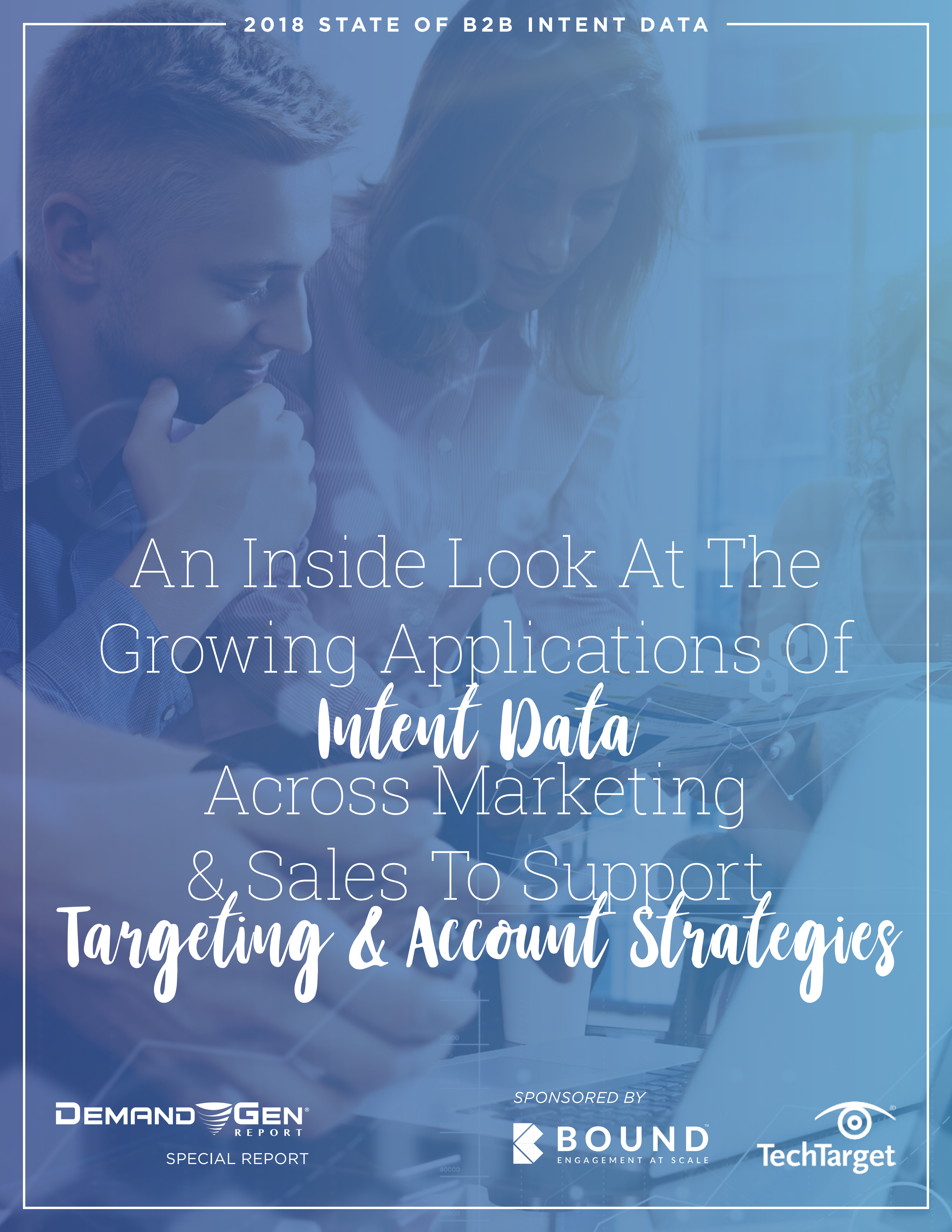

2018 STATE OF B2B INTENT DATA

An Inside Look At The Growing Applications Of Intent Data Across Marketing & Sales To Support Targeting & Account Strategies

DEMAND GEN REPORT

SPECIAL REPORT

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35% OF B2B COMPANIES SAID THEY PLAN TO USE INTENT INSIGHT WITHIN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.

INTRODUCTION

Early adopters of those applying intent data have seen success leveraging these insights to identify likely stakeholders, prioritize accounts and provide relevant messaging at the right time to accelerate potential deals.

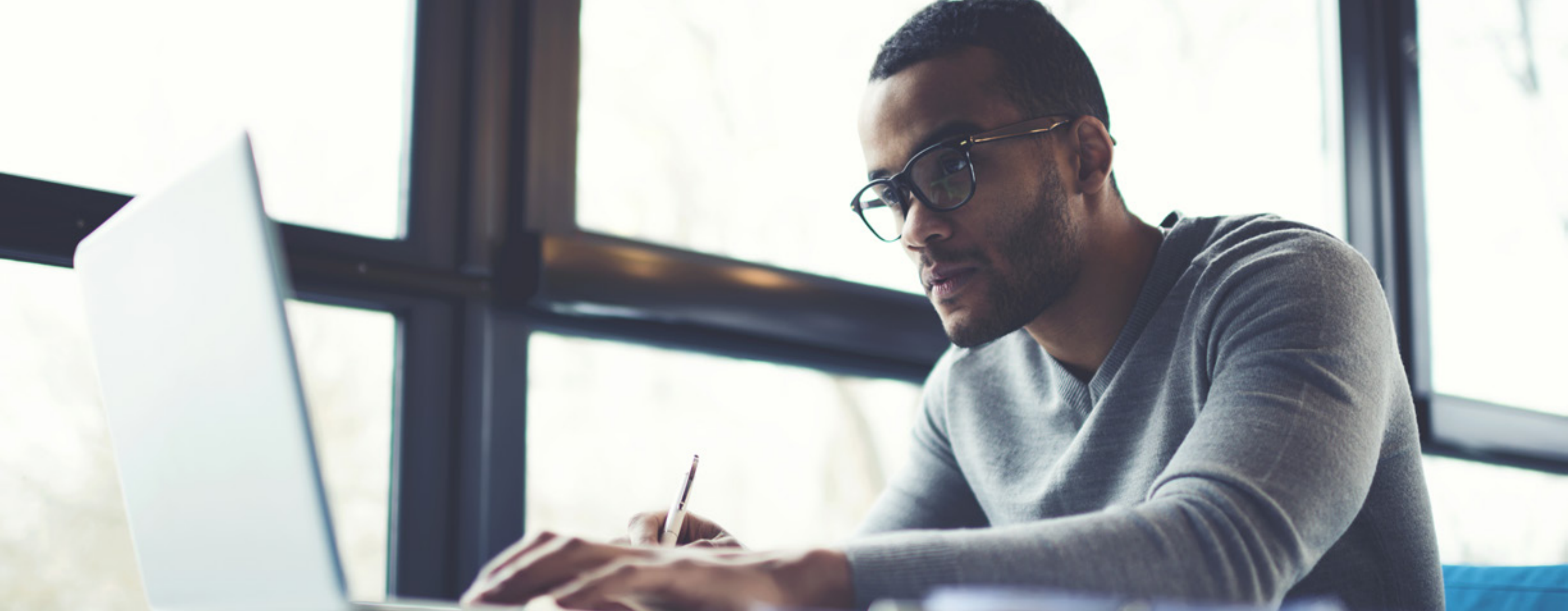
Demand Gen Report's annual ***ABM Benchmark Survey Report*** shows that only 25% of B2B companies said they currently use intent data and monitoring tools, while 35% said they plan to use intent insight within the next 12 months.

This spike in interest is being driven in part by the increased flow of successful use cases from B2B marketing and sales teams that are using intent data to deliver ads and campaigns only to companies that are likely to engage, as well as connect with the right stakeholders within target accounts and serve content based on the topics and areas of interest prospects are consuming across the web.

"Intent data is equally valuable and further bridges the gap between marketing and sales," said David Jones, President of the B2B marketing agency **Yesler**. "For marketing, intent data enables them to target, nurture and, ultimately, deliver leads to sales who are both demographically qualified and have more intent to buy. For sales, intent data enables more relevant/timely/personalized sales engagement based on the buyer's interests beyond just the assets they've downloaded or the pages they've viewed."

This special report will cover how B2B marketers are turning to intent data to **identify surging accounts** and engage them with targeted messaging at the right time. Other topics that will be covered include:

- Intent data by the numbers, with pertinent research and stats;
- Best practices for incorporating intent data throughout **every stage of the sales funnel**;
- How intent data can be used to **drive more effective content marketing decisions**;
- Practical examples of how intent data can **impact a variety of marketing channels**, such as display advertising, email and more; and
- **Use case examples** of how B2B companies are incorporating intent data to their ABM strategies and campaigns.



"OUR CONVERSION RATES ARE ESTIMATED TO BE UP BY CLOSE TO 25%, IN COMPARISON TO FOUR YEARS AGO. NOW, WE CAN TRACK DEALS BACK TO WHAT CAMPAIGNS THEY CAME FROM."

SARAH MAYER, MARCOMCENTRAL

MARKETERS ACCELERATING ACCOUNT TARGETING, PRIORITIZATION WITH INTENT DATA

One of the initial use cases for intent data was helping B2B organizations identify leads that are currently showing buying signals in a specific area based on the content they are consuming. Experts noted that this has now evolved to help identify stakeholders within target accounts in the buying process, enabling marketing and sales teams to prioritize and target accounts most likely to convert.

"Insight is a primary element to high-performance ABM," said Mark Ogne, Founder and CEO of the **ABM Consortium**, in an interview with *Demand Gen Report*. "[Practitioners] are coming to the point of maturing in this business, and intent data — both from third-party providers and their own marketing tech stack — is pivotal in making all this happen."

MarcomCentral, a marketing asset management technology, is one B2B brand that has made a transition from general blanket marketing to more prioritized account targeting with the help of intent data.

"When I started here four and a half years ago, we were doing more spray-and-pray campaigns and treating each campaign the same," said Sarah Mayer, Senior Marketing Operations Manager at MarcomCentral. "We've implemented different workflows and strategies now that were nonexistent four years ago. Our conversion rates are estimated to be up by close to 25%, in comparison to four years ago. Now, we can track deals back to what campaigns they came from."

“OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS, WE WENT FROM BLANKET MESSAGING TO PERSONALIZED, TARGETED MESSAGING BASED ON WHERE THEY ENGAGED US, ABOUT WHAT THEY WERE SURGING ON AND WHERE IN THE FUNNEL THEY WERE.”

SARAH MAYER,
MARCOMCENTRAL

Mayer and her team started by segmenting their internal data based on job title and creating buyer personas that align to those titles (C-level, decision maker, manager, etc.). MarcomCentral identified managers as their most valuable persona, then began tweaking messaging to meet the needs of these personas.

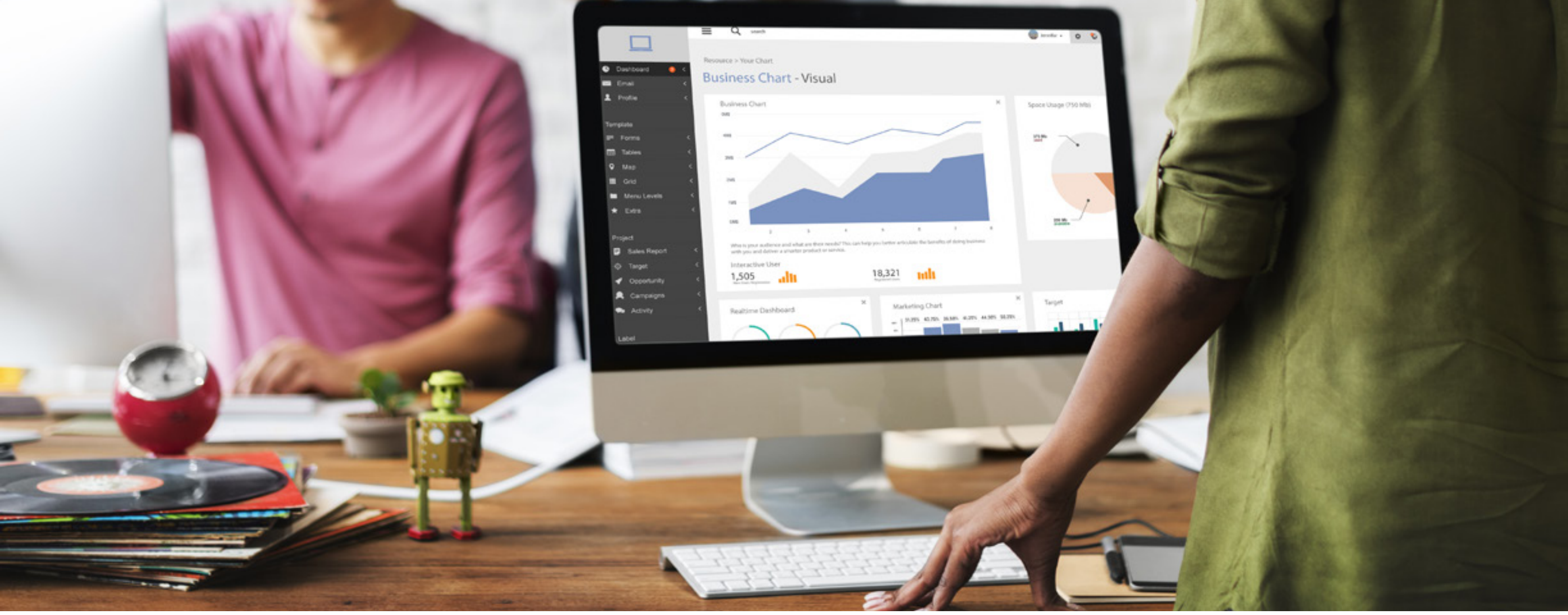
“Once we realized where our sweet spot was, we tweaked our messaging to understand what was getting their attention,” said Mayer. “We did a lot of A/B testing to find the right message.”

The company used Bizible to help understand what inbound channels prospects are coming from, enabling Mayer and her team to see what they searched and how they interact with content through the funnel. MarcomCentral then used contact data from Oceanos and ZoomInfo to target its audience.

“Oceanos cross-references with LinkedIn, and ZoomInfo has been a very helpful platform for both sales and marketing as we use their suite of products and cloud-based platforms,” said Mayer.

This intent insight is then used to build reporting in Salesforce and Marketo to see who’s interacting today via any of their channels and decide if they are a warm lead.

“Over the past couple of years, we went from blanket messaging to personalized, targeted messaging based on where they engaged us, about what they were surging on and where in the funnel they were,” said Mayer. “Four years ago, anyone who engaged our content was considered a conversion. Now we’re much more selective.”



"[INTENT DATA] GIVES YOUR CONTENT TEAM INSIGHT INTO WHAT THEY SHOULD BE PRODUCING."

SAM WETTLING, BOUND

INTENT HELPING TO IDENTIFY SURGING TOPICS FOR CONTENT CREATION

Industry practitioners and experts also noted that identifying the subjects target accounts are researching provides great insight into the topics that are important to a target audience. This information can be used for future content creation, or it can be used to repurpose old content to make it more relevant and contextual to their needs.

"A lot of the time, we're finding that [practitioners] don't know the type of intent people are sharing when visiting a website," said Sam Wettling, Director of Solution Consulting at **Bound**. "[Intent data] gives your content team insight into what they should be producing. This data can be used in so many ways across the buying journey, and its very eye opening once you have access to that type of insight."

Yesler's Jones shared a use case involving a B2B client in the payroll and benefits space. Prior to kicking off a lead generation campaign, Jones' team and the client first established the lead parameters to hit the client's target audience. They then chose 15 separate intent topics that reflected areas of focus for the client (ex: benefits management, human resource technology, payroll, etc.).

"These topics were used to find accounts currently surging for content consumption like our client's [content], which would increase the possibility that the account was actively in the research phase."

A key learning element from this method was that we received multiple individual contacts within one larger account, since the account had multiple employees that fell within our target audience. Experts noted that more individuals within an account highlights the value of the subject matter.

"One outcome from this learning is that we shifted our overarching strategy to include an ABM campaign on LinkedIn for the accounts we saw multiple individuals from," said Jones. "If multiple people within the company were in the research phase, for example, we would continue to push additional research content to them."

"THE BIG THING IS TO IDENTIFY A STREAMLINED WAY TO USE [INTENT] FROM A SALES PERSPECTIVE. WE'RE LOOKING TO GIVE THEM ENOUGH INFORMATION THAT THEY DON'T HAVE TO DO MUCH HUNTING."

MIKE BALLARD,
LENOVO

LENOVO LOOKS TO BOOST SALES EFFICIENCY WITH INTENT DATA

Lenovo is a notable B2B company that has seen early success with intent data. They partnered with **Bombora** to gain deeper insight into their data and identify prospective customers that have an interest in their products. The insight was then used to create demand generation campaigns via display advertising and email to accelerate leads through the sales funnel.

The initial success — 22% increase in display ad CTR, 3.8x increased click-to-open rate for emails and 6% higher close rate — has positioned Lenovo's team to begin considering leveraging intent throughout the organization. This also includes looping in the sales team.

"What we're starting to do now is get intent into the hands of sales," said Mike Ballard, Sr. Manager of Global Digital Marketing at Lenovo. "We're playing around with that; the goal is to have that intent data ported directly into Salesforce, so [sales] doesn't have to manually do it. It allows them not to just make cold-call types of decisions, but allows them to plan better."

For example, Ballard stated that if Lenovo had a major strategic initiative around a product line, rather than making up target numbers and calling everyone, they can use intent data to size the market and prioritize their list to hone in on the accounts that have interest in that everywhere.

"I'm doing pilot programs with a few sales folks," said Ballard. "The big thing is to identify a streamlined way to use [intent] from a sales perspective. We're looking to give them enough information that they don't have to do much hunting."

Experts added that it's important to vet out prospects identified through intent data prior to sending along to sales. A lack of vetting could potentially lead to current customers — or even competitors — being added to nurture streams they should not be involved in.

"In more than one company that we've spoken with, they have inherently sent existing customers and competitors over to sales," said Jay Famico, Co-founder of **Marketing Converts** and former VP of Client-Facing Technology at **SiriusDecisions**. "This is a sure way to decrease sales buy-in on intent data. Make sure you have processes in place to scrub out companies that should never under any circumstances be sent to sales or engaged by marketing."

"YOU'LL SEE INTENT DATA HAVING THE BIGGEST IMPACT WHEN IT'S ALIGNED WITH YOUR OWN INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT DATA."

MARK OGNE,
ABM CONSORTIUM

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT FOR INTENT DATA

Industry experts agreed that the value intent data can bring to a B2B business is becoming much clearer, but the push now is to understand how to make intent data actionable within marketing and sales' day-to-day activities. To do that, marketers need to test and gauge the best use cases for intent data in their organization.

"It comes down to testing, even something as simple as an A/B test against everyday tactics," said Ballard. "Have a control group and then have intent data tests — let the data do the talking. It's about dipping a toe before going all in."

It is also vital for practitioners leveraging intent data to not rely on it solely, experts added. Doing so only limits the user's view into their pipeline.

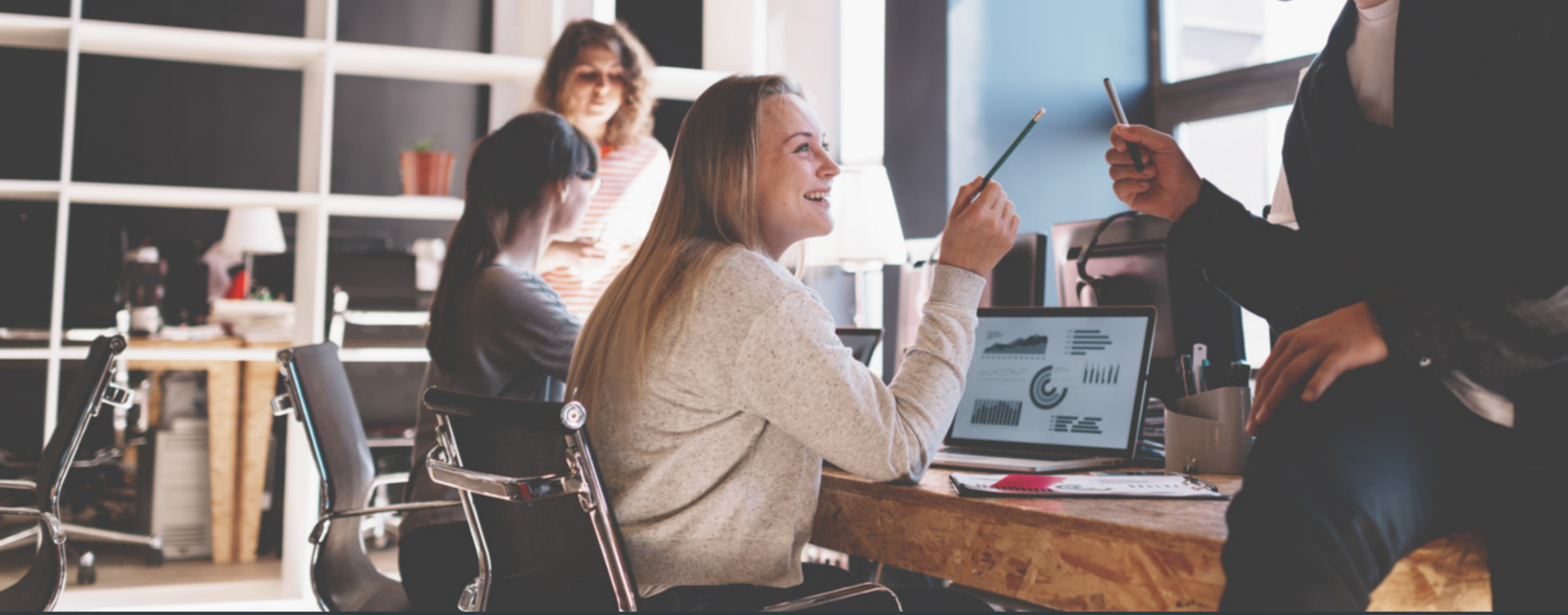
"I believe that, initially, folks don't buy intent data for the right reasons," said Ogne. "They subscribe to the fact that their internal data is so bad they can't fix it, so they try to solve the problem with third-party intent data. Using this data will help you build performance, but you'll see intent data having the biggest impact when it's aligned with your own internal engagement data."

For B2B companies looking to understand how to properly bring intent data into their day-to-day work environment, Ogne and his team formulated an **intent data onboarding workflow** aimed to answer the following questions once an intent-based lead is surfaced:

- **Is it in a target account?** If not, identify if the account fits the agreed upon ideal customer profile (ICP) and add the company to a target account list if it's a fit.
- **Do you have sufficient buyer contacts within the account?** If not, consider acquiring new contacts via inbound campaigns or purchasing from a third party.
- **Are the contacts in any of your active campaigns?** If not, add the contacts to campaigns involving the relevant intent topics and content.

Famico concluded that it is important to ensure marketers can report on the opportunities their company became aware of because of their investment in intent data.

"Be sure you can tie this investment back to pipeline opportunities and close won deals," said Famico. "Not having this report set up limits your ability to clearly identify the ROI of intent data for your company and your ability to determine if you should renew the budget you allocated to it."



STEPHANIE GUTTMAN

Director of Demand Generation, Bound

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN INTENT AND ACTION: LEVERAGING A COMPLETE PERSONA

By Stephanie Guttman, Bound

Intent is the latest craze among B2B marketers, and it's no wonder: intent is the final link to unlocking the value of personas. Marketers are finding that intent data, based on actual third-party and first-party content consumption, is a concrete, real-time indicator of buyer interest.

The job of a marketer lies between a prospect's intent and action. Thirty-five percent of marketers have taken the dive into using intent data in their marketing systems. However, most of these marketers are only using intent to identify in-market accounts and prospects. The biggest value of intent lies in what comes next. How do you turn buyer intent into action?

Intent data alone provides an incomplete picture. How valuable is knowing that an anonymous person is in-market for your product if you know nothing else about them? It's like a sick patient walking into a doctor's office but not providing any other information. As a doctor, you will try to treat the patient, but without knowing the complete picture, you may not succeed.

Turning intent into action requires having a complete profile of your prospect. Connecting with more than 20 data partners, Bound, powered by 360 Persona Technology, layers first- and third-party intent data with demographic, firmographic, behavioral and known (MAP or CRM) data. A broad set of persona attributes maximizes your ability to engage your prospects.

Nearly all demand generation programs point to the website, so it makes sense that the website would be the focal point of putting intent to work.

TURNING INTENT INTO ACTION REQUIRES HAVING A COMPLETE PROFILE OF YOUR PROSPECT.

How can marketers turn prospect intent into action? With website personalization. First, marketers can evaluate the quality of inbound demand by channel without the lag of waiting for MQLs to become SALs. Second, marketers can boost onsite conversions by an average of 50% with persona-based web personalization. Finally, marketers can evaluate engagement with existing content by persona and gain insights to inform future content creation.

DON'T DIVE INTO THE COMPLICATED WORLD OF INTENT WITHOUT A TRUE PARTNER BY YOUR SIDE

Let's face it, driving action from intent data is complicated. The biggest mistake marketers make is investing in new tech or data without the necessary resources and strategy to see intended results. Your budget, let alone your marketing strategy, can't afford to get it wrong.

Bound is more than just a website personalization tool. We are a team of experts that specialize in connecting your data and making it actionable. We've done the experiments and developed the best practices to deliver a tried-and-true strategy for turning intent into action.

Plus, Bound is data provider-agnostic. In addition to our native intent capabilities, Bound works with top-of-the-line intent data providers to help you choose which is the best fit for your needs.

Marketers agree that intent data unlocks the value of personas. But what good is the investment if you can't act on it?

JOHN STEINERT

CMO, TechTarget

THE THREE Ws TO BOOST INTENT DATA EFFICIENCY WITHIN B2B ORGS

A Q&A With John Steinert, TechTarget

In this interview with **TechTarget** CMO John Steinert, he shares why the three Ws — who, what and when — should be achievable from intent data providers to make the most of the investment.

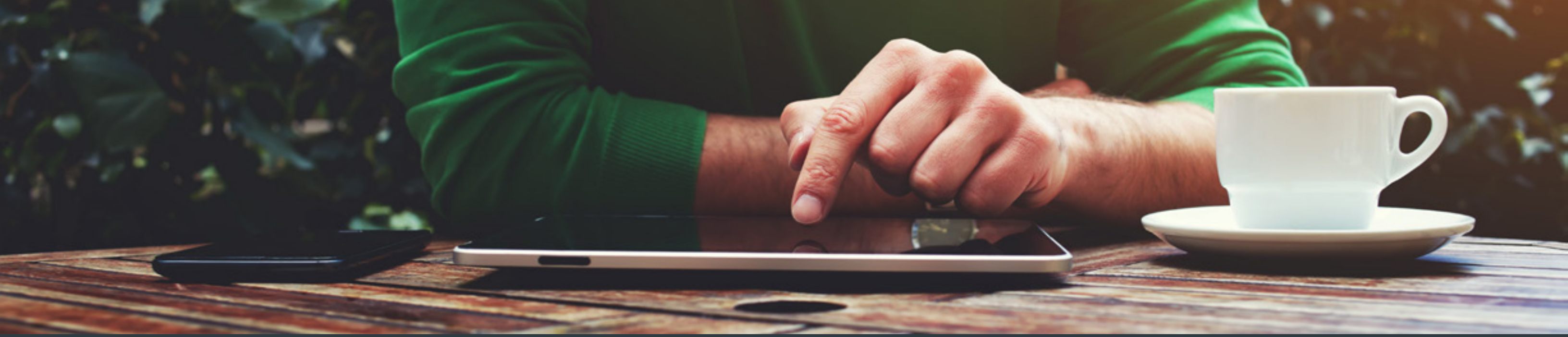
Demand Gen Report: Where do you see intent having the biggest impact on the B2B marketplace?

John Steinert: This is a story about the keys to efficiency and effectiveness in B2B marketing and sales. It's about better ways to find the right people and have the right conversations at the right time. Better, faster ways to understand "Who, What and When."

If you look, particularly at the data space, you can see the "Who, What and When" problems. For example, intent providers that focus on *who* are focusing on two angles: inbound *who* or web scraping *who*. All they can tell you is the account, and the percentage of the account out there and active in the research phase. The other angle is: "Can you tell me the contact?" These types of providers can share great insight into who exists at the company, but they can't tell you if they are the ones you should be targeting.

The *when* is directly connected to getting the smaller list of active people. Sales is going to measure the success of intent in the near term. If you believe that, to optimize the demand gen process, you've got to look at it end to end, then you understand that you must create a tight relationship with sales at the outset — meaning you should focus on the companies and individuals that are showing demand signals now.

The *what* is pretty hard. If I'm having a sales conversation, I don't want make mistakes, I want to talk about issues prospects are grappling with today. You must collect insight into what they've showed interest in already, which are strong signals to have in a sales discussion.



ACCOUNT-LEVEL INSIGHTS PROVIDE STRONG GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION, BUT WITHOUT CONTACTS, THERE ARE NO INROADS TO ALLOW YOU TO ENGAGE THAT ACCOUNT.

DGR: Why is it more important than ever for B2B orgs to better access and utilize active demand?

Steinert: In the absence of good market understanding, you attempt to target the whole market. You start with top-of-funnel activities, you probe with mid-funnel activities to find leads. This takes a lot of time, as well as content development, and provides relatively little yield when compared to demand available to you in the market. More efficient intent sources that provide details on *who* is in market, *when* they are active and *what* they are interested in will help you access active demand you cannot see in your own systems.

On the client side, we're seeing clients working hard at trying to make sure they have a unified team that is focused on the account. What we're seeing is a change in the way they think about their role. As you think about the "Rise of Demand Gen," they solely focused on driving demand, which didn't necessarily drive change in the organization's structure. With the rise of ABM, and the idea of the account as the important unit of revenue, it's natural language for sales — and marketers are starting to learn more. For example, if you see an account surging, but you don't have contacts from that account, you have two options: either ignore it or ramp up engagement to try and get contacts. In the new days, if you see intent at an account, marketing and sales must go after it or they'll miss the deal. This is completely different from the old ways.

DGR: What is the critical factor for success with intent data?

Steinert: Account-level insights provide strong guidance and direction, but without contacts, there are no inroads to allow you to engage that account. Regardless of whether you know an account is active, you still need to engage through an individual. Contacts are also a key determinant for demand intensity within an account. To understand if an account is in a buying cycle, you must understand the collective research activity of the buying team around areas related to your solution.

The ultimate goal of marketing and sales teams is to have better conversations that convert to opportunities and revenue. For this to be accomplished, they must find the right contacts at the right time and, most importantly, engage and establish a dialog that will lead to profitable revenue. You cannot open powerful selling conversations without the right context and knowledge.

As you look to choose an intent provider, you need clear answers on how they determine *who* is in market (accounts, contacts and full buying team), how they determine when they are in market (recency and velocity of buying team behavior) and finally, how they aid you in *what* to say/do to convert opportunities (directly observed on insight topics, solution needs, vendors engaged with).

"[INTENT DATA] CAN PROVIDE CLEAR ANSWERS ON HOW TO DETERMINE WHO IS IN MARKET, WHEN THEY ARE IN MARKET AND WHAT TO SAY AND DO TO CONVERT OPPORTUNITIES,"

JOHN STEINERT, TECHTARGET

CONCLUSION

Whether it's prioritizing target accounts, identifying relevant topics for future content creation or accelerating deals by giving sales team insight into what matters to prospects, progressive B2B companies that leverage intent data see enough results to gain buy-in throughout the organization.

"[Intent data] can provide clear answers on how to determine who is in market, when they are in market and what to say and do to convert opportunities," said John Steinert, CMO of **TechTarget**.

Ultimately, leveraging intent data positions B2B companies to gain the upper hand in a competitive buying cycle. While an upper hand is advantageous, it is important that intent data is used to create relevant and contextual engagement with prospective accounts.

"The engagement of accounts surfaced through intent data needs to be systematized so follow-up happens rapidly and in a predicable way," said Famico. "The value of intent data is the ability to identify and engage a company that is in an active buying cycle before your competitors. When your engagement processes aren't systematic, errors and omissions happen, and delays occur — all of which give your competitors a chance to catch up."

BOUND

ENGAGEMENT AT SCALE

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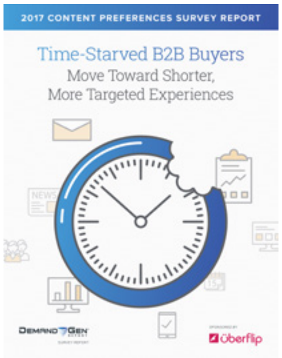

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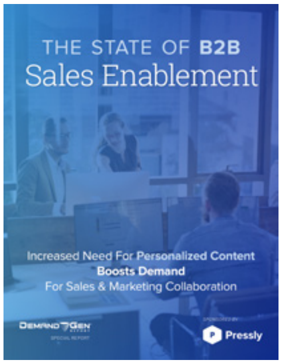

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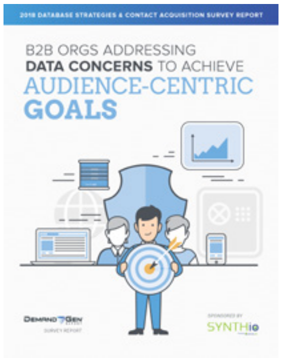

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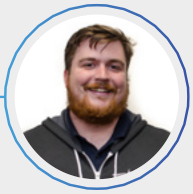

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