

THE CMO'S GUIDE TO

ABM Orchestration

Plan. Execute. Measure.

WELCOME

Every day it seems like more B2B companies are shifting their marketing budgets from demand generation to ABM. When executed properly, it can have a big impact on the bottom line. When we surveyed marketers doing ABM, about 80% reported that their ABM efforts were successful.

We've talked to many marketers and have gone through the shift to ABM ourselves. This guide will walk through the three phases of orchestrating a successful ABM strategy, including questions to ask as well as frameworks to help you think about how ABM applies to your organization.

Let's get started!

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CONTENTS

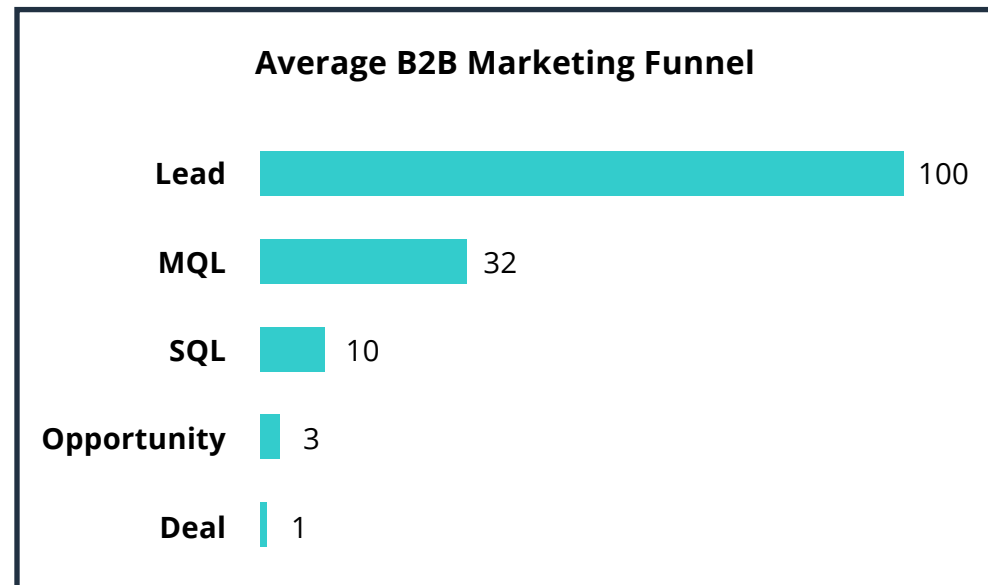
- [1] How Do You Know If ABM Is For You? p. 3
- [2] How To **Plan** ABM p. 5
- [3] How To **Execute** ABM p. 9
- [4] How to **Measure** ABM p. 12

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF ABM IS FOR YOU?

Most B2B businesses prescribe to the waterfall approach of marketing. The common funnel. If you can attract a large number of prospects to enter the funnel at the top, and if only a percentage drops off at each stage of the funnel, you'll still have some left that make it to the bottom as customers.

It's at the basis of most everything B2B marketers do, and has been for many decades, from how we make decisions about what media to invest in, to what type of content to produce.

According to [Forrester](#), the waterfall marketing funnel looks like this for the average company:



This works, to a degree, especially for companies that don't go after large companies. But it's a game of odds that works because you're constantly picking off the lowest hanging fruit. However, another way to think about this approach is that 99% of your marketing effort and spend is wasted, since only 1 out of 100 leads convert to a customer.

The problem with inbound marketing is you can't control for *who*. Anyone can download that ebook. Anyone can click on that search ad. And that's fine if you have a large purchasing base, like most B2C companies and even B2B companies with a lower average deal price. If that's you, check out pipeline marketing, but for many B2B companies that are marketing to medium-sized companies and larger, a more targeted approach is necessary.

As your average deal price increases, the potential number of customers decreases. For some companies that only target the Fortune 500, it can be a pretty small group of potential customers. In fact, you may even have every potential customer and person identified.

By shifting your budget to account-based marketing, you're not optimizing for the 1% of marketing that works. Instead, you are optimizing for the 99% and that can have a huge impact.

An account-based marketing strategy is based on the idea that you only engage companies who are ideal users of your product.

Utopia for enterprise B2B marketing should be 100% account based. It's not realistic for most companies, but in the most idyllic sense, having 100% of marketing budget go to only the companies that would buy your product is a best case scenario.

By shifting your budget to ABM, you're not optimizing for the 1% of marketing that works.

Instead, you are optimizing for the 99% — and that can have a huge impact.

HOW TO PLAN ABM

2

Note: If you have already identified and developed your ABM personas, feel free to skip to Gaining Alignment With Sales on page 7.

Creating ABM Personas: Identify and Develop

When transitioning into the account-based marketing (ABM) mindset, one of the critical changes is thinking in terms of accounts instead of leads. You're not just marketing and selling to whichever individual downloads your content or interacts with your website, you have to be thinking about the entire account — the whole team of people on the other side involved in the eventual decision.

To be able to understand and wrap your head around the multiple people that you want to engage within a target account, it's essential to think about personas — the types of key stakeholders that you expect to be involved in the deal.

To create great personas that will help both your marketing and sales teams be successful, you must understand how to do two things: 1) identify your multiple personas and 2) develop each of their profiles.

“By targeting only the right contacts and accounts (ABM), we were able to increase ROI and reduce CPL by 50%.”



Eva Sharf
Paid Media
Bizible

Identifying Personas

Identifying personas is figuring out who the audience is for your marketing. Typically, this is the same as identifying what types of people are involved in the deal.

In all deals, there are three functions: a researcher, a user, and a decision-maker. Unlike in B2C deals, where each of these components are often done by the same person or household (you shop for sunglasses, you decide to buy the sunglasses, and you wear the sunglasses), in B2B deals, there are often multiple people involved in executing the three functions.

These three functions need to be addressed in your personas. However, that doesn't mean that it will always be exactly three people. The research and the user may be the same, or there may be multiple decision-makers, for example. ABM requires a holistic view of accounts, so your marketing needs to address the needs and concerns of everyone involved in the account.

A great way to start identifying your personas is to talk to your existing customers. Think about their journey, from first contact to closed deal, and try to identify who you had to educate and convince. Who was your internal champion? See if they have a few minutes to chat about their process and what was involved on their end.

Example Questions To Ask:

- *Do all deals have to get an executive-level colleague involved?*
- *What's the job title and level of your primary user?*
- *Who initially found you?*
- *Does your product impact someone's role who isn't the primary user?*

Once you talk to a few customers, you'll start to identify trends in how your customers and prospects work.

Additionally, with a multi-touch attribution solution that integrates with the CRM, you can back up your qualitative research with data. Looking at the buyer journey for your customers and accounts in the pipeline, you can see where in the journey certain contacts interacted with your marketing, how much influence they had on the deal, and answer questions like the following:

- What job titles are common for the first touch?
- Who is reaching out to get a demo?
- Who is involved in the demo?
- Who is signing the contract?

Of course, this also requires lead-to-account mapping, the process of tying each of the individual's interactions to the account. The data can then be coalesced into an accurate representation of the account's journey, not a collection of individuals' separate and partial journeys. We'll cover this more in the section on ABM measurement.

Developing Persona Profiles

Now that you know how to identify your key personas, the next step is to develop their profiles so that they are useful. In-person meetings or phone calls are the best way to get the information necessary to develop your personas. Here's the type of information that you'll want in order to be able to leverage your personas for effective ABM.

- Who are they? How much experience do they have? What skills do they have?
- Where are they? What websites do they visit to learn/research?
- What are their deliverables and KPIs?
- What are their pain points?
- How much do they know about you and your industry?

This information is critical for key ABM channels like ad targeting, partner marketing, PR, sponsorships, etc. For example, the information about what blogs they read should inform where you put in your guest blogging efforts or where you pitch your content and research.

Additionally, with answers to these questions, you remind yourself that your marketing is about solving their problems, not touting your product's features. This goes a long way in creating greater empathy in your marketing.

Finally, it's important to make the personas feel as real as possible. As much as you can, try to use real quotes that are representative of how your personas think. Quotes, examples, data, etc. ground your personas and can remind the team that they are marketing and selling to real people.

Gaining Alignment With Sales

Once you've settled on your personas, the next step is to gain alignment with the sales team. An ABM strategy relies on a united effort between the marketing and sales teams. If tight alignment with sales is absolutely not a possibility, ABM may not be the right strategy for your organization.

While getting the sales team on board sounds straightforward, ABM produces fewer leads than a demand generation strategy. It's up to marketing to convince the sales team that fewer leads, but higher quality leads, is better for them, too. Unlike conventional demand generation, where marketers optimize for lead volume, ABM is not just a numbers game. ABM helps the sales team have better conversations, and as a result, a higher conversion rate. It's a more effective and more efficient use of their time.

So how do you get started?

Get the right people in the room by creating an ABM-focused team across departments. Just like how you focus on developing internal champions when you market and sell to your audience, alignment is much easier when you have inter-departmental champions for ABM.

Start by getting the right people in the room by creating an ABM-focused team across departments.

Develop Target Account Lists

Working with members from the sales team, you can start to build a universal list of target accounts by figuring out the firmographic criteria of what makes a good customer.

If you already have a good amount of customers, the best way to get the ball rolling is to run an analysis on your existing customers. Are there characteristics that seem to pop up frequently? These can be things like company size, industry, approximate budgets, etc.

Additionally, with help from members of the sales team, you can find out if they've noticed that they have better conversations with some types of companies compared to others. This will simultaneously help you get buy-in from Sales and inform your criteria with qualitative analysis.

It's also helpful to create several tiers of accounts within your universal list. Just like a target, you want to create a definition for the bullseye that resides within your previously established criteria. Accounts that fit within this stricter criteria should convert at a materially higher rate than the rest of the accounts. When you execute your marketing and sales efforts with the bullseye in mind and as the priority, even if you're a little bit off or have more resources to expand, you should still be within your greater universal target.

You can optionally have even more rings around the bullseye (slightly less strict criteria) until you get to your full universal list criteria.

Universal List:

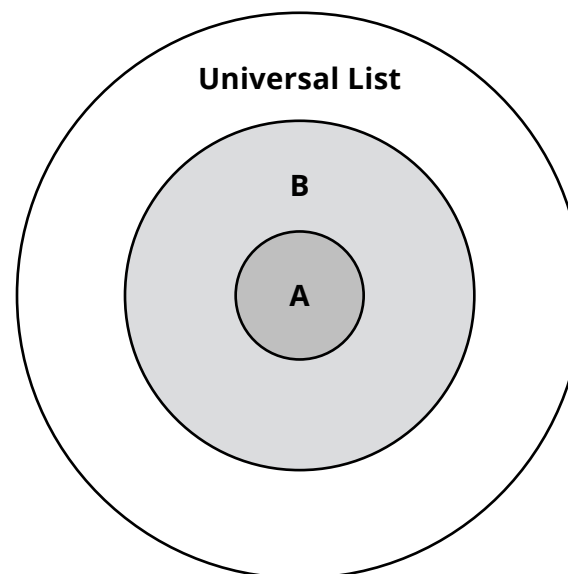
Companies with 10 - 10,000 employees

B Grade:

Companies with 500 - 5,000 employees, but not A Grade

A Grade:

Companies with 1,000 - 2,000 employees



HOW TO **EXECUTE** ABM

3

Even with detailed personas and your list of target accounts, getting started with executing ABM can be a challenge. There are a ton of moving parts that require the right timing from the right people. It's no wonder that it is now often referred to as ABM orchestration.

To help marketing leaders get started with this process, it's often easiest to start with a template or a framework. The template on the following page organizes the process by stage, and then outlines the different aspects that marketers must consider for each stage.

Account-Based Demand Orchestration Template

STAGE	TOP OF FUNNEL	MIDDLE OF FUNNEL	BOTTOM OF FUNNEL	WON OPPORTUNITY	LOST OPPORTUNITY
STRATEGY	Introduce target accounts to brand and benefits of product	Prioritize and transition interested accounts from education to sales	Convince and convert to customers	Create advocates; leverage that content with prospects	Lost is only temporary, keep on pulse for future sale
METRIC	Engagement	Pipeline	Revenue	Referrals	Recovery Rate
SECONDARY METRICS	Awareness and Net New Accounts / Contacts	Opportunities	Velocity / Sales Cycle and Win Rate	Net Promoter Score (NPS)	N/A
SALES & SUCCESS	Account Development Rep (ADR) Follow on social from ADR account Persona prospecting with some engagement score-based and personalized outreach Account-based contact sequence Pre-event appointments to stop by tradeshow both Re-prospect returning visitors		Account Executive (AE) Follow on social from AE account	Account Manager (AM) Follow on social from AM account Swag 'welcome kit' Tutorials & Workshops	Account Executive (AE) Re-prospecting
DEMAND	Audience: Master Target Account List Event sponsorships + pre-event efforts (parties, sweepstakes) Field marketing: parties ABM orchestration platforms Paid search (net new contacts) Paid social: gated/ungated educational content (net new contacts) Display (net new contacts) Lookalike audience prospecting Direct Mail: postcards, branded swag, gift box, physical books Industry alliances Connection prospecting for introductions (e.g. LinkedIn)	Audience: Engaged Accounts Event sponsorships (include element of targeted engagement - e.g. call out key contacts/accounts) Field marketing: educational sessions Paid search Display and retargeting (higher bids) Paid social: product content, case studies Direct Mail: postcards, branded swag, gift box, physical books	Audience: Open Opps Field marketing: educational workshop sessions, dinners, sales trips Paid search Paid social: competitive, case studies Display and retargeting (highest bids) Direct Mail: postcards, branded swag, gift box, physical books Exec-to-Exec campaign	N/A	Remove from marketing target account list for specific time period
CONTENT	Email: nurture workflows based on account grade & content downloaded, weekly blasts to house list Blog posts, guest posts on key blogs Ebooks, whitepapers & data/research reports PR & analyst relations Partner marketing Customer presentations Terminology personalization by industry across all content (website, social, ads, DM, etc.)	Product overview video Topic-based webinars, case studies with customers Partner marketing (webinars, ebooks, etc.) One-pagers, sales enablement collateral Website personalization (industry, geo, role) Persona-specific web pages Account-specific content Terminology personalization by account, persona across all content (website, social, ads, DM, etc.)	Case studies & testimonials Video case studies Sales presentation Exec-to-Exec content and conversations Customer reference panel "How-to" / helpdesk content ROI calculator	Regular product newsletter & webinar Create new case studies & testimonials Customer community Follow on social from company account Proactive requests for reviews	Regular product newsletter & webinar

[Click here to download an editable version \(.ppt\)](#)

How To Use The Template

The template was built with comprehensiveness in mind because it is easier to delete from a full list, than to brainstorm on your own and have to add to the list.

Now, that means that you likely will not be able to — nor want to — do everything that's included in the template. Consider how it would work for your organization and feel free to remove anything that is not applicable.

Furthermore, the template was built to apply to as many companies with the plan to do ABM as possible. This means that it is purposefully generic and broad.

Let's take a look at the Top-of-Funnel Demand cell, for example. This cell lists out the channels and tactics to create demand and engage with the universal list of accounts at the top of the funnel. Among many other things, it says that you can do Paid Search targeted at your Universal ABM List audience. Again, these are purposefully broad. What that entails for your organization is specific to you, and you should tailor that demand tactic as it is relevant to your brand and your audience.

Using this template as a blueprint, you can figure out where you need to focus and prioritize your efforts in order to create and execute your operational plan.

“We tried to build out our ABM orchestration plan without a template and found ourselves trying to recreate the wheel not only on how to visualize our plan, but brainstorming the different options for initiatives. This template should easily save days of work.”



Dave Rigotti
Head of Marketing
Bizible

HOW TO MEASURE ABM

4

Before you've started investing in targeted ads, content, outbound calling, event sponsorships, etc., it's critical that you have a way to measure performance. Without accurate measurement that the whole team trusts, how can you know if you're successful?

If you're coming from a demand generation-based marketing strategy, you're likely using lead-centric marketing measurement. That doesn't work for ABM. When measuring ABM performance, it is essential that performance ultimately be measured in terms of accounts, not leads.

This requires lead-to-account mapping.

Lead-to-Account Mapping

Lead-to-account mapping is the process of tying each of the individual's interactions to the account. The data can then be coalesced into an accurate representation of the account's journey, not a collection individuals' separate and partial journeys.

Let's say that John and Jane both work for Company ABC, a target account. Lead-to-account mapping ensures that John's interactions with your marketing efforts are mapped to the Company ABC account and Jane's interactions are mapped to the Company ABC account, along with everyone else at ABC. So when we look at the data for Company ABC, we can see the complete account journey, rather than Jane or John's incomplete journeys separately.

Predictive Account Engagement Score

When switching from a demand generation strategy to an account-based marketing strategy, another major difference is that because you've already identified your target account universe, marketing is no longer primarily focused on generating new leads. Instead, the primary function of marketing, on a day-to-day level, is to engage contacts within accounts.

Now, there are a lot of ways to report on engagement and a number of different engagement metrics. To some extent, they're all important in their own way. But when you track too many metrics, however, they tend to lose their utility — their power to be actionable diminishes. You need things to focus on and prioritize, which is why we believe in creating and using a single account engagement score — a metric that rolls everything up and gives the team an easy and digestible metric to act on.

Particularly for marketing executives, the predictive account engagement score is a great metric to quickly understand the state of any account.

Let's say that you have a 1-4 scoring system, where 4 is the most engaged and deepest in the funnel. You know that if an account has a 4, the sales team should act because they have the highest likelihood of all your accounts to buy. If you have to look at ten different metrics to determine whether the sales team should act, they may never actually act.

The score tells the sales team which accounts are ready to strike and which need more time. It turns ABM measurement into a clear and actionable tool.

Without accurate measurement that the whole team trusts, how can you know if you're successful?

Multi-Touch, Account-Based Attribution

In addition to having performance indicators that help inform decision-making in real-time, it's essential that performance ultimately be measured in terms of revenue, which requires an attribution solution.

Because the primary unit in ABM is an account, ABM measurement requires an attribution solution that has the capability to consider multiple people having multiple touchpoints. For example, if you use a first-touch attribution model, the data will look like the decision-maker in the account never makes an impact. Or if you use last-touch, it will look like the researcher in the account never makes an impact. In reality, we know that everyone involved in the deal is important.

Multi-touch attribution, combined with lead-to-account mapping, allows marketers to capture an accurate representation of an account's journey with data.

CONCLUSION

According to the [2016 ABM Metrics Report](#), about 80% of marketers who are doing ABM say that their efforts have been successful. Another study by ITSMA confirmed this, finding that nearly 85% of marketers say that ABM is delivering greater ROI than other marketing strategies.

When done properly, ABM can be a game-changer for organizations. Now that you've read this guide, you are prepared with the foundation to lead your team and build an exceptional ABM program.

About Bizible

Bizible is a B2B & ABM marketing attribution solution dedicated to helping companies make profitable marketing decisions.

Bizible's technology connects all marketing activity (both online and offline) to revenue, enabling revenue credit to be accurately distributed to the marketing channels that are making an impact. This advanced, multi-touch attribution technology empowers marketers to do more effective and more efficient marketing.

Learn more at bizible.com