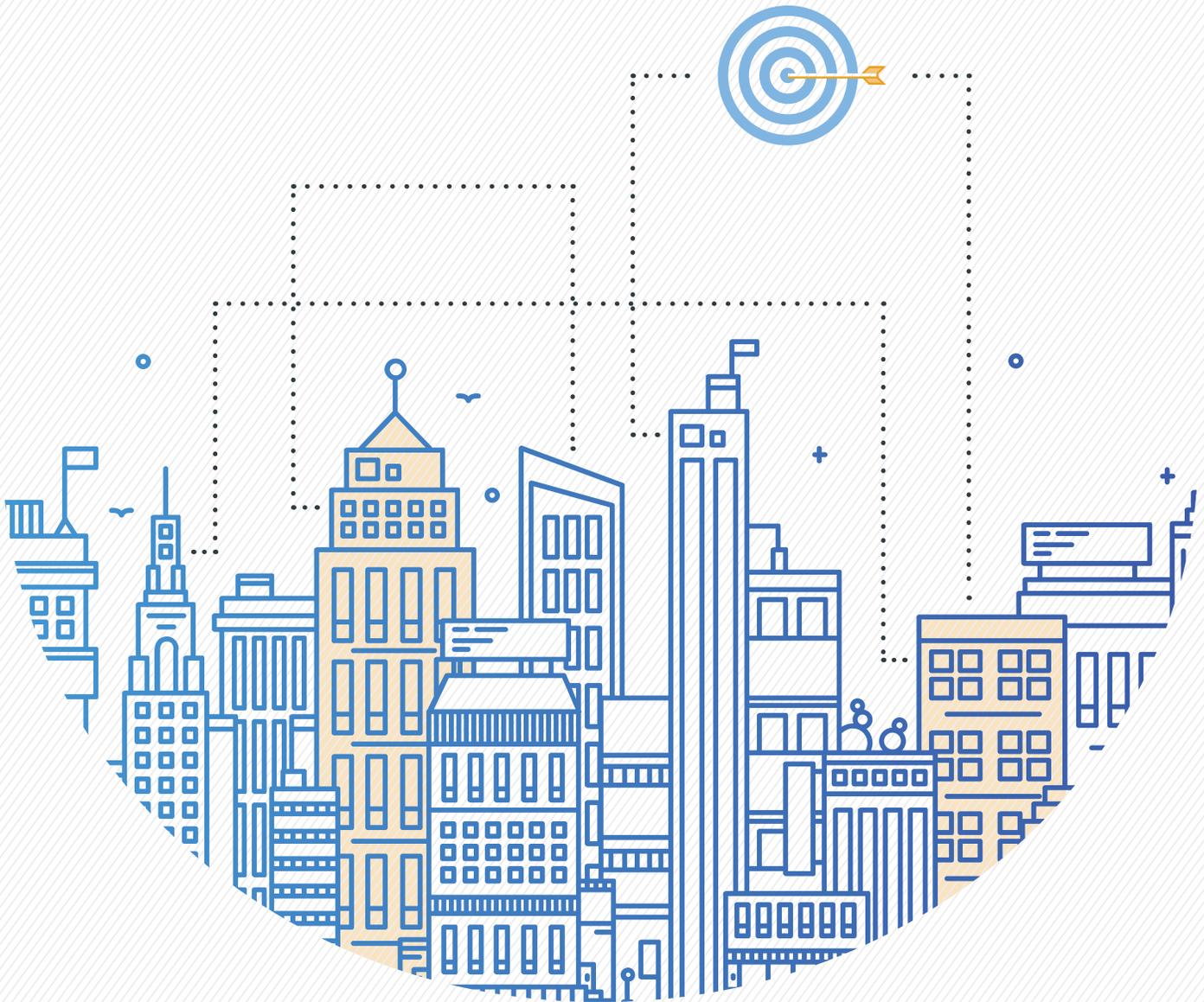


RESEARCH SHOWS EARLY **ABM** ROLLOUTS  
**HITTING THE MARK**  
IN **MEETING BUSINESS GOALS** AS B2B  
ORGANIZATIONS LOOK TO EXPAND IMPACT



# Executive Summary

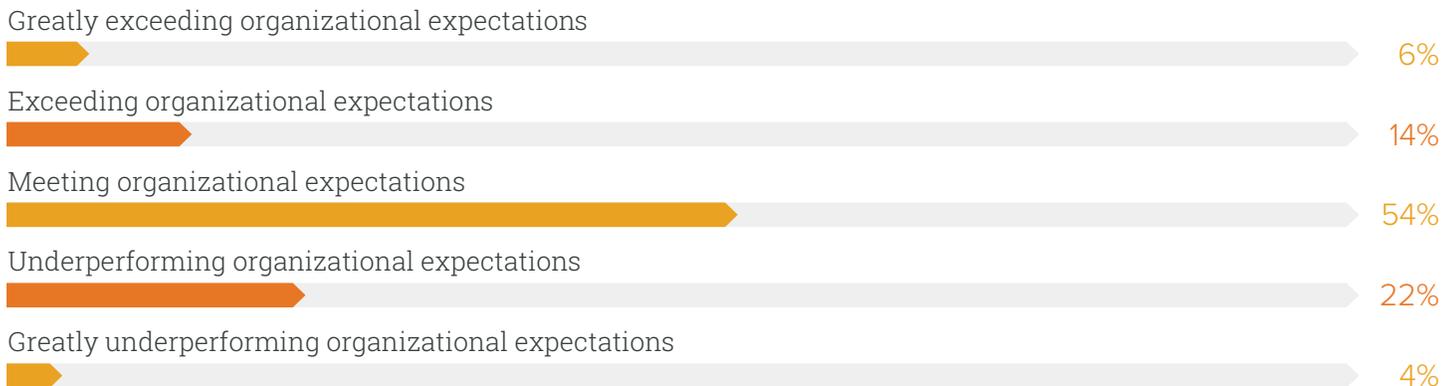
The buzz around ABM has been so loud for the past 18 months, it's understandable that some industry watchers have quickly categorized it as overhyped. However, *Demand Gen Report's Second Annual ABM Benchmark Survey* served as a good reality check for naysayers, as it highlighted that the majority of companies are still in the early stages of deploying account-based tools and strategies.

More than half of respondents (52%) said their ABM strategy has only been in place less than six months, and 56% categorized their efforts to date as in the "early stages of and testing our ABM program."

However, despite relative immaturity of ABM deployments, the study supported the positive impact account-focused strategies are having on businesses, with 74% of respondents indicating their ABM efforts are meeting or exceeding their organizational expectations.

A majority of companies are still in the early stages of deploying account-based tools and strategies.

## HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE IMPACT YOUR ABM EFFORTS ARE HAVING FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?



The survey also showed a significant boost of adoption of ABM, compared to results from the inaugural survey in 2016, which showed that less than half (47%) of respondents had an ABM strategy in place, 33% planned to implement it within 18 months and 20% had no plans to implement ABM at all.

The following report will present a deeper dive into the full survey results, including:

- The processes and tools companies are using to build and optimize their account lists, with **34% planning to work with a predictive analytics provider** to build a list of likely buyers;
- The technologies B2B marketers are prioritizing to support their ABM strategy, with **web personalization (42%) and account-based advertising tools (41%)** topping the list of planned deployments;
- The type of content offers/experiences B2B brands are offering as part of their ABM initiatives, with **targeted executive events (54%) and interactive content tailored by industry/role (46%)** topping the list;
- How brands are **integrating traditional demand generation efforts** with an ABM processes, and
- The top challenges marketers are encountering as they look to expand their ABM strategies, with **sales and marketing alignment (45%), ROI/attribution and lack of internal resources (both 36%)** ranking as the biggest hurdles.

The survey also showed a significant boost of adoption of ABM, compared to results from the 2016 survey.



# Adjusting Expectations On ABM Maturity

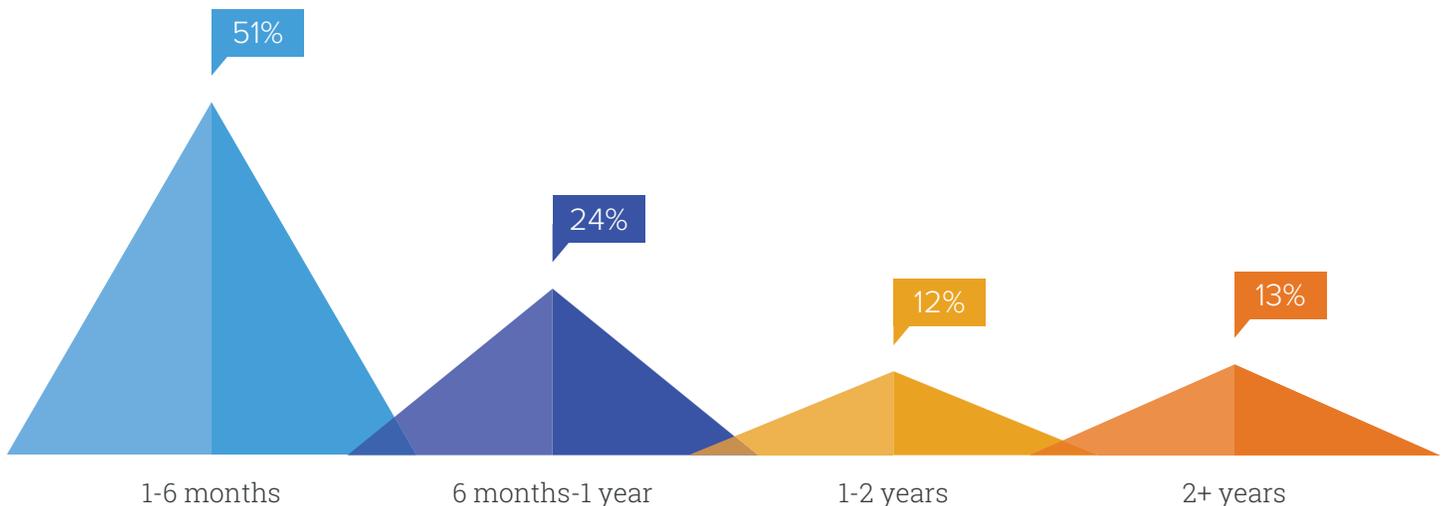
Underscoring that ABM is still a new discipline and technology stack for most B2B organizations, the survey found 76% of respondents have had their ABM in strategy in place for less than a year. Only 13% of respondents said they have been doing ABM for more than two years, and 12% said they have had ABM in place between one and two years.

In another question that addressed ABM maturity, 56% described themselves in the early stages of testing account strategies. Many are still equally early in their utilization of dedicated ABM tools, with 23% saying they are using their current stack (CRM, MAP, etc.) to target specific accounts, and only 7% saying they have a dedicated ABM platform integrated into their tech stack.

Some respondents added that the lack of dedicated tools is making early pilots more challenging, with one respondent calling their current approach “shotty,” and adding “we rely on several databases that aren’t synched and waste hours pouring over combined Excel sheets to segment and target our audience.”

**76%**  
of respondents said they have had their ABM strategies in place for less than a year.

## HOW LONG HAS YOUR ABM STRATEGY BEEN IN PLACE?



# Early Challenges In ABM Activation

A need for dedicated account tools also emerged when asked about their top ABM-related challenges. The age-old issue of sales and marketing alignment topped the list (45%), but other factors pointed to areas that may require more specific tools and processes, including:

- Personalization at scale 38%
- Proving ROI/attribution 36%
- Lead-to-account mapping 24%
- Identifying ideal accounts 21%
- Data enrichment 19%

Sales and marketing alignment is the top ABM-related challenge.

## WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST ABM-RELATED CHALLENGES? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



# Balancing ABM With Demand Gen Strategies

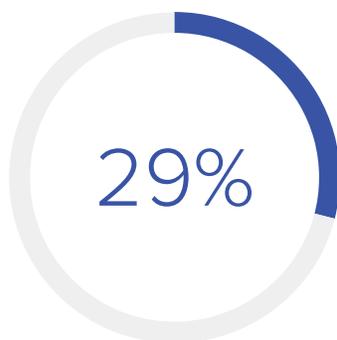
The survey found more than half of respondents (52%) are still prioritizing traditional demand generation over ABM efforts. Nearly one-third of marketers (29%) have integrated demand gen and ABM processes to streamline their marketing efforts, while 16% are prioritizing ABM efforts over traditional demand generation. In direct responses, many marketers admitted they were “still trying to figure out the right balance,” while others said “priorities are constantly shifting back and forth between” demand gen and ABM.

**52%**  
of respondents are still prioritizing traditional demand generation over ABM efforts.

## WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CURRENT MARKETING OPERATIONS?



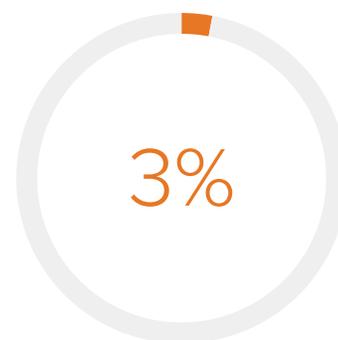
We prioritize traditional demand generation over our ABM efforts



We have integrated our demand gen and ABM processes to streamline our marketing efforts



We prioritize our ABM efforts over our traditional demand generation efforts



Other

# Building Out Account Lists A Top Priority

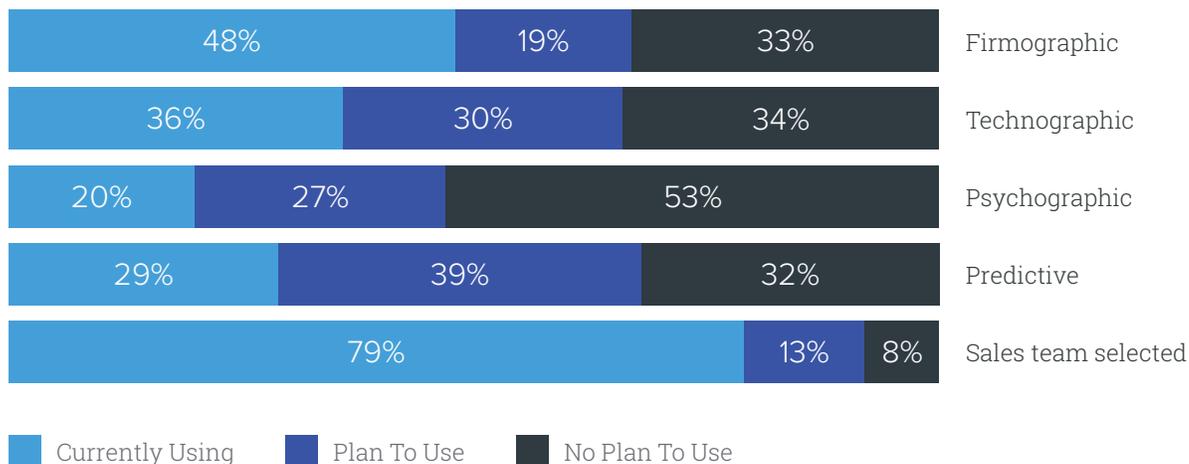
Tightly focused account lists were the top strategy among respondents, with 39% saying they target between one to 50 accounts, and 13% saying they target between 50 to 100. However, at the other end of the spectrum, 28% said they are targeting 500+ accounts.

For the baseline exercise of defining their ideal customer profile (ICP), 58% said they used internal knowledge to define their ideal customer, but only 44% said their sales and marketing teams were aligned on their ICP. Only 19% said they currently use intent data to identify new customers in market.

Respondents did point to using more data sources to help build and formulate their targeted account list in the future, with 39% planning to use predictive data, 30% planning to use technographic data, 27% planning to use psychographic data and 19% planning to use firmographic data.

Respondents plan to use more data sources to help build and formulate their targeted account list in the future.

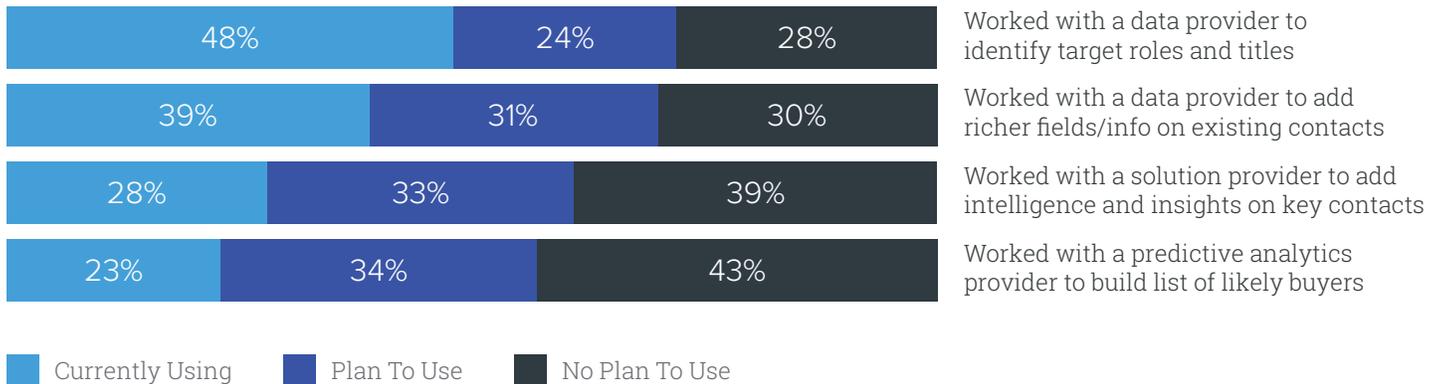
## WHAT DATA DID YOU USE OR PLAN TO USE TO HELP BUILD AND FORMULATE YOUR TARGETED ACCOUNT LIST FOR ABM?



A majority of marketers indicated they are either already working with or planning to use data providers to augment their contact lists to expand their reach within target accounts, with 34% planning to work with a predictive data partner to build a list of likely buyers, 33% planning to work with a provider to add intelligence and insights on key contacts and 31% working with a provider to add richer information on existing contacts.

A majority of marketers indicated they are either already working with or planning to use data providers to augment their contact lists.

## AFTER YOUR ACCOUNT LIST WAS CREATED, HOW DID YOU AUGMENT YOUR CONTACT LIST TO OPTIMIZE YOUR REACH AND CAMPAIGNS?

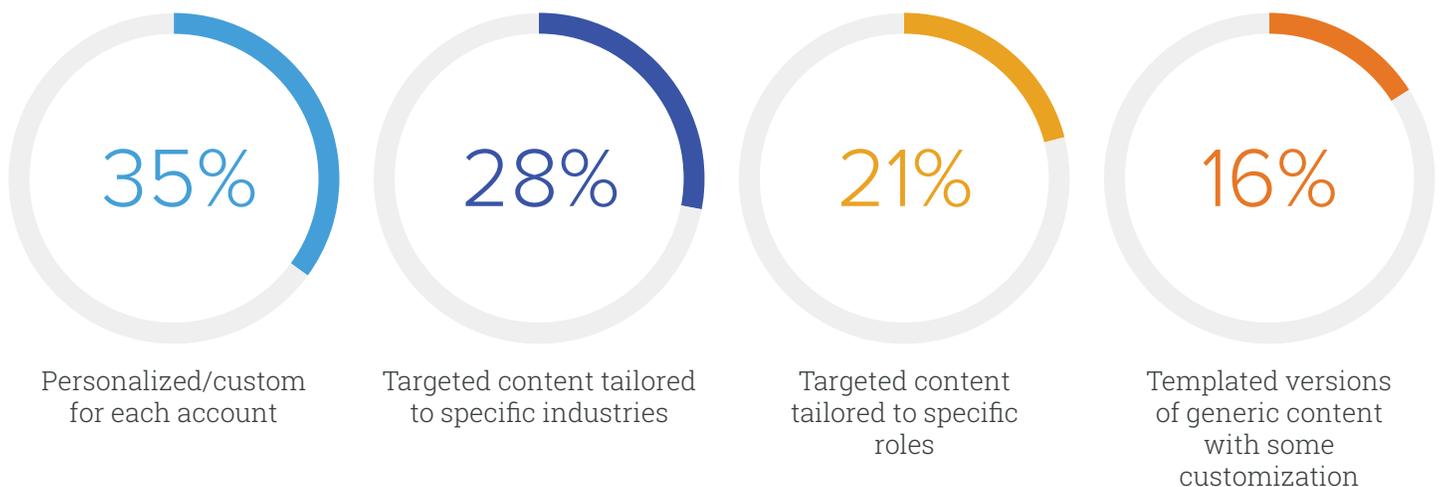


# Delivering Targeted Offers For ABM Programs

This year's survey showed an increase in the number of B2B organizations doing personalized/custom content for each account (35%), while other marketers are still creating tailored content to specific industries (28%) or specific roles (21%). Another 16% are using templated versions of generic content with some customization.

**35%**  
of B2B orgs are doing personalized/custom content for each account.

## WHAT TYPE OF MESSAGING OR CONTENT ARE YOU LEVERAGING IN YOUR ABM OUTREACH? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



In addition to making content more specific and tailored, respondents also showed they are using a wider variety of experiences to engage executives from target accounts, with 54% using targeted executive event invitations. The other top offers/experiences included:

- 46% using interactive content tailored by industry role;
- 41% using direct invitations to sales meetings;
- 39% using promotional item giveaways;
- 36% using video content; and
- 35% using influencer/advocate-related content.

**54%**  
of respondents are using event invitations to engage executives from target accounts.

### WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT OFFERS OR EXPERIENCES ARE YOU OFFERING AS PART OF YOUR ABM INITIATIVES? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



# Expanding The Tech Stack To Support ABM Goals

When asked which technologies ABM practitioners are using to support their programs, data and analytics tools ranked at the top. A large majority of respondents (72%) use analytics and reporting tools, followed by campaign execution and orchestration tools (60%) – which showed a dip in responses compared with last year’s survey results of 91%.

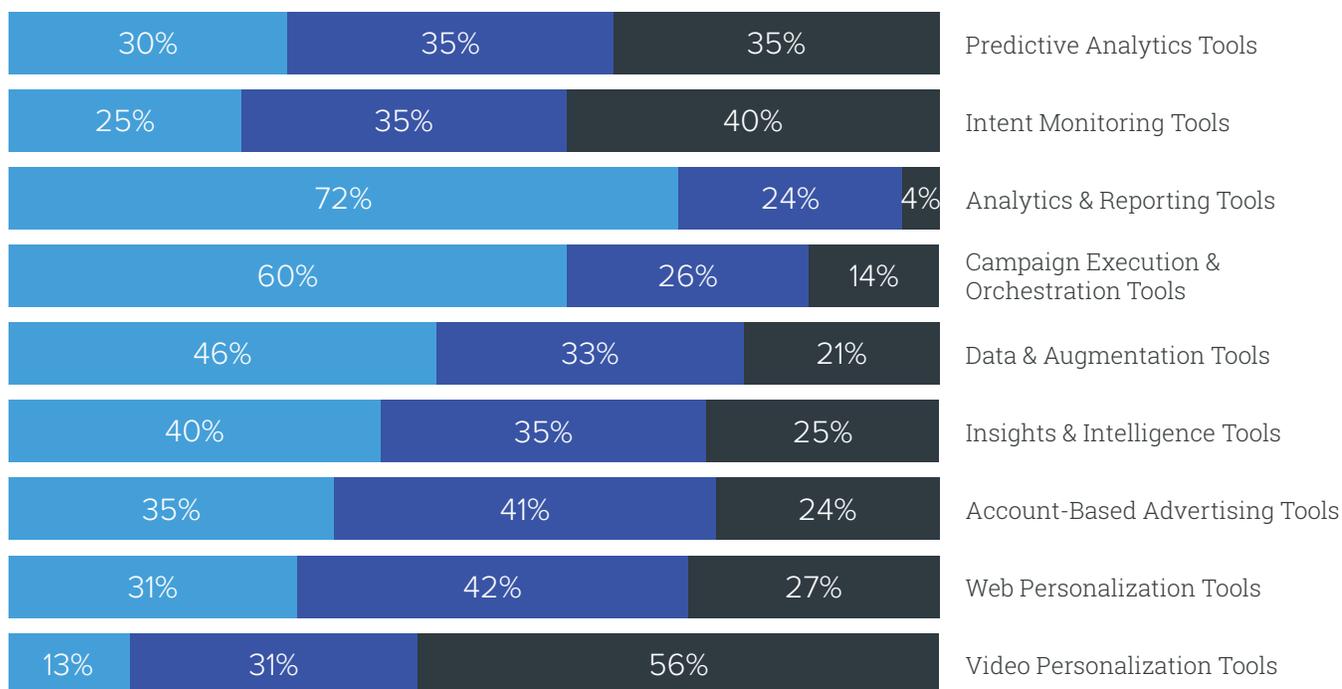
The use of data and augmentation tools also fell short this year compared with 2016. Forty-six percent of respondents said they currently use data and augmentation tools; 33% plan to use them and another 21% don’t plan to use them at all. Last year, data and augmentation tools were ranked in the top three with a score of 79%.

In terms of which tools respondents are planning to use, the top choices included:

- Web personalization tools (42%);
- Account-based advertising tools (41%);
- Intent monitoring tools (36%); and
- Insights and intelligence tools (35%).

**72%**  
of respondents said they use analytics and reporting tools to support their ABM programs.

## WHICH TECHNOLOGIES ARE YOU CURRENTLY USING OR PLANNING TO USE IN SUPPORTING YOUR ABM STRATEGY?



■ Currently Using
 ■ Plan To Use
 ■ No Plan To Use

# Bringing In Outside Expertise To Support ABM Strategies

Because most B2B brands are still in the early days of their ABM strategies, the majority have not yet brought in any outside agencies to support their programs, with 37% saying most ABM practitioners haven't relied on outside agencies or consulting partners to support their ABM efforts. A majority – 37% – said they haven't used nor do they plan to use an agency or consulting partner.

For those organizations that have utilized outside expertise to support their ABM programs, many brands focused on the creative and messaging aspects of ABM. The top uses for outside agencies included:

- Develop content assets (27%);
- Design creative/campaign themes (26%);
- Set an overall ABM strategy (22%), and
- Help in selecting/integrating tools.

One respondent noted that executive buy-in is lacking in this department: "Unfortunately, our CEO does not understand the value in investing in marketing automation, and the need for clean data and tools to quickly enable customer segmentation and analysis. So we're stuck using outdated marketing techniques and are left with our own devices to come up with ways to improve our marketing efforts."

A majority of B2B brands have not yet brought in any outside agencies to support their ABM programs.

## IN WHICH WAYS HAVE YOU USED, OR PLAN TO USE, AN AGENCY OR CONSULTING PARTNER TO SUPPORT YOUR ABM EFFORTS? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



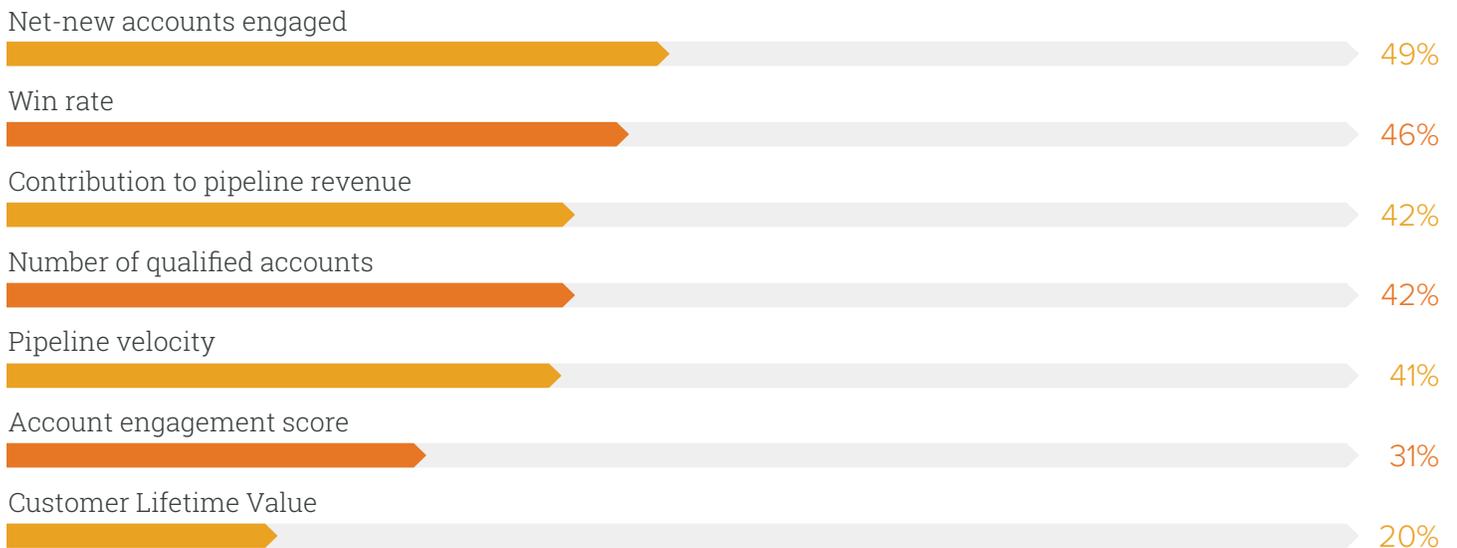
# ABM Measurement Continues To Be A Top Goal

The vast majority of respondents agree that measurement is critical with ABM, and many are using a variety of KPIs to support their efforts. Almost half (49%) measure net-new accounts engaged, followed by win rate (46%), contribution to pipeline revenue (42%), number of qualified accounts and pipeline velocity (42%), and account engagement scores (31%).

In terms of the departments who are driving the execution and measurement of ABM programs, marketing ops (73%) and demand gen (62%) were cited most often as being actively involved in tracking the success of ABM. Those departments were followed closely by sales management (49%) sales development reps (48%) as “actively involved” departments.

The vast majority of respondents agree that measurement is critical with ABM, with 49% measuring net-new accounts engaged.

## HOW DO YOU MEASURE YOUR ABM EFFORTS? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



# 4 Keys To A Better Bond Between Marketing And Sales

Cliché aside, account-based marketing really is a journey. One that sales and marketing must take together. It requires a shared vision, a shared commitment and shared objectives.

Getting there isn't easy. As this benchmark survey finds, the biggest ABM challenge facing organizations isn't about technology or content, data or even budget. It's lack of alignment between sales and marketing (45%).

Sales and marketing must work together for effective ABM. So how do you bridge this divide?

Quarry gets to lift the hood on many ABM programs for our B2B clients. Here's what we see works well to bring sales and marketing together:

- 1. Start at the top:** Marketing leadership needs to secure the buy-in of sales leadership. Convincing sales leadership to endorse the theory of ABM (even if they remain skeptical until shown quantitative proof of its merit) is critical to ensuring that the rest of the sales organization collaborates and cooperates as necessary.
- 2. Show them the numbers:** Now that ABM has been more widely adopted, there are numerous reports and case studies that share the metrics that matter to sales. Look for examples from within your industry, or from organizations similar to yours, as they will be the most influential.
- 3. Set clear expectations:** Sales is busy. If they believe ABM is going to demand more of their time and effort, no wonder they're loath to support it. And ABM does require more active sales involvement. Be very clear about what will be required of sales and when they will need to be involved, but for every step, be sure to explain the benefits to sales of this participation.
- 4. Run a pilot:** In most enterprises, there will be a few sales team members who are keen to trial ABM. Conduct a pilot involving those lean-forward folks. Positive results should help convince the hold-outs.

ABM is less about more effective marketing than about up-leveling marketing's support of sales: delivering better-qualified, more engaged accounts that have a higher level of sales-readiness. And while these outcomes will deliver tangible bottom-line benefits today, an improved marketing and sales relationship will deliver tangible and intangible gains tomorrow and beyond.



Meredith Fuller,  
Managing Director of Buyer  
Engagement, Quarry

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*Demand Gen Report* is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Andrew Gaffney** is a story teller and publisher focused on helping brands create content that sparks conversations with their prospects.

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

The *2017 ABM Benchmark Survey* polled 248 marketers about their account-based marketing strategies. Almost half (40%) of respondents serve the high tech industry, followed by 12% in professional services. Forty percent of respondents were from companies with annual revenue of more than \$25 million. The majority of respondents (37%) hold manager positions at their companies, followed by 27% of direct-level respondents.