you're targeting CFOs at Fortune 500 companies, you're competing against several other brands to get their attention—you'll be

a drop in the ocean and you're unlikely to make much of an impression. Your marketing strategy needs to be focused on where your customers are as they move through the sales funnel.

It's time to think about an account-based marketing (ABM) strategy. Using data, ABM identifies the best target accounts for your business and tailors a compelling message to individual decision makers within these accounts and their buying committees. Selecting and prioritizing the right accounts can increase the volume of marketing-qualified accounts [by up to 3X](#). Marketing is no longer a "lead delivery service" for sales. ABM allows both teams to work towards creating new sales opportunities, shortening sales cycles and generating measurable revenue.



# Foundations of ABM

Executing a sophisticated ABM strategy that impacts and accelerates revenue requires four key components:

- 1. Data-driven account prioritization:** If you go after the same accounts as your competitors, you're likely to get the same results they're getting which diminish over time. Instead, you need a data-driven method to find and prioritize underserved accounts who are ready to buy.
- 2. The ability to reach and engage across several channels:** To maximize engagement at your target accounts, you need to be everywhere they are. Display ads, content syndication, and LinkedIn are the three dominant channels that have proven to yield a positive ROI. LinkedIn is one of the most effective channels to reach and engage with a senior audience. Your buyers are networking with their peers, consuming and creating content and engaging in a way that indicates they're looking for a specific solution. This intel is critical for any ABM approach fueled by in-market data.
- 3. Insight into how accounts are engaged and what's working:** Gain complete oversight into which content assets your audience is engaging with and which accounts are converting into sales deals.
- 4. Operationalize multiple data sources:** Your ABM strategy should constantly be evolving based on the data you collect and use. Think of ABM as a flywheel rather than a linear path. Data gleaned at every stage of the buying journey should inform your account targeting, which contacts you pursue, and the content that will resonate with them the most.



# Understand and Learn about Your Target Accounts

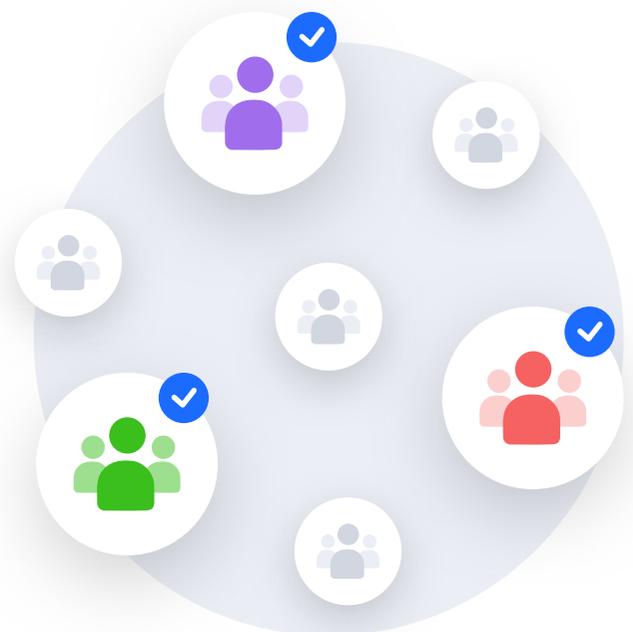
Understanding who your target accounts are and preparing content for them is more than just knowing what market they participate in and which solutions they may require. To develop your ideal customer profile (ICP) you must examine your funnel for the following signals:

- **Content consumption signals:** Determined by the actions your audience takes, these signals help you understand how they behave to indicate where they currently sit in the buying journey.
- **Technographic signals:** Demonstrates if they've installed complementary or competing technologies. This includes software, open-source applications, and underlying hardware used in their operation.
- **Account fit signals:** This includes firmographic and demographic targeting data. It allows you to profile your "perfect customer" and find more just like them.
- **Campaign engagement:** While content consumption signals show you what your target accounts engage with across the ecosystem, campaign engagement data shows how they engage with your content.
- **Competitive engagement:** Which of your target accounts are engaging with your competitor's content and campaigns? Are they underserved or neglected by your competitors? Identifying these contacts allows you to swoop in and give them the content they're hungry for (but not getting from anyone else).

Unlike buyer personas, which focus on individuals within an organization, an ICP describes the organization itself. It's essentially a fictional company that represents your best customer. If you have customers across several buying segments, you'll need several ICPs to accommodate them. This is necessary if you sell into multiple verticals, have a wide array of products or services that serve many needs, or operate on a global scale and cater to varying demographics. Your ICP is an evolving asset and efficient marketers know that the ICP is informed by what they do as well as who they are.

A simple starting point for this data is segmenting your customers by:

- **The most value:** This can be measured through net promoter scores (NPS) and customer health scores.
- **Revenue impact:** This can be measured by comparing annual contract value (ACV) with the total contract value (TCV) of specific accounts. Other reliable revenue impact indicators are retention and potential growth.



High-paying customers are great, but retention will suffer if they don't see any tangible outcomes from your solution. A customer who gets consistently blown away by your product or service is more likely to stick around.

Once you've identified your best-fit customers, look for commonalities and patterns. Common attributes include:

- **Industry**
- **Location**
- **Revenue**
- **Company size**
- **Company structure**
- **Buyer-team members**
- **Objectives and goals**
- **Challenges and pain points**

Include or add any attributes that are suited to your solution. For example, your best customers may invest in a specific tool or technology, have recently raised a new round of funding, or made significant changes to their management team structure. Ground your ICP on data, facts, and insights. If you're not sure what challenges your customers are facing, **interview them**. If you're unsure what tech they're currently using, use technographic data to fill in the gaps.

Another method of understanding your customers is to involve your sales team.

They speak with prospects and customers on the front line and will have access to unique and valuable insights such as:

- **How buyers make purchase decisions**
- **The names of decision makers in the account**
- **What kind of prospects see immediate value in what you're offering**
- **What pain points they talk about**
- **Shared end-goals**
- **Common customization desires or must-haves**
- **The features that get the least attention and why that is**

Both sales and marketing teams must be familiar with these insights. Every team member should understand your ICP's desires, goals and pain-points. This collaboration will give you greater insight into your benchmark velocity, i.e., how long it takes sales to close a deal. Get sales and marketing working together, and you'll be closely aligned at every stage of the buying journey when executing your ABM strategy.



# The Importance of Sales and Marketing Alignment

Understanding your ICPs is beneficial for both sales and marketing. Marketing and sales teams have the same goals or “North Star”: increase revenue and accelerate the sales pipeline. It is important in your ABM campaign to break down the silos between these two teams, so your content and advertising is impactful and effective to

the entire buyer’s journey. Knowing which accounts are demonstrating in-market behavior and the individuals to target within those accounts is one part of this strategy. The other part is measuring the marketing impact at every stage of the sales journey with the 3 Vs:



**Volume** understands that sales opportunity creation is critical to reaching as many of your target accounts as possible. By quantifying and examining the right metrics, i.e., sales opportunities and revenue creation, you can optimize your campaigns to ensure they effectively fill the top of the funnel.



**Value** focuses on the quality of your ABM campaigns which you can quantify with the amount your average sales deal increases. By examining this metric, you can see how your messaging, creative assets and content resonates as you optimize volume. For example, personalization can lead to a higher level of engagement, which in turn impacts revenue. Madison Logic helps you reach and engage accounts across the entire funnel.

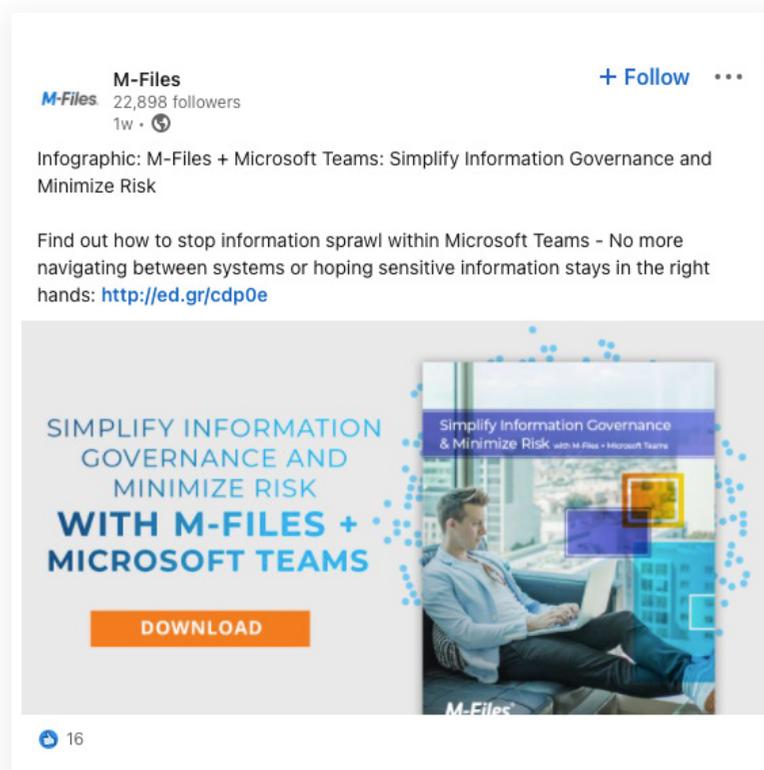


**Velocity** answers the question, “How long does it take to convert target accounts into customers?” Using metrics like deal size, conversion rate, and sales cycle length and speed, you can optimize your campaigns to increase velocity and convert more target accounts, faster.

**Volume, Value, and Velocity** are the bedrock components of every strategy and approach laid out in this playbook. With them, you can create your own cohesive ABM go-to-market plan to increase net new client acquisition, customer expansion, and your impact on the sales pipeline.

ABM recognizes that more than one individual is involved in the buying process. Half of the buying committee will never speak to a sales rep, yet their input in the decision-making process can make or break a deal. A cohesive ABM strategy means creating content and catering to entire buying committees, not just the most senior decision-maker. So, how do you reach an audience that will never speak to a sales rep? You use marketing to get your message in front of them with a strong ABM campaign.

For example, this LinkedIn ad from [M-Files](#) may feel irrelevant for a brand offering enterprise content management solutions:



You'd expect something that speaks to the priorities of IT managers for an enterprise content management system. However, IT professionals aren't the only individuals involved in the buying committee. M-Files needs to get buy-in from the compliance and risk leaders within a target account. Offering content that speaks to their specific pain-points builds awareness with the decision makers M-Files may never speak with as part of the sales process.

In an ideal world your sales team speaks to your ideal customers and target accounts daily, but there could be other members of the buying committee they never speak with regardless of the digging and research into the account. Tools like Madison Logic can help you reach these untouched contacts. By including

marketing material that speaks to every decision maker in the prospective buying committee you can ensure your brand stays top of mind throughout the sales cycle.

The most important aspect of sales and marketing alignment is communication. LinkedIn research finds that 9 in 10 sales and marketing professionals believe they're misaligned across key areas, including process and content. However, 90% believe that when initiatives and messages were aligned that the customer experience improved.

Forrester also found that aligned sales and marketing teams can be up to 6% more likely to exceed their revenue goals. Stay connected and focused on your target accounts together.

# Scaling Complexity and Effectively Measuring ABM

Your ABM strategy is not a one-size-fits-all approach; it can be as simple or as complex as it needs to be. To understand how different organizations can utilize ABM, it's important to acknowledge the three distinct philosophies that have emerged over the years:

- **One-to-many:** This strategy relies on automation to deliver campaigns at scale. It requires less of an investment per account than traditional ABM but has a lower ROI.
- **One-to-few:** These campaigns utilize custom templates. Specific segments are created based on account industry and seniority or role within those target accounts.
- **One-to-one:** This approach makes use of unique content tailored to an individual account and potentially an individual person. This involves the most upfront investment but also has the highest ROI.

Choose the approach most suitable to your available resources and target market. If you're a startup, you may not have the resources to produce content, creative, and messaging for each target account. However, you can still ensure you're delivering the right value while maintaining a healthy volume with a one-to-many strategy.

A one-to-few and one-to-one approach allow for more granular targeting. You're able to personalize on a deeper level, and therefore the value you deliver is far more relevant to each target account. The stronger your value, the bigger your impact on the sales pipeline.



Focusing resources on the most valuable accounts might make more sense than spreading yourself too thin with broad marketing and hoping you'll generate enough qualified opportunities as a result. It all starts with intelligent targeting. When you know exactly who your audience is, you can create buying journeys that increase your pipeline **volume** at a faster **velocity** by delivering greater **value**.

[Forrester](#) found that 62% of those implementing an ABM strategy see “a measurable and positive impact.” But to get results, you need the right components in place. LinkedIn's targeting capabilities allow you to get as granular or as broad as you like. If you're taking a one-to-many approach, you can simply focus on your target accounts and specific job roles with a handful of campaigns.

Looking to pour ad dollars into a one-to-few or one-to-one approach? Get more granular with your campaigns, ad sets, and targeting. Grab the attention of your audience by producing creative that's relevant to specific accounts and job roles.

The upcoming chapters will show you how to nail your targeting and build cohesive, multi-channel processes in greater depth.



## Chapter 1 Takeaways

- Focusing solely on lead generation is ineffective. Instead, focus on filling your sales pipeline with highly qualified, “ideal” target customers.
- To achieve your goals, your ABM strategy must account for volume, value, and velocity.
- Half of the buying committee will never speak to a sales rep. This means sales and marketing teams must collaborate throughout the entire journey.
- ABM can be as simple or complex as you need, making it ideal for companies of all sizes.
- Great ABM offers cohesive multi-channel journeys. This allows you to personalize your messaging and creative on the channels your audience is most engaged with.

# Components of a Successful ABM Strategy

You've learned that ABM can be a straightforward process that businesses of any size can implement. Going deeper, there are three key factors that successful ABM programs have in common:

1. **Identification**
2. **Activation**
3. **Measurement**

Taking the time to get these components right—while ensuring that they're correctly implemented—will help you convert your best-fit accounts in less time.

## 1. Identification

ABM is akin to treating your key accounts as if they were a standalone market. However, a tailored approach means nothing if you're targeting the wrong accounts. Without proper lead identification, you'll end up dedicating time and resources on target accounts that are a poor fit for your solutions.

You must identify high-value accounts that have pain points your product or services can solve. “Nice to have” features are great, but your offering and value proposition must help them achieve strategic goals. This could be a broad outcome (such as increasing revenue) or a specific target like helping them win accounts that open up new markets or opportunities. Think about the ICPs you identified from Chapter 1 as you move into the next step.

## Prioritize the Right Contacts Using Multiple Data Sources

You're now ready to start identifying potential accounts that fit your ICP. Never base this process on guesswork. A multi-source, data-driven approach is required.

With multiple data sources, you can confidently paint a more detailed picture of your ICP, including their pain points and behaviors. You can also get more granular with basic identifying factors such as job titles.

Start with **first-party data**, which is collected from your existing prospects and customers from the various systems and tools you already use, such as your customer relationship management (CRM) system and marketing automation platform (MAP). This includes contact and organization information, such as their job title, company size, revenue, and funding.

Insights on their behavior will be available as your prospects and customers engage with your brand and your campaigns. These are quantitative and qualitative insights you can collect to understand your audience better and answer questions like:

- **What pages do they visit on your website?**
- **What content are they consuming?**
- **Which campaigns are they most engaged with?**
- **What content are accounts most interested in?**
- **Which products are they showing buying intent for?**
- **How satisfied are they with your service?**
- **What content resonates with specific personas?**

**Third-party data**, on the other hand, includes information collected by outside vendors. They may have relationships with your audience, but not directly with your customers. This data can range from basic firmographic details (such as company size, location, revenue) to intent data, which identifies potential customers based on what they're interested in as well as their "level of interest." We'll cover this more in the next section.

First-party data will only show you the accounts you're already engaging. To uncover accounts outside of this blind spot, you need to collect and organize **proprietary data** from external sources. This is where multiple data sources blend to identify accounts that are being underserved. However, collecting and unifying proprietary data can be tricky. How can you consolidate this data if it's siloed across several owned and third-party data sources?

Solutions like **Madison Logic's Data Cloud** help you build a target account list beyond those engaging with your campaigns. For example, let's say you're offering a compliance management solution to

By combining first and third-party data, you can discover opportunities that match your ICP and gain more insights into their behaviors and interests.

fintech companies. Using the **ML Data Cloud**, you can identify the accounts that are underserved by your competitors that fit certain intent and firmographic criteria. Who else is going after accounts like Wells Fargo? What strategies are they using to drive engagement? Proprietary data can help answer these questions and more.

Proprietary data blends several sources of data to identify and prioritize the accounts most likely to engage with your content. This data gives you a list of accounts that are hungry for what you offer but aren't being given the content they need to make a purchasing decision. Empower them and you'll see higher levels of engagement.

## Use Firmographic and Intent Data to Identify In-Market Accounts

There are two types of sources you can use to gather insights on your best-fit accounts:

1. Database software that compiles **firmographic data**
2. Predictive software that looks at **intent data**

Certain prospect and contact databases enable you to identify accounts with the exact firmographics and technographics that match your ICP.

Intent data allows you to prioritize in-market accounts based on specific behaviors or indicators. Not only can you see what a potential customer is interested in, but also their level of interest.

Research from Madison Logic and [Forrester](#) shows that **the right intent data can triple the number of marketing qualified accounts (MQAs) from 3% to 9%**.

Accounts are identified at more mature stages of the buying process, so they're more qualified when product messaging reaches them.

For example, did they look at a product page for 10 seconds or 10 minutes? What other pages did they visit after researching a product? You can use this information to identify their level of interest and association with the company's buying committee.

These are more accurate indicators of influence than any job title. Alternatively, you can use software that gathers both kinds of data.

**Madison Logic's Data Cloud** includes sources for demographic, firmographic, and technographic data and measures intent signals such as web research, and media engagement, and investment trends.

The data sources you invest in must integrate seamlessly with your technology stack to give you a complete and comprehensive view of your accounts. For example, if your CRM data and campaign analytics aren't synchronized, or they're siloed, you will never get a true 360-degree view of your customers.

## Find Easy Opportunities from Your Existing Customers and Sales Data

While it can be tempting to search for new and exciting accounts, ABM can also unlock opportunities through customer expansion. Your existing customers have already invested in your solution and trust your brand. These existing relationships help you jump initial sales barriers and make it easier for you to serve them with additional solutions they could be interested in.

Methods to identify these opportunities include:

- Analyze your CRM and automation data for new opportunities. For example, are there any upselling opportunities with existing customers that match your new ICP?
- Identify churned customers who you've not engaged with for a while, or lost opportunities that you can re-engage.
- Identify prospects who seem stuck at a particular stage in the pipeline who need extra attention through sales enablement.

Use these insights to deliver a tailored approach. For example, if a prospect is stuck during the proposal phase, find out their objections. If it's a matter of pricing, you can deliver content that communicates why you charge the way you do to address that objection directly. LinkedIn integrates with many leading CRMs, allowing you to create audience segments from your CRM data. This enables you to tailor your campaigns and content depending on where certain accounts are in your sales pipeline.

## Identify Prospective Customers with Competitive Research

With a little research, you can identify your competitor's biggest existing accounts. In most cases, you won't have to look far—simply visit their website and read their case studies to understand who they help (and what you can do better). Dig into review sites such as [G2](#) and [Capterra](#) to see who's leaving reviews for your competitors.

If you're planning on reaching out, personalize your outreach by identifying your customer's likes and dislikes. Sources like G2 asks each user what they dislike about the product they're reviewing. Using this process as part of your ABM strategy will give you insights to produce content and campaigns that resonate with your audience.

Finally, use technographics to find which of your target accounts are using your competitors' solutions. Cross-referencing this data with your ICP can uncover accounts that already use a product like yours.



## Tier Your Target Accounts to Optimize Your ABM Campaign

With a target account list in hand, the next step is to ensure you spend the appropriate amount of time and resources converting them based on the size of the opportunity.

Targeting every account with the same approach is counter-productive and likely to leave your sales and marketing teams overwhelmed.

We recommend taking a tiered approach that categorizes your target accounts as follows:

- **Tier 1:** Companies that fit all the criteria of your ICP with the biggest potential value to the bottom line
- **Tier 2:** These companies are also a good fit, but have a lower lifetime/order value
- **Tier 3:** Companies that only meet a few of the key criteria and are unlikely to offer great value

Depending on the number of accounts in each tier, you may find that your tier one companies are ideal candidates for one-to-one ABM, tier two for one-to-few ABM, and tier three for a one-to-many approach.

## 2. Activation

**You've identified your key accounts.** Now it's time to consider how you'll reach out to your list of target accounts. **Activation** is all about starting the conversation and building a commercial relationship. Whereas identification helps us meet required **volume** goals, activation aims to build and deliver the right **value** at a high **velocity** that accelerates pipeline growth. A good activation strategy consistently delivers relevant experiences on the channels where your audience spends their time. Relevant and consistent engagement will maximize conversions and allows you to convert your best target accounts faster.

### Reach your target accounts where they're the most engaged

In today's buying process, people spend considerable time researching potential solutions before starting a sales conversation. According to [Gartner](#), the typical buying group for a complex B2B solution involves six to ten decision makers, each one independently gathering four or five pieces of information around the product or service they're considering investing in. To be part of this conversation, you must take a proactive, multi-channel approach to reach them on the social platforms, publications, and communities where they're conducting their research.

This multi-channel approach applies to the entire buying committee. For example, sales managers may be your main point of contact but the decision to invest in your solution involves the CRO, individual contributors (the people using your solution on a day-to-day basis), finance teams, and potentially legal, procurement, and other departments. Take the time to understand where each of these stakeholders spends their time. Which channels are likely to make the biggest impact, capture their attention, and educate them on your solution?



Relying on a one-off account generation approach isn't going to cut it. Your target contacts will never see your message if you're not reaching out and promoting your campaigns in the right places. Buyers must see your message across multiple channels (both online and offline), such as:

- ABM Content Syndication
- ABM Social Advertising with LinkedIn
- ABM Display Advertising
- Events (in-person or virtual)
- Webinars
- Direct mail
- Email campaigns

The data you gathered during the identification phase should give you insight into which channels your buyers are most active in; use this data to inform your activation phase.

The channels and approaches you use will depend on how sophisticated your ABM strategy is. For example, in-person events can be a powerful tactic to deploy for one-to-one ABM, getting several people from a single target account into a room/virtual event. However, it's far more costly than a one-to-many approach, where scalable online channels would be a more efficient use of resources.

## Grab Attention with Intelligent Personalization

You must personalize your content and message to the individual it's meant for to stand out from your competition. This means going beyond simply including {First Name} variables in your email sequences. You must make prospects feel that your content, copy, and messaging were written with them in mind.

To achieve this level of personalization requires you to fully understand your audience. We've talked about firmographic data up to this point, so we need to take a closer look at the individuals on the buying committee:

- Who are they?
- What's their role in the organization?
- Where are they in the buying journey?
- What are they trying to accomplish?
- What pain points and challenges are they facing?

Research from Gartner shows that meaningful personalization boosts the chances that a customer will make a high-quality purchase by 9%. Use personalization to demonstrate that you truly understand your audience and solve their most pressing challenges.

Supplement this with first-party data to see where your existing customers are most active. What content has resonated with them the most? What questions do they ask throughout the sales cycle?

The personalized content you produce will be unique to your organization, but you must ensure it caters to the needs of your target accounts and commercial objectives. With a one-to-one ABM strategy, you can double-down on personalization to create and organize content that's truly unique to the recipient.

You can also curate your existing content and deliver a personalized and relevant message without creating any new content. For example, this LinkedIn ad from **Gong** is offering a coaching guide to sales leaders:



This Gong ad is targeting contacts responsible for training sales reps; Gong wants to build relationships with contacts, like training leaders, that may be part of a buying committee researching its solution for its team. Syndicating existing content with a new message for a specific contact saves resources and shows the buying committee that Gong prioritizes the right decision makers within the account.

[Use LinkedIn Ads](#) to serve personalized ads and messaging that drives traffic to a relevant article or whitepaper. You're serving the same piece of content to several segments, but you've started the conversation on the platforms where they're already active.

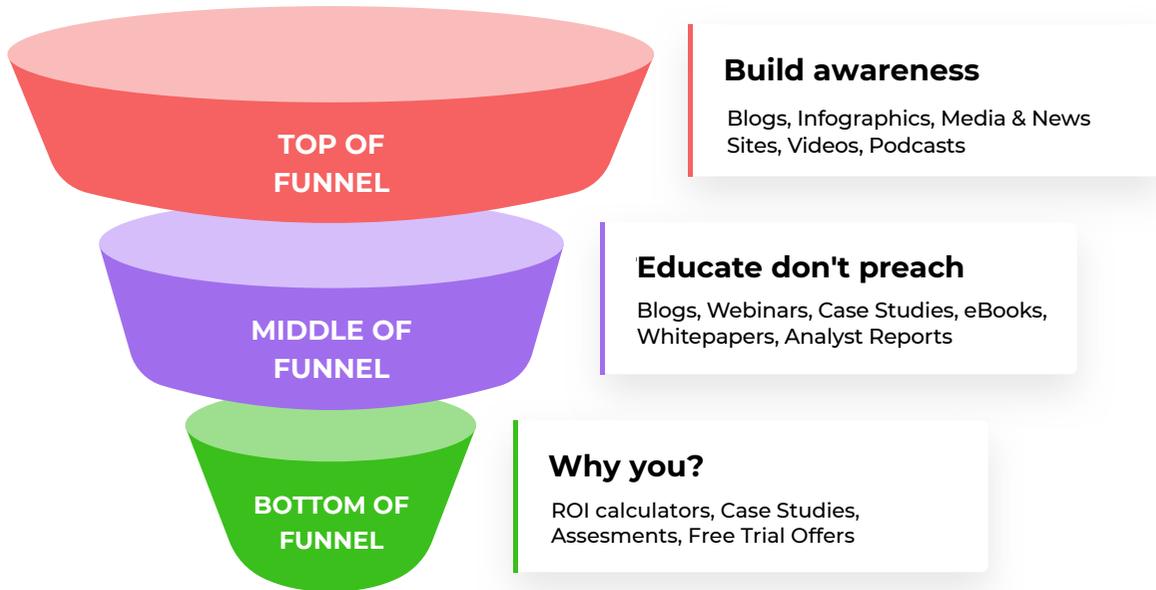
## Align Content and Messaging in the Sales Cycle

Selecting channels and producing content requires you to consider the different stages of your contacts' buying journey. Though you're using intent signals to identify in-market accounts, they may not be ready to buy. Instead, you must nurture them through the sales cycle with the right content and messaging at the right time. Each customer will go through three stages:

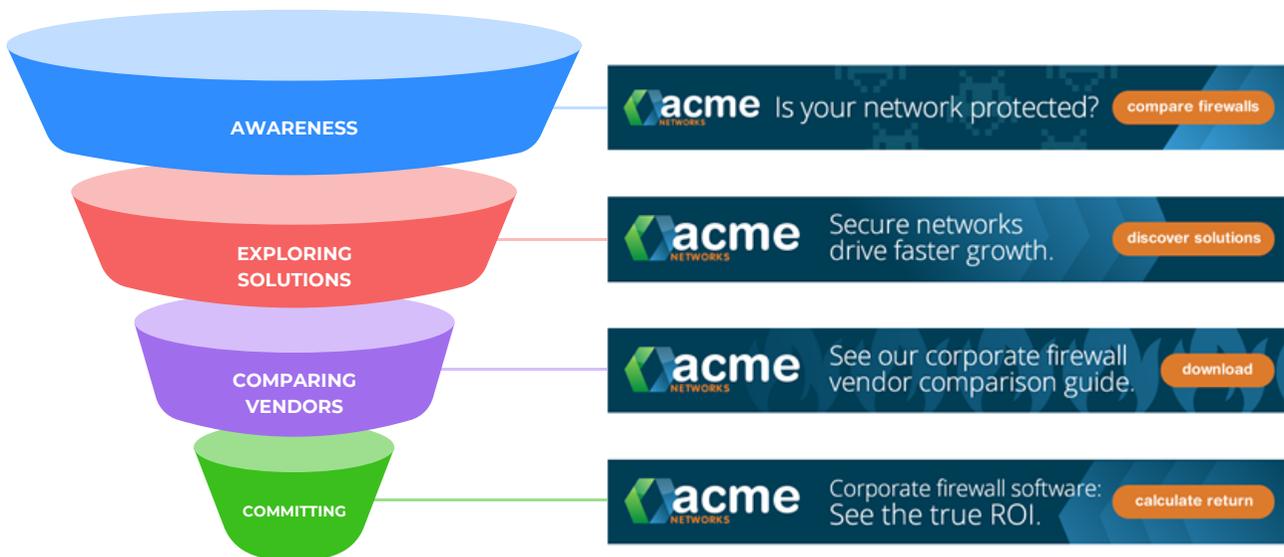
**1. Top of the funnel (Awareness):** The prospect may not be aware of their problem or how your solution can help. Become a trusted advisor, educate them around their current challenges and show them how to overcome these challenges. Use your intent data to create specific messaging that matches their research.

**2. Middle of the funnel (Consideration):** The prospect knows the challenges and the potential solutions but needs more information. Position yourself as the ideal solution; talk about your solution's benefits more than features or technology.

3. **Bottom of the funnel (Decision):** The prospect is ready for final conversations to make their buying decision. They know the solution they need but haven't picked the right vendor. Content should focus on the reason to choose you over competitors; use data, statistics and customer stories to show the buying committee that you're the best option.



Depending on your ABM platform, you might be able to use the same channels at different stages with adaptive content. This allows you to speak to your audience with relevant messaging at each stage of the sales cycle. For example, notice how each message variation below changes depending on the buying journey stage:



Acme Networks provide a different piece of content and call-to-action depending on previous behavior and intent signals.

[Schneider Electric](#) used a combination of intent data, firmographics, and technographics to build

personalized triggers. With this data, they could automatically adapt the messaging in their content syndication, display ads and LinkedIn campaigns based on where each account was in the sales funnel. This allowed them to increase engagement, deal velocity, and ROI.

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## **Stay Top-of-Mind at Every Stage of the Funnel with an Omnichannel Approach**

Accelerating revenue requires you to be visible on the channels your target accounts are active. Consider investing in an omnichannel approach to ABM that provides seamless messaging across several channels rather than treating each channel as a separate entity. Each touchpoint builds on the previous interaction, even if they took place on other channels. A multi-channel approach may utilize social media, display

ads and high-quality owned content, but they need to work together to provide a true omnichannel experience.

While it's possible to manage each channel individually, the ability to design and execute your campaigns from a single platform makes the process easier. The right tools allow you to focus on creating tailored content and measure its impact.

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## **Use Display Advertising to Increase Visibility and Generate Demand**

It's hard to get the attention of every decision maker in an account. Most members of the buying committee will never speak to a sales rep. One or two contacts are responsible for communicating the benefits of your solution and advocating change to the entire organization. If you've ever tried making a case for drastic changes in a large organization, you'll know that this comes with friction. It's much easier to keep doing what's working than face the headaches that change brings.

The only way around this is to help these decision makers see the problem, challenges or pain that you and your main point-of-contact(s) have been remunerating over. They need to feel invested. Madison Logic's ABM Display Advertising helps you get in front of this hard-to-reach audience with a highly personalized message. Suppose you already have a relationship with a contact within a target account. In

that case, you can use insights generated from your conversations to segment and serve the right creative and content to every buying committee member.

Effective ABM campaigns start with your ability to reach the buying committee, no matter where they're located. The ability to reach in-market accounts regardless of their location gives your team the best opportunity to increase pipeline.

In addition to this geographic reach, identifying the right accounts requires a comprehensive understanding of how in-market accounts are engaging across multiple channels is a key component of a successful ABM strategy. By understanding how frequently your accounts are being targeted across multiple digital channels as well as which key personas are engaging, your ability to efficiently leverage targeted advertising improves significantly.

Let's say you want to attract leads for a content syndication solution. At the top of the funnel, you'd serve a demand generation manager with content that demonstrates how syndication can help them build sales pipeline and convert leads into appointments. Once you've started a commercial conversation, you can shift gears and start serving content to their CMO. Here, your messaging should talk to their high-level, strategic goals and problems and how content syndication will contribute to that solution.

Finally, you'll need to speak to the priorities of the CFO or CEO (Chief Executive Officer). Do this during the evaluation process. This messaging should focus on what's likely to happen if no action is taken. For example, demonstrating how content syndication saves on wasted ad budget and therefore increases ROI over time.

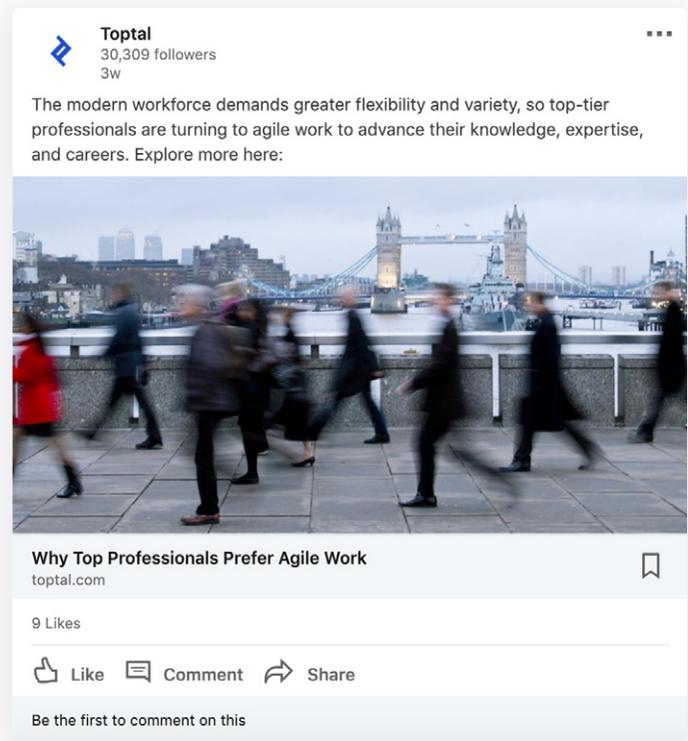
This example shows that the solution is consistent across each stage of the funnel. The only difference is the outcome of that solution is tailored to each member of the buying committee. This is how you ensure that you're part of the strategic narrative without 1-to-1 conversations with each stakeholder.

## Educating and Nurturing Leads Through **ABM Content Syndication**

Producing eBooks, whitepapers, and blog articles for every buying committee member contributes to both lead generation and nurturing. However, creating great content is only useful when the right contacts engage with this content. Content syndication helps you get the right content in front of the right contacts using the multi-channel approach we've discussed throughout this playbook.

For example, you may have a solution that helps accelerate enterprise companies' digital transformation and adoption process. Creating an eBook for CFOs on

This LinkedIn display ad from [Toptal](#) is the perfect example of speaking to specific pain-points:



This ad provides insights that senior recruitment leaders are hungry for without directly talking about Toptal's solution. This ad is effectively steering the conversation to a challenge or inquiry that someone in a buying committee is facing.

the top-line benefits of digital transformation will help you build relationships with a key stakeholder in the buying committee.

**ABM Content Syndication** helps you personalize elements of your campaigns to offer the same piece of content to multiple stakeholders. That same eBook on digital transformation can apply to marketing and product leaders alike. However, to get their attention, you'll need to personalize your ads and landing page copy to speak to the priorities of everyone.

Marketing automation platform [Marketo](#) puts their content to work by focusing on every stage of the sales funnel for an account looking into B2B marketing attribution for the first time.

A resource like this helps marketing leaders looking into a marketing attribution solution make better decisions. This helps to advance the sales process by empowering target contacts to decide and position Marketo as a trusted advisor in the process.

[Madison Logic's Journey Acceleration](#)™ helps you accelerate the customer journey by serving, starting, and stopping specific campaigns depending on where contacts are in the sales funnel. Using Journey Acceleration (registered trademark symbol here please), you can increase ROI by distributing the content your contacts need right now.



### 3. Measurement

Accurately measuring and optimizing your ABM campaigns is just as critical to long-term success as producing personalized, relevant creative assets.

First, you must **identify the financial impact** that ABM has on revenue generation and acceleration. ABM can require significant investment; finding the right accounts, researching them and producing content for buying committees requires considerable resources from your marketing and sales teams. You must measure your ABM campaign's productivity, efficiency and impact.

Second, you must **identify opportunities for optimization**. ABM is an ongoing strategy that must constantly evolve and adapt to the marketplace you operate in. To stay up-to-date, on-trend and relevant,

measure your performance over time and ask yourself the right questions. For example:

- Have we identified and prioritized the correct accounts?
- Are we missing out on new accounts that need adding to our campaigns?
- Are we using the right channels and messaging to activate new accounts?
- What content is succeeding in building and accelerating our sales pipeline?

Proper measurement of your ABM campaigns enables your marketing and sales teams to make better decisions on engagement and optimization.

## Plan Ahead Before Starting Your ABM Campaign

Demonstrating the positive impact of ABM and identifying areas for improvement means planning ahead. KPIs and baseline metrics must be established as part of the strategic process. Bob Peterson, Principal Analyst at Forrester Research, [recommends having a control group in place](#).

For example, test Tier 1 campaigns using Tier 1 segments as your control group to accurately measure the impact of your campaigns.

The metrics used to measure effectiveness fall into four categories:



### READINESS

How have you prepared?



### ACTIVITY

What have you done?



### OUTPUT

What happened as a result?



### IMPACT

What was the effect on your business goals?

Your chosen metrics must align with your goals. Unlike metrics used in other lead generation approaches, ABM requires account-specific metrics for each category. For example, you might use the following metrics for a one-to-one ABM campaign:

<b>Readiness</b>	Buying groups mapped, account planning completion, account contact completion
<b>Activity</b>	Executive briefings, ADR touchpoints, content engagement (time on page, # visits), campaign and ad engagement
<b>Output</b>	C-level engagement, C-level demos, asset/content used by sales
<b>Impact</b>	Volume, value, and velocity vs. non-ABM*

\*See the [Measuring Success](#) chapter for a deeper dive into measuring volume, value, and velocity.

## Improve, Optimize and Pivot by reviewing your metrics

Once your ABM campaigns are running you can use those metrics to identify any bottlenecks and opportunities for improvement. ABM is a long-term strategy; it's necessary to use time-based metrics to measure progress. ABM can shorten the buying journey, but it won't cut 18-month sales cycles down into a few weeks.

You can still use short-term goals to check you're on the right track, such as engagement metrics and identifying new contacts to target. Work toward initial outcomes (such as new sales opportunities), and finally, long-term results.

Diagnosing bottlenecks is simple when measuring metrics across the four categories above (readiness, activity, output, impact), as each stage leads into the

next. For example, if you do not see the impact you hoped for, check your output metrics. If your outputs are lacking, see if you need to increase your volume at the activity level.

It's easier to see how your ABM campaign is performing with your KPIs in one place rather than aggregating data across multiple sources.

According to Forrester research, when cross-channel engagement and sales performance data is integrated in a single platform, ROI can improve by [507%](#). Use a solution that helps you build account dashboards that display specific accounts, programs and targets to provide coherent revenue-based account analytics in one place.

Use the feedback from your front-line sales team when assessing your performance. How are prospects responding to marketing efforts? What's resonating, and what's falling flat? Are there any gaps in your coverage?

## Chapter 2 Takeaways

- Successful ABM relies on identifying and prioritizing the right accounts, using a combination of first-party, third-party, and proprietary data.
- Existing accounts and competitor customers who match your ICP are ideal places to start your ABM strategy.
- ABM activation involves reaching out to all buying committee members on the platforms that they use to research potential purchases.
- Personalizing your messaging and content involves more than simply using the prospect's name—demonstrate that you know the individual and can help them with their most pressing challenges.
- Measuring the progress of your ABM campaigns allows you to make better decisions on engagement and optimization.
- Define your KPIs and take a baseline before you get started, then monitor your results to identify any bottlenecks or areas for improvement.

# The Plays

ABM is versatile—it enables you to reach new accounts and accelerates your existing sales pipeline while unlocking hidden value in your already engaged accounts. You'll need different strategies and tactics that depend on the main objective of your campaign. These are referred to as **plays**.

While you must always identify, activate and measure, the specific actions you take will vary depending on your goals. Below are three of the most effective ABM plays with how you can implement them in your strategy.

## Play 1: New Customer Acquisition and Lead Generation

According to TOPO, [74% of all ABM is focused on customer acquisition](#). However, getting the attention of those contacts in the first place is hard. Traditionally, ad buying and targeting would happen on a single channel, but a multi-channel approach can get the attention of senior decision makers.

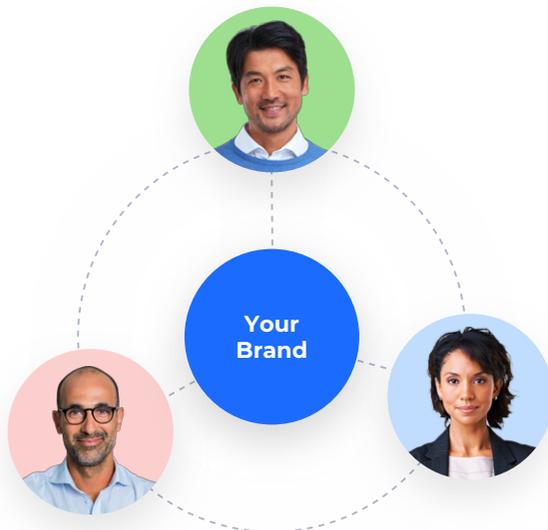
An acquisition approach to ABM enables you to make the best of your resources. You spend more time talking with accounts with the biggest potential to affect your bottom line.

### Objectives:

- Get the account's attention
- Make initial contact to confirm fit
- Introduce yourself
- Add account to the pipeline
- Drive additional pipeline

### Channels:

- ABM Display Advertising
- ABM social advertising with LinkedIn
- ABM Content Syndication
- Email
- Phone calls
- Direct mail



## Play 1 in Action

Identify your best accounts that demonstrate intent. Look at the channels suited to top of the funnel prospects with the goal of moving these prospects deeper into awareness where they're ready to explore solutions.

Warm up your contacts with targeted and ABM Display Advertising. You want to help attract the right contacts in the account with messaging and landing pages that speaks to their challenges.

At Madison Logic, we've found that well-targeted ads result in a 5x higher gaze duration and 4x higher ad recall. Personalization helps get the attention of your target audience as you're delivering a message that's relevant to them.

Coupling this approach with LinkedIn takes personalization to another level. With their advanced targeting, you can get your message in front of specific accounts and job roles:

**INCLUDE**

United States X + Add Locations

Exclude people in other locations

---

**INCLUDE** people who meet one or more of these criteria

Job Titles current ▼

Director Of Business Development X Director Of Sales Marketing X VP of Sales X

VP of Marketing X + Add Job Titles

---

**AND** people who meet one or more of these criteria

Home > Job Experience	
Company	Job Functions ?
Demographics	Job Seniorities ?
Education	Job Titles ?
Job Experience >	Member Skills
Interests	Years of Experience

While the display ads served across publications may speak to the high-level goals of the account, LinkedIn allows you to get hyper-targeted to the individual: LinkedIn that has [over 65 million decision makers](#) so you can be sure the right people will see your message.



Capture the attention of target accounts that are engaging with competitors using in-market data. Use proprietary data (fueled by a platform like the [ML Data Cloud](#)) to identify accounts that are engaging with competitor campaigns. Produce content and creative that speaks to your buyer's pain-points in a way your competitors can't.

Your goal is not to hit them with a sales pitch at this stage; your aim is to raise awareness while getting your name in front of each buying committee member. As their interest peaks, you can position yourself as a trusted advisor who can help them with their challenges.



Content syndication is a great way to do this as it allows you to talk about your accounts problems and subsequently position yourself as an expert in your field. When it's done well, content syndication helps to establish thought leadership, extend your reach, and ensure your brand is presented consistently across all channels.

For example, this LinkedIn ad from [Salesforce](#) offers an eBook for marketers looking to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic:

**Salesforce**  
2,909,539 followers  
Promoted

Today's customers don't just seek innovation and convenience; they expect the brands they trust to be purpose-driven and empathetic. ...see more

**The Marketers' Playbook to Humanising Marketing and Building Deeper Customer Connections**

E-book: Marketer's Playbook for Success in a Post-COVID World.  
salesforce.com

Download

Here, they're offering a top-of-funnel content asset that speaks to the priorities of most marketers at the time. They can start a conversation with specific accounts before serving ads and content to other buying committee members.

While the exact level of personalization will vary depending on the scale of your ABM strategy, you must tailor your content to each account and customer segment. Use intent data to adjust your ad messaging to their unique problems and situations.

As target contacts engage with your ads and content, you can establish top-of-mind awareness with a multi-channel campaign to introduce your solutions and nurture them into buyers.

Whether you're using LinkedIn InMail, email, or direct mail, you must personalize each touchpoint. Demonstrate that you've done your research and can help them reach their goals.



## Cadence

The exact cadence you use will vary, depending on sales cycles, the size of the buying committee, etc. However, as a general guide, the following sequence applies:



### Stage 1

Warm up the account with targeted display ads that lead contacts to customized landing pages with curated content.



### Stage 2

Continue warming up the account via LinkedIn engagement.



### Stage 3

Reach out to individuals on the buying committee with a multi-channel campaign and personalized content.



### Stage 4

Follow up on outreach via email and phone.

## An Example of Play 1 in Action

Know which accounts to prioritize for more effective account generation. You need data that signals your target accounts are in the market for a solution like yours (e.g., content consumption and campaign engagement).

[Genesys](#), a customer experience company, used [Madison Logic's ABM Content Syndication](#) to reach target accounts with relevant content. They simultaneously leveraged intent data to see which topics their best accounts were researching, allowing them to optimize their content strategy.

As a result, they were able to uncover multiple Marketing Qualified Leads (MQLs) as well as high-quality Marketing Captured Leads (MCLs). This initiative also helped them accumulate valuable data for future marketing efforts.

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"We use [MCLs] as a key top of the funnel metric because getting unique contacts for account expansion purposes has a great impact on our bottom line."

- Eric Roesch, Paid Media Manager at Genesys.

[Read the full case study here.](#)

## Play 2: Pipeline Acceleration

For large or complex purchases, the sales cycle can take months, sometimes years and most of these touchpoints are away from your sales rep. According to the [2021 G2 Software Buyer Behavior Report](#), business technology buyers in the buying committees are

spending more time investigating solutions ahead of purchase. This requires your content and advertising to touch multiple people in the buying cycle to speed up pipeline velocity and push them into the decision making stage earlier.

### Objectives:

- Reduce friction in the customer journey
- Get buy-in across the buyer team
- Shorten the sales cycle
- Book the meeting

### Channels:

- ABM Display Advertising
- ABM Content Syndication
- Direct mail
- Email sequences
- LinkedIn Sales Navigator
- Phone calls
- Webinars
- Events (virtual and in-person)
- Demos and trials

## Play 2 in Action

Once new accounts have been converted into the sales pipeline, some marketers prefer to hand responsibility over to the sales team.

However, marketing and sales should collaborate at every stage of the ABM journey. To accelerate the sales pipeline, the two teams must work together to provide buying committees with relevant content based on their current stage in the sales cycle.

For example, a high-profile target account may ask for a slide deck that covers use cases for your solution, which is an excellent engagement. There's just one problem: the deck doesn't exist.

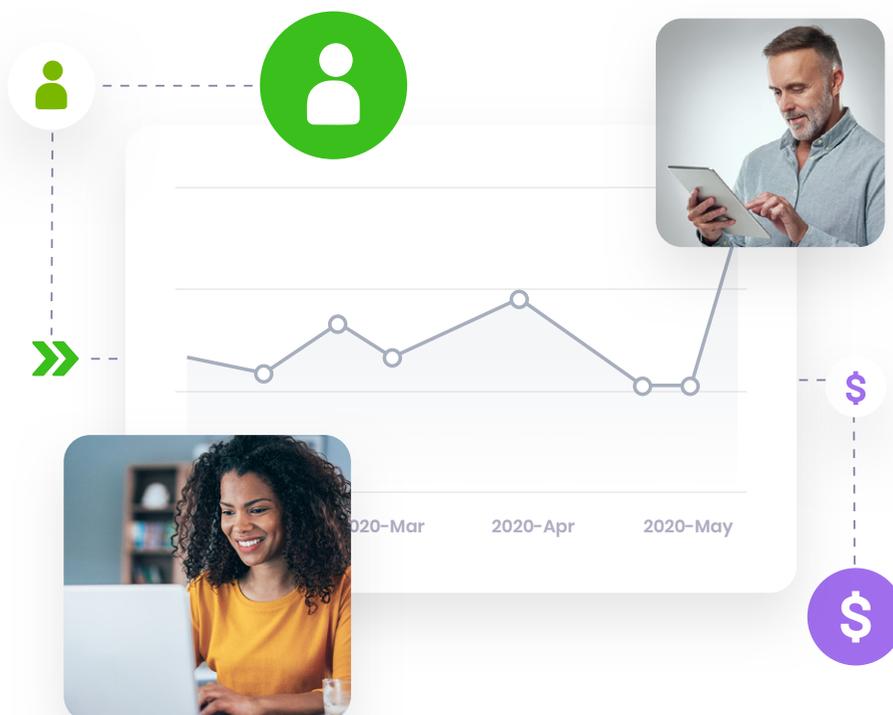
It's up to sales and marketing to figure out what they need to communicate and present it in a digestible way that will add value to the entire buying committee. Without collaboration, you may miss key aspects of how your solution could solve this specific account's problem.

It's also important to remember that progress through the funnel is rarely linear:

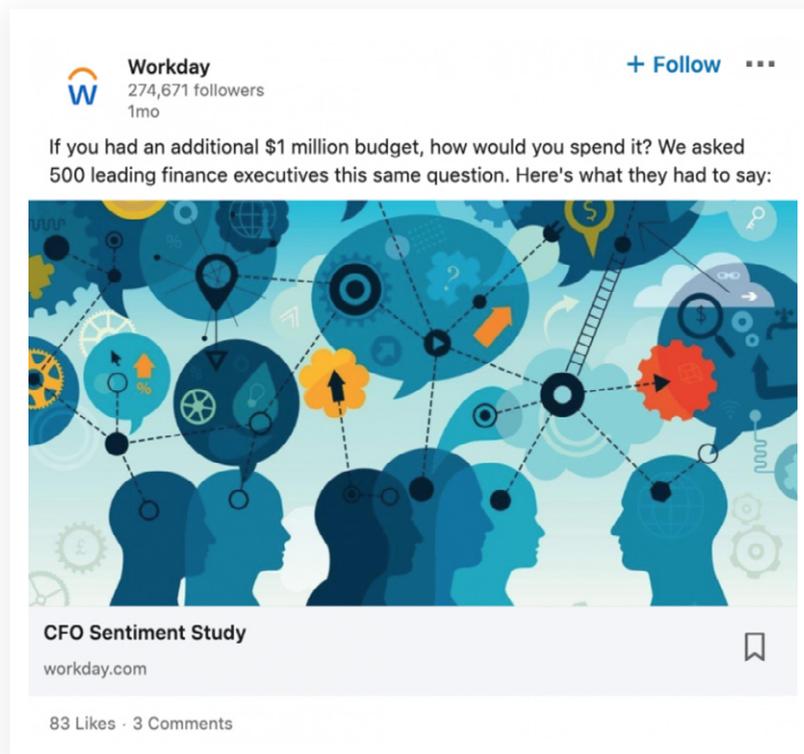
- Prospects can go dark and may need warming up all over again.
- New objections may arise at any time.
- Different members of the buying committee will have different priorities, all of which must be addressed to close the sale.

As leads move from awareness to consideration, answer any questions your contacts may have and give them the information they need to make a decision. Typically, this is done with content that demonstrates how your product would work in your prospect's situation or benchmark data that allows your prospect to compare different solutions.

Case studies, whitepapers, and eBooks are all effective content formats, but only if they relate to the prospect's unique circumstances. By using insights gleaned from intent data and your sales teams, marketing can serve (or create and serve) personalized content that speaks directly to the priorities of each stakeholder.



For example, in this ad from [Workday](#), they spark a conversation with CFOs by providing story-driven content that shares the thoughts and opinions of their peers:



While it's not relevant to a specific problem, it does help to begin a relationship and drive awareness with a critical member of the buying committee that may never be directly involved in the sales process.

The further an account progresses through the pipeline, the more you'll learn about them. As a result, the quantity and relevancy of the content you serve must also increase.

With a one-to-one ABM campaign, you could arrange for senior decision makers at your company to reach out to their counterparts on the buying committee at your target account. This should then be followed up with collateral related to the challenges and goals raised during the sales conversation.

## Cadence

As accounts progress through the pipeline, you'll need to consider different touchpoints for different roles. For example, influencers placed in charge of researching a potential solution may require more details on how you

differ from competitors. Executives who act as the final decision maker will rely on the influencer's research but would still benefit from clear examples highlighting your solution.

To satisfy both parties' needs simultaneously, consider the following sequence:

## INFLUENCER



### Stage 1

LinkedIn engagement, ABM Content Syndication, email nurturing.



### Stage 2

Webinar  
Follow-up emails.



### Stage 3

Case studies, demo videos, trial incentives, follow-up phone calls.

## DECISION-MAKER



### Stage 1

Targeted ads, LinkedIn engagement, ABM Content Syndication



### Stage 2

Direct mail package,  
follow-up emails.



### Stage 3

Counterpart call, account/  
industry event.

## Play 2 in Action

Accelerating revenue impact depends on serving the right content at the right time. Marketers can unstick deals by talking to the buying committee about their pain point and how their solution can solve it.

[Limelight Networks](#), a leading content delivery network, wanted to prioritize their accounts to find prospects ready to buy. They implemented a full ABM strategy that enabled them to identify and engage those accounts. For one high-profile account, there were 25 different marketing touchpoints with multiple people on the buying committee, carried out over several years. At the same time, sales stayed in touch with their key contacts.

The result? Limelight Networks' **marketing efforts directly influenced 90% of the opportunities:** Marketing was engaging with a lot of people through events, content syndication, display advertising,

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"When sales introduce themselves and our product, the prospect knows who we are and how we can help them achieve their business objectives. That's the value of account-based marketing, especially with a powerful solution like Madison Logic."

- **Janice Merk, Senior Director of Global Marketing at Limelight Networks.**

[Read the full case study.](#)

webinars, and so on. Sales had fewer touches, but their activities were high-impact face-to-face meetings, demos, and technical briefings.

## Play 3: Account Expansion

The sales pipeline and buying journey are rarely linear. New needs, questions, objections, and use cases arise sporadically, requiring consistent follow-up, optimized strategies, and personalized nurturing. Similarly, even after the prospect becomes a customer, the journey does not end there. Once your sales team has closed the initial sale, you should already be looking for other opportunities within that same account.

### Objectives:

- Build on existing relationships
- Secure introductions to new contacts within existing accounts
- Identify additional opportunities to add value
- Increase overall account revenue

### Play 3 in Action

Rather than starting from scratch by identifying new contacts within existing accounts, leverage your existing relationship with your initial point of contact as the foundation for further expansion.

Since you've proven your value, recommending you to their peers is a low risk to their professional reputation. In fact, they're more likely to act as a 'champion' and enthusiastically promote your product to their company.

Large enterprise accounts are uniquely positioned to benefit from your product. As they are made up of multiple departments, they represent a huge opportunity for ABM. Those varying departments have different buying teams, comprised of people who may know nothing about you and your product. An account expansion play builds on your initial win and uses it to target other opportunities at the same account.

### Channels:

- ABM Content Syndication
- ABM Social Advertising with LinkedIn
- ABM Display Advertising
- Email nurture
- Email sequences
- Video messages
- Phone calls

Simply asking them who else in their company would benefit from your offer may be enough to obtain a list of fresh names to reach out to.

That said, while a referral from a colleague will go a long way, new contacts still require some warming up.

Similar to acquiring a new customer, you'll need to raise awareness and position yourself as a trusted advisor.

The main difference between a brand new and existing account is you can refer to the successes you've already generated for their organization. Testimonials and case studies become even more persuasive when they're from peers they can have a face-to-face conversation with.

In general, the best practice is to be proactive when identifying new opportunities. Instead of waiting for an existing contact to reach out, keep them top-of-mind for cross-selling and up-selling opportunities.

New features or updates to your service may open up new use cases that previously did not apply.

Intent data can also show increased interest on topics revealing additional challenges or opportunities complementary to your existing relationship. Once you've identified a potential area for expansion,

let your customer (i.e., your new contact in a new department) know exactly how you can help and ask to be introduced to the relevant decision maker. In all of the excitement of uncovering new opportunities, be careful not to neglect your existing contacts.

This play should build stronger relationships, not have you jump from one department to the next leaving the initial contact in the dust. Done right, account expansion can increase retention for your existing solution and pave the way for new sales opportunities.

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## Cadence

When looking for opportunities to expand, your sequence must include separate touchpoints.

For existing champions, the objective is to continue strengthening your relationship and stay top-of-mind. You'll need to warm them up and educate them on how your solution can benefit them for new contacts.

### EXISTING CHAMPION



#### Stage 1

Direct mail swag package, thanking them for their support.



#### Stage 2

Follow-up call, checking that they're happy with the solution.



#### Stage 3

Email, highlighting positive results achieved.



#### Stage 4

Follow-up call, asking if other departments would benefit from the solution, with specific use-case scenarios.



#### Stage 5

Follow-up video message, thanking them for the introduction(s).

## NEW CONTACT



### Stage 1

Warm up with ABM Display Advertising customized landing pages, and content syndication that highlight results already achieved within the account.



### Stage 2

Reach out to the new contacts with a multi-channel campaign and personalized content, referencing your existing champion.



### Stage 3

Follow up on outreach with email and phone calls.

## An Example of Play 3 in Action

One enterprise technology company wanted to reach out to the buying committees at existing accounts to build the case for expansion into different regions and business units. However, they struggled with identifying who they should be engaging with and when. This was exacerbated by a lack of alignment between marketing and sales, with campaigns feeling less targeted and more scattershot.

To solve this, they adopted the **ML Platform** and used it to prioritize their existing accounts. They achieved this with a combination of first-party data on customer behavior and Madison Logic's proprietary data.

They created targeted multi-channel campaigns, using ABM Content Syndication, ABM Display Advertising, and ABM Social Advertising with LinkedIn. The campaigns were divided into two categories:

- Cross-sell campaigns, designed to increase awareness and consideration of new solutions
- Upsell campaigns, designed to educate accounts further and increase adoption of existing solutions

By using signals captured within their ABM platform, the sales and marketing teams were able to engage with the different buying committee members more effectively via personalized content specific to their stage in the customer lifecycle process.

## Chapter 3 Takeaways

- By using different strategies and tactics, referred to as plays, you can leverage ABM to meet different objectives.
- If your goal is new customer acquisition and lead generation:
  - Identify your best-fit accounts which demonstrate intent
  - Warm them up with targeted display ads, engagement over LinkedIn, and content syndication
  - Use a multi-channel campaign to introduce your solution and nurture the account

- If your goal is pipeline acceleration:
  - Have marketing and sales collaborate on content to move accounts to the next stage
  - Use your greater knowledge of the account to create relevant, high-quality content
  - Distribute content that demonstrates how your product would work in the account's unique situation and how it compares with alternative solutions
- If your goal is account expansion:
  - Use existing relationships with your point of contact as the foundation
  - Identify new opportunities based on product updates and account intent data
  - Refer to previous successes within the account to build trust



# Measuring Success

Measurement is a core component of any successful ABM strategy. However, according to research from SiriusDecisions, up to [60% of companies either don't know or don't measure key ABM metrics](#). Measuring your ABM campaigns allows you to build confidence when executing them.

Whether it's convincing sales and marketing teams to get aligned or demonstrating value to stakeholders, showing how your ABM efforts have paid off with measurable revenue can help you get greater buy-in (and hopefully help secure your budget for next year). In this chapter, we'll dig deeper into how to design objectives and success metrics for your campaigns.

## Choosing the Right Metrics

The right metrics can give you unparalleled insights into your ABM performance, allowing you to make strategic decisions based on what is and isn't working. Placing your bets on unreliable metrics can result in wasted resources. For example, click-through rate (CTR) was a standard metric for measuring campaign effectiveness.

When measured on its own, regarding a specific stage of the funnel, CTR is still be valuable. But when measured across the entire journey, the value of a click can quickly diminish. Total clicks across the board are less valuable than clicks by a target account from a targeted ad aligned with a specific stage of the buying journey.

The University of Baltimore found that a rise in PPC spending [directly correlates with a rise in invalid traffic](#). Specifically, they report that 14% of PPC spending is invalid, and that this figure will continue to rise. The culprit? Click farms, ad fraud schemes, malicious bots, competitor clicks, and more.

The takeaway here is twofold:

- The right metrics for your campaign depend on its stages.
- External forces like fraud can negatively affect certain metrics, so make sure your data is reliable to avoid inflated outcomes.

Different metrics apply to early progress, initial outcomes, and long-term value. Howard Sewell, President of Spear Marketing Group, suggests [considering different KPIs](#) for different accounts and buyer segments:

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“The measuring stick for your ABM strategy should reflect where an account or group of accounts is in the buying journey, and how much that account either knows you or has expressed interest in your solution. In practice, this means that you may be employing different KPIs for different accounts, or even for different buying centers within the same account, even if, collectively, those individuals are part of the same overall ABM strategy.”

Howard Sewell,  
President of Spear Marketing Group

Further, as ABM is commonly used for marketing and selling complex products with long sales cycles, you might not see long-term value metrics for months.

Similarly, if you're carrying out a six-month ABM pilot campaign, you may not see any of those metrics before the pilot ends. Analyzing the results too early could falsely suggest that the strategy is a failure. Long-term value metrics are better suited to verify that ABM impacts the goals that matter, such as increased revenue and ROI.

As obvious as it sounds, you must ensure your chosen metrics measure success at the account level. While most marketing campaigns use MQLs as a lead metric, your ABM campaign will look for marketing qualified accounts (MQAs).

Rather than just a change of terminology, this metric ensures you're focused on the account as a whole and reach out to the entire buying committee for the best results.

”

“Your goal is not to convert an individual; your goal is to convert the entire account, which comprises multiple individuals at different places in the decision-making process. This requires a consensus sale. Therefore, get your organization away from individual KPIs and measure success with account-based metrics.”

- Josh Thomas, Vice President of Marketing at Madison Logic

## How ABM Affects the Two Most Important Metrics on the CMO Dashboard

Today's marketers need to focus on two metrics:

- Marketing sourced pipeline
- Marketing sourced revenue

According to Forrester, these two metrics are featured the most on a marketing dashboard to prove marketing's impact on an organization's sales pipeline and revenue.

Measuring the impact marketing makes on an organization means going deeper than pipeline and revenue.

Forrester's [B2B Buying Study](#) found that the “average buying cycle involved a minimum of six buying group members and 30 discrete marketing interactions across those people.”

This is especially true with ABM, where success means reaching the entire buying committee. The impact of your marketing efforts goes far beyond the first interaction that begins the sales conversation.

ABM involves investing in actions that don't directly impact sales pipeline. We need more granular reporting to truly measure the impact marketing makes, not just on revenue and pipeline, but on the velocity of sales cycle.

More importantly, it allows us to improve efficiency and ROI. By using data to prioritize underserved and in-market accounts for our solution, we can pour more marketing budget into getting their attention, increasing deal flow, and reducing ad spend on oversaturated accounts.

## The ABM Metrics to Measure Success

As mentioned above, the metrics that matter most to your ABM efforts depend on the stages that make up your campaigns and sales pipeline. In the table below, we've provided some common ABM metrics and a description of where in the sales funnel they're most relevant and how they can impact your strategy.

Metrics	Breakdown
# of new accounts on site	Identify how many new accounts are consuming your owned content (articles, landing pages, etc.)
# of sessions	How many times those accounts have visited your site
% of target accounts engaged	How many accounts are engaging with your campaigns
# of page views and pages/sessions	How many pages your accounts are viewing during a session
Avg. sessions duration	How long accounts are engaging with your content for
# of users from accounts	The number of individual contacts from a specific account that visit your website
# of new accounts engaged	How many new accounts are engaging with your content and campaigns
# of marketing qualified leads	The number of leads that are qualified by marketing
# of sales qualified leads	The number of leads that fit in-market criteria or have begun a sales conversation
% of SQL pipeline conversion rate	The number of sales qualified leads that convert into sales opportunities
# of accounts in the pipeline	The number of accounts currently actively engaged in a sales conversation

<b># of accounts in the pipeline</b>	The number of accounts currently actively engaged in a sales conversation
<b>Avg. close rate</b>	The average rate that sales convert target accounts into customers
<b>Avg. contract value</b>	What's the average revenue and LTV of a target account customer
<b>Avg. pipeline velocity</b>	What's the average time it takes for a target account to convert into revenue

Use these examples to map performance across the entire ABM sales journey. When you identify gaps between stages, select additional metrics that help track performance between one stage to another.

**Share Issues and Progress Regularly with the Entire ABM Team**

Regular meetings involving the combined team, with complete visibility into how the ABM strategy performs, will enable sales reps and marketers to coordinate their activities. This also applies at a boardroom level. As with any marketing strategy, the C-suite needs to know if their investment is paying off. This means setting realistic expectations and using those time-based metrics to show early progress while measuring long-term results.

Bob Peterson, Principal Analyst at Forrester Research, recommends using an [executive-level dashboard](#) that shows how different workstreams have performed against key metrics. This includes results from your control group for comparison and qualitative feedback from sales, which can build credibility.



# ITSMA's Three R's framework

ITSMA, the organization that originally coined the phrase account-based marketing, recommends focusing your ABM strategy's impact on the [the Three R's](#) that business leaders prioritize. They stand for:

## Reputation

Determine whether you're building a strong **reputation**. More than promoting a general awareness in the market, ensure that the key stakeholders in your target accounts have a positive impression of you and your product. Are they aware of you? Are they recommending you to others? You can use a combination of quantitative and qualitative feedback to find out, such as monitoring social media chatter for positive (or negative) conversations, using surveys and interviews, or leveraging NPS and other score-based measures.

The second part of the framework is your **relationships**. You must build strong customer relationships with the buying committee to the point where you know who the influencers and decision-makers are in a target account. Once identified, you can reach out to them and have meaningful conversations. This can be measured by looking at the number of valuable relationships across an account and their engagement metrics (such as event attendance and email response rates).

## Relationships

Finally, are your ABM efforts generating **revenue**? Look for pipeline growth, revenue growth, and deal size across your target accounts. This is more than just how many sales you're closing. You must also determine whether it's [the right kind of revenue](#).

## Revenue

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“For one thing, not all revenue is equal from a business strategy perspective. Some is more profitable. Some comes from new solutions planned on for major growth in the future. Some revenue is more likely to contribute to great customer lifetime value than others. Some comes from particular customers that serve as our best references and advocates.”

**Rob Leavitt, Senior Vice President at ITSMA**

Putting this into practice, here are some examples of metrics that cater to each phase of the framework:

Three R's	Metrics
Reputation	Social media, content, and email marketing engagement
Relationships	Pipeline acceleration, email response rates, number of calls per contact
Revenue	Average deal value, close rate

Measuring relationships with pipeline acceleration, helps you understand how your relationships are progressing from a commercial standpoint. If you're meeting at events, but they're not progressing through the pipeline, then you're simply making friends.

## Using the Three Vs to measure ABM performance

Gauging the success of your ABM requires a clear picture of how it's impacting your pipeline and how positive (or negative) your ROI is.

As mentioned at the very start of this playbook, **volume**, **value**, and **velocity** are the growth levers that will determine whether your ABM strategy has the desired effect. Here's how to measure the impact of all three.

### Volume

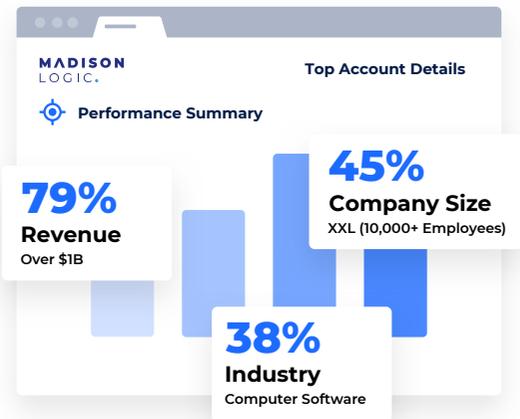
One of the significant differences between ABM and "traditional" lead generation is quality over quantity.

However, volume is still an essential aspect of any ABM strategy. Tracking the number of opportunities and deals created indicates whether you're moving in the right direction.

Even where you're using a one-to-one approach, the volume of sales opportunities created within a specific account will affect the success of your campaign.

The greater the coverage and influence you have within an account, the more likely you will make the sale. As a result, you should prioritize account-based metrics such as:

- Number of decision-makers engaged at the account level
- Web traffic and content engagement by account
- MQA pipeline growth



If you do not see an increase in volume metrics compared to your control group, start by reviewing how you've identified your target accounts.

Do they match your ICP? Is the benefit of your product/service obvious? Within those accounts, have you successfully mapped out the complete buying committee?

Answering these questions will ensure you're targeting the right accounts and contacts. Targeting is the key to successful revenue acceleration.

## Value

Like any marketing endeavor, you need to know that you're getting a good return on your ABM investment. Value looks at how much you're getting back from the accounts you're targeting, usually in the shape of pipeline and closed revenue. How are your target accounts interacting with your content, and what are

they most interested in? A strong content engagement rate means your personalization and targeting efforts are well dialed in.

To track content engagement, measure the following elements:



### **Viewability:**

How long are your accounts consuming your content? Which assets are they downloading? This data can help improve syndication efforts by consolidating these behavior metrics with third-party data.



### **Email:**

How are prospects responding to your outreach efforts? Do they open and click through on your nurture sequences?



### **Ad engagement:**

Are your target accounts engaging with your LinkedIn ads? What's your click-through rate across accounts and persona types?

These KPIs will give you a strong indication of how well your messaging resonates with your audience's pain points and priorities. It's also an indicator of the quality of your campaigns. The more personalized and relevant your content and creative, the higher your engagement (directly impacting revenue). In this way, engagement metrics can be a strong indicator of how your campaigns will perform in the long term,

especially if you have reliable benchmarks to work with.

For example, if you see a 5% dip in performance of your display ads from previous campaigns, this could have a direct impact on volume, which in turn affects your long-term pipeline and revenue goals.

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To measure value from a revenue perspective, evaluate what each account is worth to your bottom line, both on average and as a total amount. For example, you can identify specific accounts to understand how average deal size, cross-sells, upsells, and overall customer lifetime value have been affected.

Consider metrics such as MQA pipeline opportunities and ROI compared to non-ABM campaigns across all accounts. If there isn't a significant increase in those metrics, first look at how much value you're offering to those accounts at the activation stage.

Are you using messaging and content that is truly tailored to the account and the challenges they're facing? Meaningful personalization will lead to higher engagement as they see the value they can get from your product or service, resulting in increased pipeline acceleration and increases in revenue.

## Velocity

For complex products sold at the enterprise level, it's not unusual for the sales cycle to stretch on for many weeks, months, or even years. Finding ways to move target accounts through the sales cycle in less time is invaluable and something that an ABM strategy can help with.

Define how long it takes to close a sale on average. How long are accounts spending at each stage of the sales funnel? You should also look at your overall pipeline **velocity**, calculated using the following formula:

If your velocity is too low, review your contacts at the account. Have you correctly mapped out the account and identified everyone on the buying committee, or are there influencers and blockers you're unaware of?

Assuming you're reaching out to the right people, are you using appropriate content for their current stage in the customer journey?

Delivering the right message to the right person at the right time is essential for velocity.



$$\frac{\text{Number of opportunities} \times \text{Average deal size} \times \text{Conversion rate}}{\text{Sales cycle length}} = \text{Pipeline Velocity}$$

## Chapter 4 Takeaways

- Today's marketers need to understand and demonstrate the impact of their ABM campaigns.
- Metrics need to be account-based and take into consideration the length of the sales cycle.
- ITSMA's Three R's framework encourages marketers to consider reputation, relationships, and revenue.
- Use the three Vs: volume, value, and velocity as the biggest growth levers for your ABM campaign.

# Building a World-Class ABM Campaign, Step-by-Step

We've covered several advanced aspects of ABM, the essential components, and how it can be used effectively depending on your goals and resources. Even when you know these principles, putting an ABM strategy into action can seem like a daunting task. In this chapter, we'll walk through the process step-by-step.

## Step 1: Design and align success metrics

In a rush to start winning their best-fit accounts, many organizations make the mistake of launching their ABM campaigns without agreeing on their objectives. This can lead to confusion, wasted resources, and disappointing results.

We've discussed why the Three Vs of volume, value, and velocity should be your priority. But how does this apply to the context of what you're trying to achieve? Are you going after a big-name account? Trying to break into new industries? Aiming to expand your reach within existing accounts?

Decide on the metrics you'll measure (both short- and long-term) to give you an indication of how you're progressing towards those goals:

- **Short-term metrics**, such as new sales appointments and engagement metrics, will help you understand your content and creative impact during the early stages of your campaigns.
- **Long-term metrics**, such as revenue and deals closed, will demonstrate the impact ABM is having, allow you to measure ROI, and provide insights on whether you're moving the campaign in the right direction.

Different objectives require different approaches. Getting clear on your goals allows you to focus on the activity that moves you closer to them. Whatever your goal, select relevant metrics that measure early progress, initial outcomes, and long-term value. Refer to [Chapter 4](#) for examples of metrics and how they apply to KPIs.



## Align your marketing and sales teams

Your marketing and sales teams must collaborate at every stage of your ABM strategy, from initial planning to execution.

Make sure both teams agree on:

- Key definitions, such as what a MQA looks like
- Responsibilities throughout the campaign
- How success will be measured, both on a campaign and individual level

As with any change, there could be some hesitation.

Take the time to explain how sales teams will benefit from an ABM strategy, including:

- New high-value opportunities (which leads to higher commissions)
- The ability to have their say with marketing (and how they can help them close more deals)
- The results they can expect based on your benchmarks and projections

Communicating value in this way will usually be enough to overcome any doubts.

## Step 2: Develop a data-informed target account list

As discussed in [chapter 1](#), ABM is divided into three approaches:

One-to-many

One-to-few

One-to-one

The approach you choose will depend on the type of product you sell, your target market, and your available resources. Creating 100% original content for a handful of enterprise clients takes significant time and effort, but it's effective when selling a complex product.

Organizations with limited resources can still use automation technology and apply the principles of ABM to a larger pool of accounts.

### Identify your target accounts

Unlike traditional lead generation, where you're reliant on casting a wide net and getting as many leads into the funnel as possible, ABM enables you to focus your efforts on qualified accounts.

If you're yet to define your ICP (or it could do with a review), start by looking at your best existing customers. Do they tend to be in the same industry, use a certain technology or share similar objectives?

Look for any commonalities that could help you identify other ideal potential customers. Refer back to [Chapter 2](#) for more on how to do this.

When you have clarity on the accounts that value what you offer (while giving the most value in return) and understand what makes them tick, you'll know who to target.

## Check existing accounts for opportunities

Finding opportunities within your existing accounts, especially if this is your first ABM campaign, can yield quick wins and create initial momentum. As you already understand their needs, creating personalized content that resonates with them will be much easier.

They're also aware of you and (presumably) happy with the service you've provided, meaning they're likely to be more receptive to any offers.

Are there other departments who'd benefit from your service?

Are there promising accounts who haven't bought for a while or who may be stuck in the pipeline?

These are all ideal starting points for your ABM campaigns.

## Segment your target accounts

Breaking down accounts into segments makes it easier to create and personalize campaigns to their specific needs. For example, segment by tier by choosing a handful of high-profile accounts for one-to-one ABM while using a one-to-few or one-to-many approach for lower tiers.

You could also look at segmenting by firmographic criteria (location or company size) and technographic data (whether they use a competitor or a complementary solution). This is useful for a one-to-many campaign, automating the process while personalizing based on common characteristics.

## Lead and account scoring

Unless you have an unlimited marketing budget, you must make the best use of your resources to target accounts that have the most potential value.

Account scoring is a structured way of identifying and prioritizing accounts that are the closest match to your ICP and who show the most intent.

## Look for accounts that are showing intent

A smart ABM strategy targets best-fit accounts that are most likely to buy, and if they're visiting your site, there's a good chance they're interested in what you're selling.

Taking it further, how do they behave with your content? Are they browsing in a "shallow" manner for short periods, or spending hours researching specific solutions?

Use third-party intent data to identify accounts that are yet to engage with your brand but are giving off buying signals. Intent data can tell you who's researching the challenges your products can solve, allowing you to identify and target in-market prospects. It will also reveal the topics they're most interested in, which will prove invaluable when producing content.

Harnessing the right data makes your ABM campaigns more successful.

**ML Insights** leverages three sources of data: B2B research, proprietary historical performance, and install base to help you identify the right accounts and the right individuals to engage with your content.

Base your scoring system on a combination of explicit information (empirical data regarding firmographics, technographics, etc.) and implicit information (customer behaviors). Rank the significance of these details and assign an appropriate score, to determine the best accounts to target.

## Validate and enrich your data

Your ABM campaigns are only as good as the data that feeds them. The first-party data you have in your CRM and MAP is essential, but only if it's reliable.

To ensure data is accurate, validate and enrich your contacts with third-party data from reliable sources.

At the most basic level, this means verifying that you have the correct contact details. Even the best ABM campaign won't get results if the target account never sees your content.

From there, use third-party data to build a complete picture and learn relevant details that you can use in your messaging. Data enrichment will fill the gaps in

## Vet your account list with the sales team

Sales is a vital part of identifying target accounts, as they know who the prize accounts are and already have accounts in mind that they'd like to target.

In many cases, your sales team will already have a list of dream accounts they want to target. Once you have your shortlist, sales can help with additional insights that you can use to develop more accurate personas.

As Marie Hattar, CMO at Keysight technologies, says, [this is a good stage](#) to confirm how marketing will pass accounts on to the sales team:

their contact information and, in some cases, show you where they're active online (and the content they engage with).

Proprietary engagement data uncovers extra insights into what's going on in their company. For example, you can reach out to ideal accounts with relevant and timely content using intent and historical engagement data that isn't widely available. This gives you an advantage over other companies targeting the same accounts.

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“Be sure to determine which reps will take on what accounts so that once prospects show interest, the marketing team can seamlessly hand them off to sales and the experience is a consistent one.”

**Marie Hattar,**  
**CMO Keysight Technologies**

## Step 3: Create high-performing creative

Multiple decision-makers are typically involved in B2B purchasing decisions. ABM is particularly suited to these situations, targeting accounts rather than individual contacts. However, you still need to know who those decision makers are. Your sales team will know from experience with similar accounts what roles are involved, and third-party data can help identify who holds those positions at your target account.

For example, the main decision maker when purchasing a product like yours is the Head of Operations. On previous occasions, the sales team found that the project manager, operations engineer, and HR all had to approve the purchasing decision. In that scenario, you can use a third-party data provider to see the details for the people in those roles at a newly targeted account.

### **Identify your audience's pain points**

What keeps decision makers at your target accounts awake at night? Knowing the challenges they face is essential if you're going to come up with an attention-grabbing message. The good news is accounts are eager to tell you what's troubling them; you just need to know how to listen.

SEO data, site analytics, and social media are all gold mines, showing what topics your accounts are most concerned with. We've already looked at how you can use intent data to identify in-market accounts, but it can also reveal their biggest challenges. Consider carrying out a SWOT analysis on your target accounts,

to identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. When you know what's most important to them, your messaging will stand out from the noise.

### **Choose the right medium and channels**

Having the right message is important, but you must deliver it in the right way. This involves both the person's role in the organization and their current stage in the buyer's journey.

A busy executive may not have time to download and read an eBook, while a targeted display ad could be enough to grab their attention. A phone call may work for existing customers but is unlikely to get past the gatekeepers at a fresh account.

If you're not sure which channels are best for your situation, go back to your intent data to see where your accounts are active. Delivering your content in the same location makes it more convenient for your customers. For example, ABM Content Syndication is a particularly effective way of delivering helpful content to decision-makers as they research solutions just like yours.

### **Create customizable, hyper-personalized content**

Personalization can be powerful, but it has also lost some of its meaning. While adding a {First Name} merge tag to your email used to be enough to get attention, it's now table stakes. To create truly personalized content, you must address what matters to each individual that makes up the buying committee.

The level of personalization you need will depend on the account tier. One-to-one usually involves 100% unique content that wouldn't necessarily apply to other organizations. That includes dynamic landing pages,



microsites and physical items made exclusively for one account. However, even for lower-tiered accounts, all content and messaging should feel like it applies to them and their situation. No decision-maker should ever be left wondering why they've received a piece of content.

For one-to-many ABM, you can still personalize your automation efforts through proper segmentation. For example, if you've segmented your accounts by technographic data, then you can send them case studies showing how you've helped customers fulfill needs not found in your competitor's feature set.

### **Map out how and where content will be used**

Once you've created your content, work out exactly where you intend to use it.

Just as you mapped the buyer's journey when selecting your ABM channels, mapping your content against their journey will help ensure you produce enough creative to cater to every stage.

Think about how each piece of content will coordinate with the next, complementing each other for maximum effect. While it should appear effortless, you should carefully plan content delivery to the right question at the right time without jumping ahead or confusing the recipient.

Take this as an opportunity to confirm who will be responsible for delivering the content. For example, sales may use marketing material to close a deal, while marketing creates new content for existing accounts as part of an account expansion play.

### **Catalog your content**

Make a note of key details for both new and existing pieces of content, including (but not limited to):

- Date of creation
- Relevant persona
- Challenges it addresses
- Which stage of the buyer's journey the content applies to

This will give you an overview of the content available to sales reps and marketing teams, allowing you to see what works, what needs updating (with new stories and case studies, for example), and any other gaps you might need to fill. Use your catalog to identify opportunities to repurpose existing content. Make small changes applicable to a wider audience by packaging it up for social media, communities, and third-party publications without starting from scratch.

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## **Step 4: Engage buying committees at high-value accounts**

Mapping out an account by identifying each member of the buying committee isn't always straightforward. An organizational chart and understanding job roles are great but may not reflect the inner workings of the business.

You've already identified the key decision makers for each account, but you need to consider other roles on the buying committee. Influencers may not have

the final say, but their input will directly impact the buying decision. They can be hurdles to overcome or champions of your brand. Rather than assuming individuals with a specific job title will impact purchasing decisions, look again at the behavioral and intent data from the account. If individuals are researching solutions related to your product, they're likely involved in the buying committee.

## Track changes with a continuous flow of data

As the saying goes, the only constant in life is change. People get promoted and move in and out of the buying committee. If you have a long sales cycle, you could be dealing with a completely different group of people with different priorities halfway through the process.

For example, if a target account starts researching certain features, you can modify your content to highlight how your product implements those features. If they are researching competitors, you can update your messaging to highlight the specific ways your product is superior.



To keep up with these changes, your data must be reliable and up to date at all times. Monitor account activity (including intent and engagement data, where content on specific topics is being researched and viewed significantly more than normal) on an ongoing basis. This ensures you'll be able to adjust your campaign, so it stays relevant to each account and adapts to their needs as necessary.

## Level up engagement with one-to-one communication and dedicated events

While scalable channels are an effective way of building awareness, one-on-one engagement and dedicated events can form the basis of strong relationships with your most important accounts.

A telephone conversation between members of the C-suite can address any questions or concerns at the highest level. Opening up this dialog will also demonstrate your commitment to the account.

Holding an event exclusively for the decision makers requires some significant investment. However, it creates unique opportunities, both before, during, and after the event.

Designing an entire program for attendees and then following up with tailored recommendations based on their feedback.



## Step 5: Evaluate and Communicate Performance to Sales and Executive Teams

As you begin to see early indicators of success, revisit the objectives and metrics you agreed on in Step 1. Keep track of the right metrics to confirm that you're heading in the right direction.

While this could be done with a spreadsheet, using a dedicated ABM platform makes it easier to gather data and keep it updated in real-time. The right

platform can help you with every stage of the ABM process, from initial identification and engagement to measurement and optimization.

Being able to see key metrics in a single dashboard (both for your overall ABM campaigns and granular account-level insights) puts you in a better position to see what's working and what needs improvement.



### Focus on your KPIs

Tracking metrics and making decisions based on reliable data is a key step. But it's easy to become overwhelmed with so much data available. Rather than tracking every metric, concentrate on the metrics that matter for the stage of your ABM.

Measuring KPIs based on the Three V's (volume, value, and velocity) will ensure your metrics are directly related to sales impact. Avoid distracting vanity metrics by focusing on the metrics that contribute to pipeline and revenue.

### Iterate and optimize

You must treat your ABM strategy as a long-term play to see results. Going through the process helps you learn more about your best accounts, which allows

you to refine your targeting, content, and messaging. You can then apply those lessons to new plays with different objectives.

Start by looking at your most successful campaigns. What did you do differently? Can you replicate these differences in your future plays? Was it better across all your KPIs, or is there still room for improvement?

Study your worst-performing campaigns. What mistakes can you avoid next time? Was it all bad, or were there positive results that you could build on? Have you chosen the right metrics, or might it make more sense to use different KPIs going forward?

By treating your ABM as an ongoing learning experience, you'll continue to get better results for years to come.

# Conclusion

Account-based marketing helps fill your sales pipeline with best-fit accounts and key decision makers. As every touchpoint is tailored to the needs of the individual target account and ideal customer profile, the result is an accelerated sales pipeline and increased revenue.

Pipeline acceleration is all about optimizing sales impact and marketing initiatives by leveraging the three V's (**Volume, Value, Velocity**). If your campaigns reach the right people, at the right time, in the right way, you can increase net new client acquisition, customer expansion, and provide superior customer experience.

By focusing resources on high-value accounts, you can reduce friction in the customer journey and close more meaningful accounts faster than casting a wide net.

To maximize success, align your ABM strategy with your solution's philosophy that makes the most sense. Is

your goal to deliver campaigns at scale, target specific customer segments, or build creative to target one specific account?

Once you've defined your goals, get your sales and marketing teams working together. Conduct detailed research, align content with the sales cycle, measure your results (and optimize your campaigns if needed), and focus on account expansion leveraging existing account data.

Madison Logic makes it easy to see how your campaigns are performing by collating your data in one place. Rather than tracking aggregated data across multiple sources, the **ML Platform** provides invaluable access to the tools you need to identify, prioritize and engage your top accounts , faster than ever.

## Are you ready to optimize your ABM strategy and convert your best accounts faster?

### Request a free demo of the ML Platform today!

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