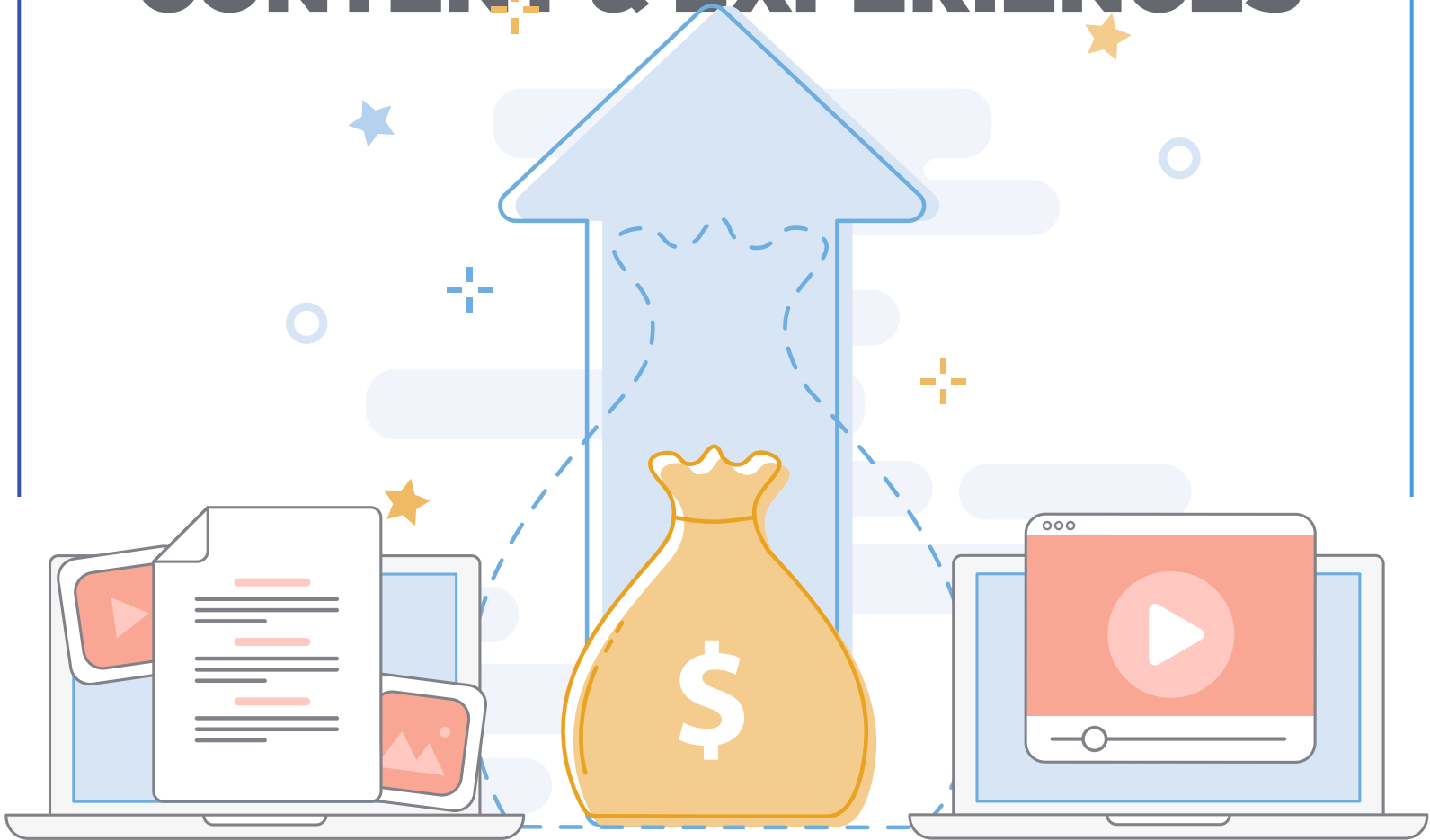




RESEARCH SHOWS

Challenge Of Proving ROI

PUSHING B2B BRANDS
TOWARDS TARGETED
CONTENT & EXPERIENCES



52%
OF RESPONDENTS
HAVE HAD AN
ABM STRATEGY IN
PLACE FOR UP TO
A YEAR.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

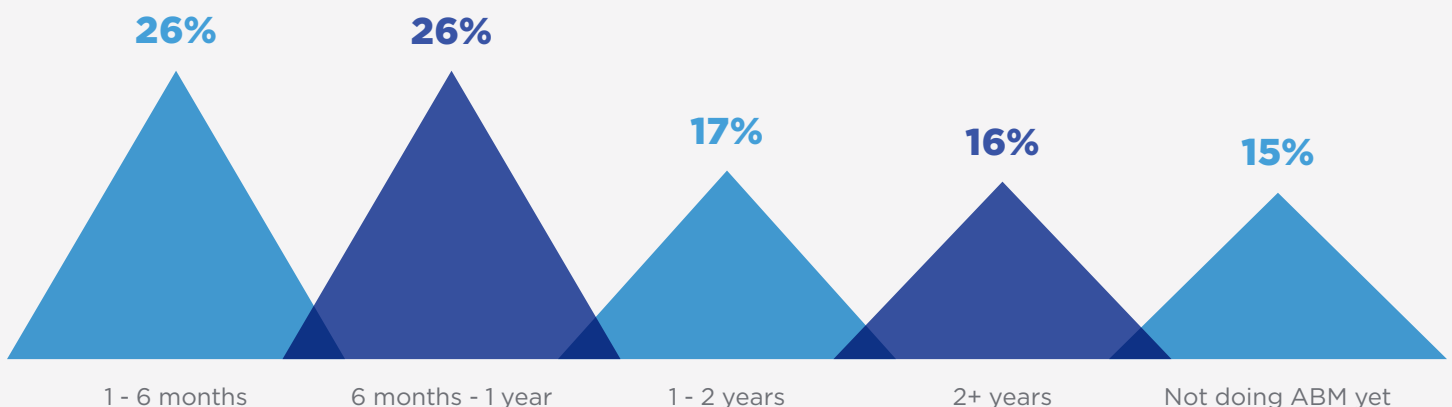
Account-based marketing continues to generate buzz, but B2B organizations are quickly looking to move beyond the initial hype around the category and are pressing to show ROI from their targeted programs.

Demand Gen Report's third annual *ABM Benchmark Survey* revealed most organizations are still in the early stages of ABM – they are starting to see some early growing pains and challenges on executing programs and clearly tracking and demonstrating the impact of their investments.

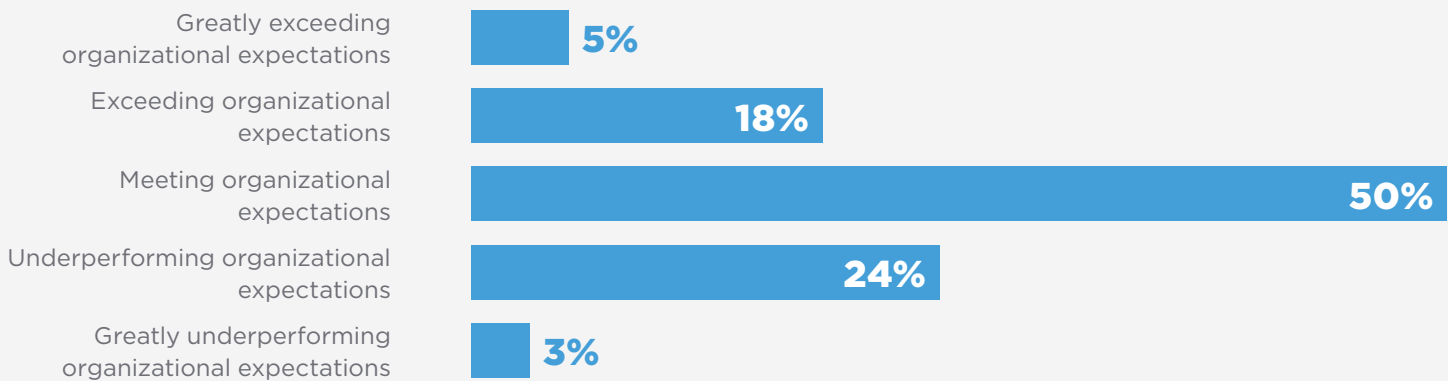
The survey found that 52% of respondents have had an ABM strategy in place for up to a year, while another question revealed that 49% are still in the early stages.

On the positive front, the majority of companies that have adopted ABM are still pleased with the overall results. The findings show similar numbers to last year's results: 50% of respondents noted ABM is meeting organizational expectations, while just 5% said it is greatly exceeding organizational expectations and 18% noted it is exceeding organizational expectations. When asked about the payoffs of their ABM initiatives, respondents highlighted benefits such as efficient use of marketing resources (48%), streamlined customer acquisition processes (33%) and a clearer path to ROI (32%).

HOW LONG HAS YOUR ABM STRATEGY BEEN IN PLACE?



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



50%
OF PRACTITIONERS
SAID ABM
IS MEETING
ORGANIZATIONAL
EXPECTATIONS.

While most don't doubt that ABM is a positive addition to their efforts, the report did highlight some common challenges emerging as B2B marketers look to balance their ABM with traditional demand gen programs.

This report dives deep into the survey findings, including:

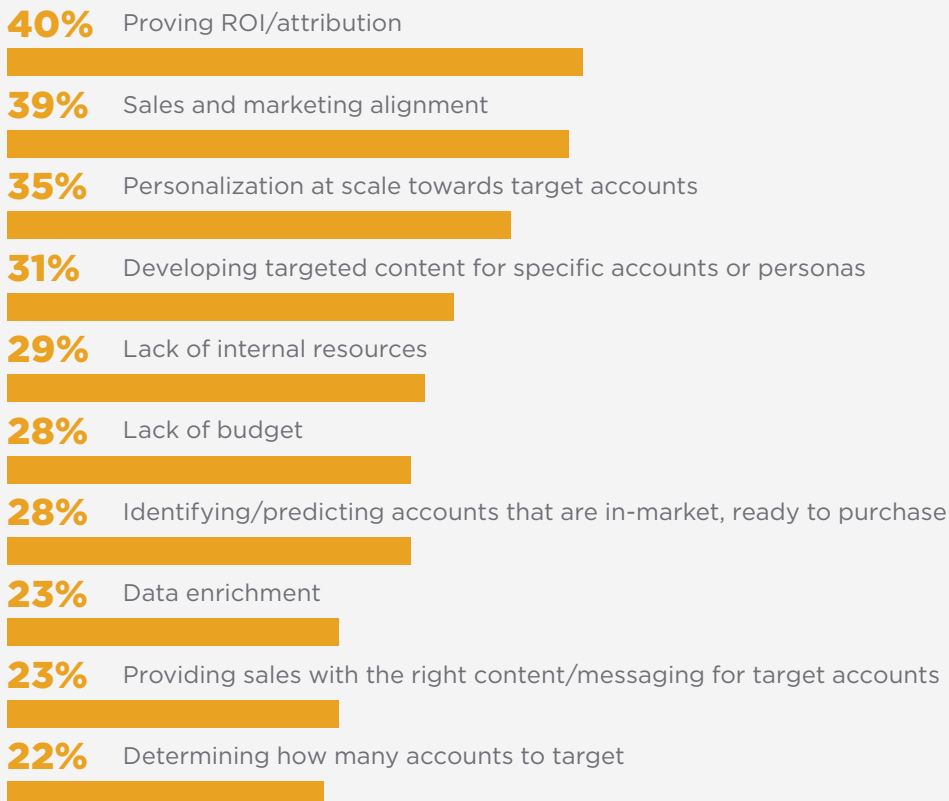
- **Top challenges for ABM practitioners**, including proving ROI/attribution (40%) and achieving sales and marketing alignment (39%);
- **A growing emphasis on traditional demand generation**, with 45% of respondents noting they prioritize it over ABM efforts, and 38% saying they prioritize a combination of both demand gen and ABM initiatives;
- **Key technologies companies are planning to use to support their ABM strategy**, including video personalization tools (36%), predictive analytics tools (35%) and lead-to-account matching tools (35%);
- **More investments in targeted content/messaging**, such as content tailored to specific industries (64%) and a spike in interest in video content (71%); and
- **How organizations are measuring their ABM efforts**, with 61% highlighting contribution to pipeline revenue as a top focus, followed by win rate (52%) and net-new accounts engaged (51%).

40%
OF RESPONDENTS
STRUGGLE WITH
PROVING THE ROI
OF THEIR ABM
EFFORTS.

PROVING ROI IS TOP CHALLENGE FOR ABM PRACTITIONERS

The survey saw a spike of respondents (40%) who noted that proving ROI/attribution is a top ABM-related challenge – especially when compared to last year’s findings. In 2017, the option ranked third after sales and marketing alignment and personalization at scale towards target accounts. This year, it took the top slot above sales and marketing alignment (39%) and personalization at scale (35%).

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





54% OF PRACTITIONERS OFFER TARGETED EXECUTIVE EVENT INVITATIONS AS PART OF THEIR ABM INITIATIVES.

Other key challenges highlighted by respondents include:

- Developing targeted content for specific accounts or personas (31%);
- Lack of internal resources (29%);
- Lack of budget (28%); and
- Identifying/predicting accounts that are in-market and ready to purchase (28%).

Marketers who practice account-based marketing tend to find that efforts in targeting key accounts can be more expensive than traditional digital campaigns, as they often include direct mail and executive events to engage key stakeholders.

In terms of the types of content offers or experiences marketers are offering as part of their ABM initiatives, respondents said they offer the following experiences, which may align with the challenge of proving ROI/attribution in addition to lack of budget.

- Targeted executive event invitations (54%);
- Interactive content tailored by industry/role (44%);
- Video content (44%);
- Sales meeting invitations (43%); and
- Promotional item giveaways (38%).

ONLY 15%
OF RESPONDENTS
SAID THEY
PRIORITIZE
ABM OVER
TRADITIONAL
DEMAND GEN.

CONTINUED EMPHASIS ON TRADITIONAL DEMAND GEN COMPARED TO ABM

Given that respondents are still in the early stages of their ABM efforts, many remain focused on traditional demand generation efforts instead of ABM. This year's findings show:

- 45% of respondents prioritize traditional demand generation over ABM efforts – a small dip compared to last year's 52%;
- 38% have integrated demand gen and ABM processes to streamline marketing efforts; and
- 15% prioritize ABM efforts over traditional demand gen.

The remaining percentage who highlighted "other" as their response noted efforts such as "fit ABM in as we can" and "pilot program to determine if ABM is a better approach than traditional demand gen/targeted marketing."

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

35%

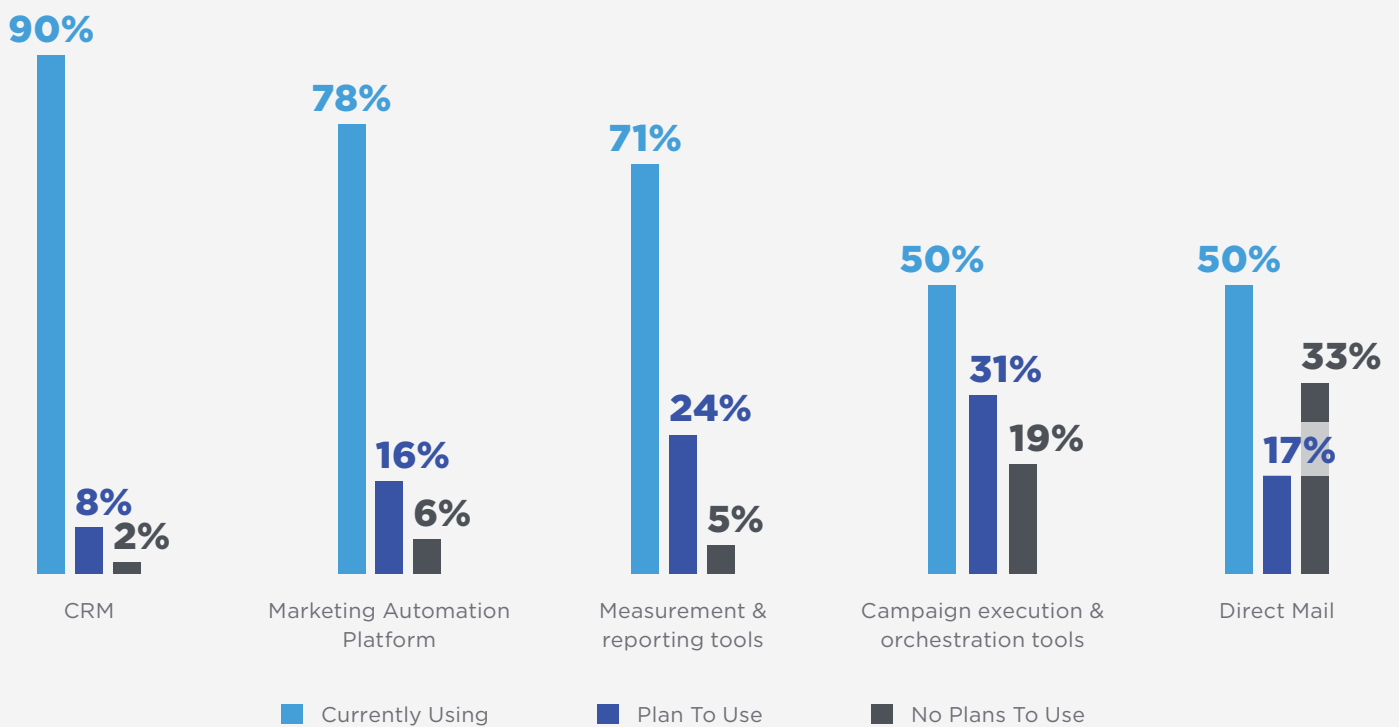
NOTED THEY ARE USING OR PLAN TO USE AN AGENCY OR CONSULTING PARTNER TO HELP DEVELOP CONTENT.

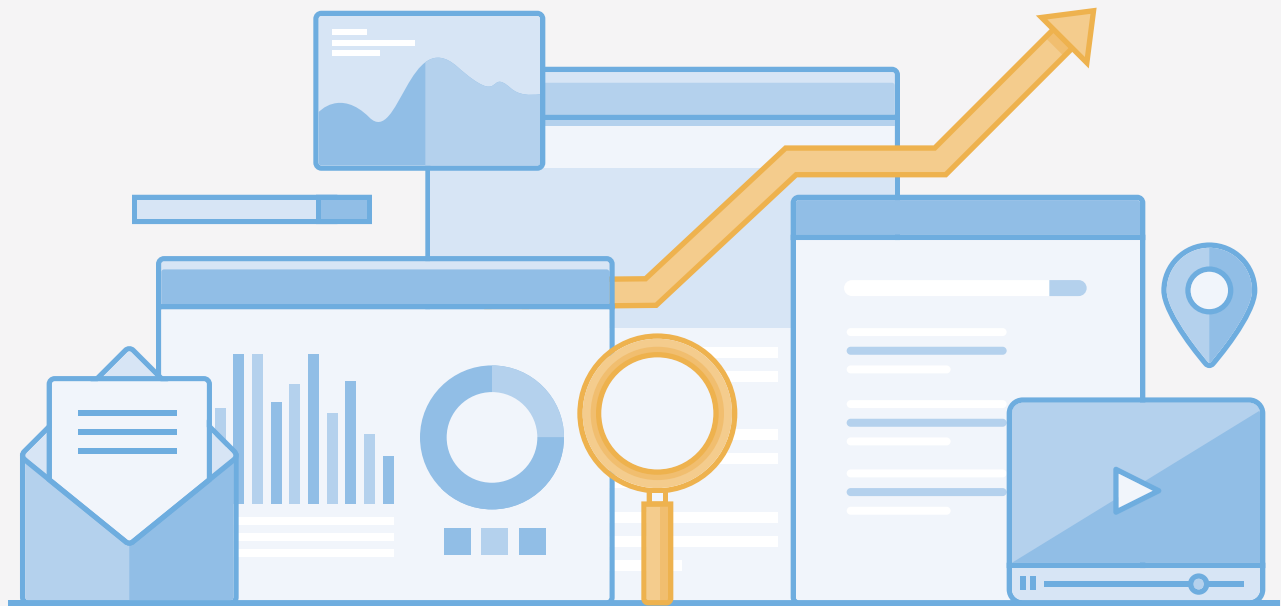
UTILIZING THE TECH STACK TO RESOLVE COMMON ABM CHALLENGES

When asked which technologies they are using or planning to use to support their ABM strategy, respondents highlighted a variety of tools that also align with the top challenges mentioned earlier.

Among them, web and content personalization tools (49% currently using and 34% planning to use) and video personalization tools (19% currently using and 36% planning to use) stood out, explaining an effort to resolve challenges around developing targeted content for specific accounts or personas, as well as personalization at scale. Both categories revealed a prominent spike when compared to last year's findings. In another question, respondents also noted they are using or plan to use an agency or consulting partner to help with developing content assets (35%) and designing creative campaign themes (31%).

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





71%
ARE CURRENTLY
USING
MEASUREMENT
AND REPORTING
TOOLS TO
SUPPORT THEIR
ABM STRATEGY.

Measurement and reporting tools also ranked high, with 71% stating they are currently using them (an 11% lift compared to last year) and 24% noting they are planning to use them.

Other top technologies respondents are planning to use include:

- Lead-to-account matching (35%);
- Predictive analytics tools (35%);
- Data and augmentation tools (30%); and
- Account-based advertising tools (30%).

44%
OF RESPONDENTS
SAID THEY OFFER
VIDEO CONTENT
AS PART OF THEIR
ABM INITIATIVES.

VIDEO BECOMES BIG PLAYER IN ENGAGING WITH TARGET ACCOUNTS

Whether they practice ABM or not, B2B organizations are increasingly embracing video as a content format and have seen the value it has on their marketing efforts. This year's survey findings revealed that marketers are also putting a higher focus on video in their ABM strategies.

Seventy-one percent of respondents said that video is very or somewhat important in their ABM strategy — a 5% bump compared to last year. In addition, 44% noted that they offer video content as part of their ABM initiatives. And, as previously stated, 36% of respondents said they are planning to add video personalization tools to their ABM tech stack.

Additional content formats highlighted by respondents include:

- Articles/blogs — 89%;
- Case studies — 86%; and
- Research — 81%.

For this year's survey, respondents were asked to rate the importance of three new content formats when employing their ABM strategy: podcasts, case studies and direct mail. Among those, case studies reigned supreme (as seen above), followed by direct mail at 56% and podcasts at 26%.

PLEASE RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF CONTENT FORMATS WHEN EMPLOYING YOUR ABM STRATEGY:



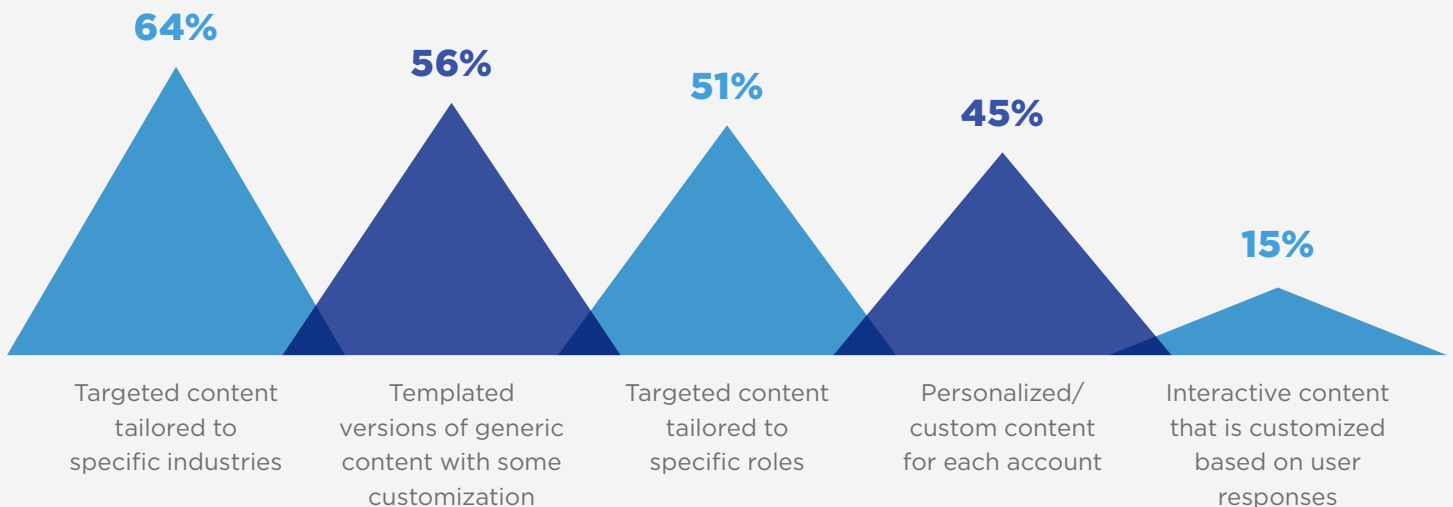
MORE THAN HALF OF RESPONDENTS STILL USE TEMPLATED VERSIONS OF GENERIC CONTENT WITH SOME CUSTOMIZATION.

TAILORING CONTENT MESSAGING STAYS TOP-OF-MIND

In terms of ABM content outreach, more than half of respondents still use templated versions of generic content with some customization. However, they are also taking strides to deliver targeted content tailored to specific industries (64%) and specific roles (51%), as well as personalized content for each account (45%).

Direct write-in responses noted they are creating “custom landing pages for each buying persona in each account” and “targeted content based on business imperatives and challenges.”

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



61%

MEASURE THEIR
ABM EFFORTS BY
CONTRIBUTION
TO PIPELINE
REVENUE.

MEASUREMENT REMAINS A STRUGGLE

When measuring their ABM efforts, respondents highlighted top KPIs as:

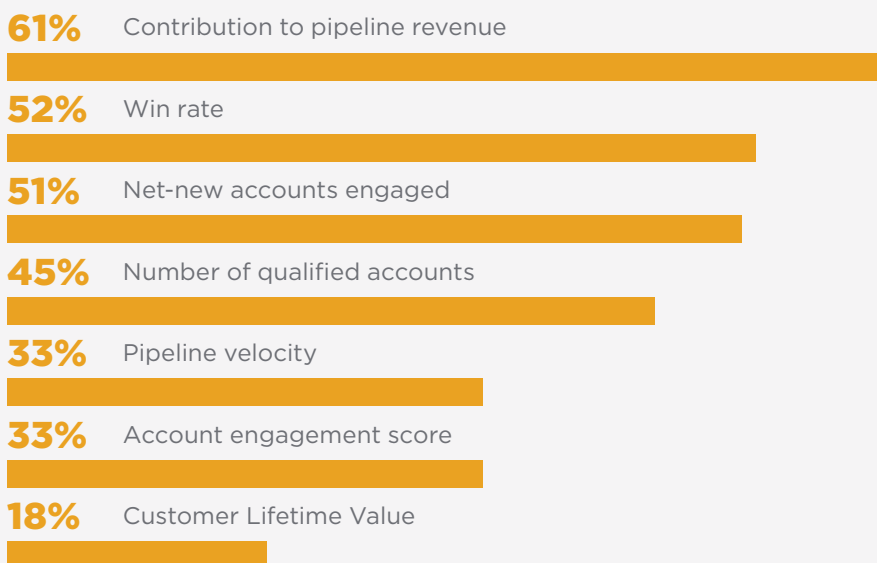
- Win rate (52%);
- Net-new accounts engaged (51%); and
- Number of qualified accounts (45%).

However, in written responses, marketers mentioned that measurement was still a challenge, with comments noting that respondents are "still working on this" and still finding "difficulty measuring" ABM initiatives..

Other KPIs respondents wrote in include:

- Annual recurring revenue;
- Relationship score;
- Opportunity rate;
- Account influenced revenue;
- Qualitative feedback; and
- Average contract value.

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



56%
SAID THEY HAVE
SEEN BETTER
SALES AND
MARKETING
ALIGNMENT
FROM THEIR ABM
INITIATIVES.

CONCLUSION

While the buzz around ABM is still prominent, the survey highlights that the practice and discipline still has significant room to mature. Yet, despite the struggles some early-stage companies are seeing, it's important to note that overwhelmingly respondents were satisfied with the overall returns on their initiatives to target key accounts.

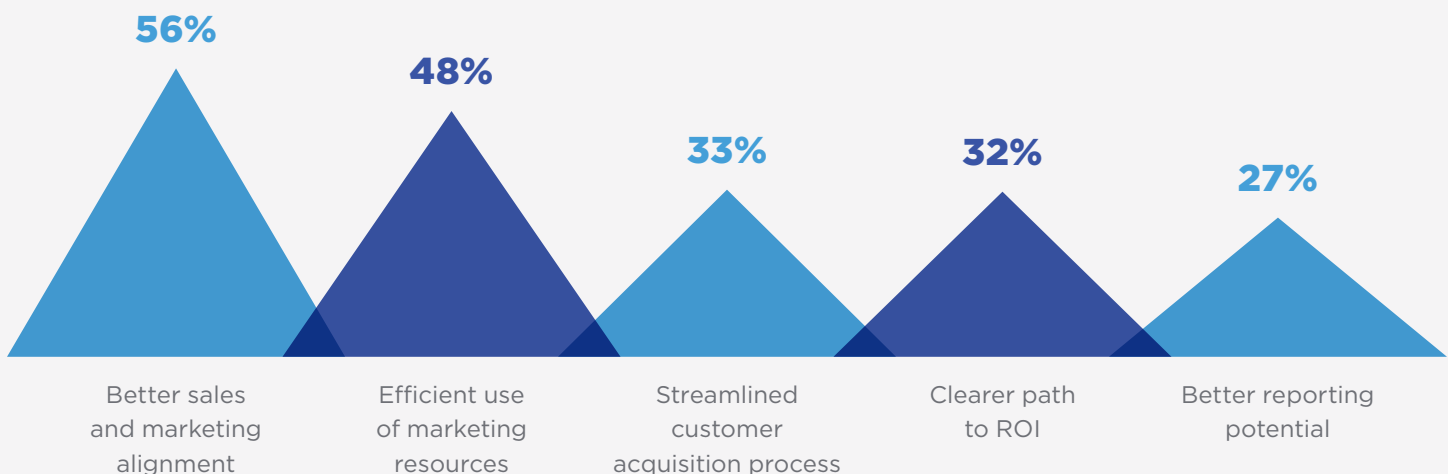
In addition, the survey highlights that the payoffs and definition for success will likely be different for different companies, based on their size and market dynamics.

For example, while sales and marketing alignment was a top challenge for 39% of respondents, in contrast, 56% noted they have seen better sales and marketing alignment from their ABM initiatives.

Other payoffs from ABM initiatives highlighted by respondents include:

- Efficient use of marketing resources (48%);
- Streamlined customer acquisition process (33%);
- Clearer path to ROI (32%); and
- Better reporting potential (27%).

HOW ARE YOUR ABM INITIATIVES POSITIVELY IMPACTING YOUR BUSINESS? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



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ABOUT THIS SURVEY

The 2018 ABM Benchmark Survey polled more than 300 marketers about their account-based marketing strategies. Almost half (47%) serve the high-tech industry – 40% of which were from companies with an annual revenue of under \$25 million. The majority of respondents (35%) hold director positions at their companies, followed by 30% at manager level.



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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