

WHAT'S WORKING IN DEMAND GENERATION?

HOW THE PIVOT TO DIGITAL INCREASED RELIANCE
ON DEMAND GEN, FORCING MARKETERS TO
REEVALUATE TRIED & TRUE MARKETING INITIATIVES



Introduction

It's difficult to find a year that presented more challenges for demand generation marketers than 2020. Organizations had to think on their feet and pivot to embrace digital mediums in new ways while further researching and understanding the value automation and artificial intelligence can provide. As offices were temporarily closed and companies successfully switched to remote work models, the dynamics of demand generation followed suit.

In *Demand Gen Report's State of Demand Generation Benchmark Survey Report*, it was revealed that only 19% of those surveyed said they were increasing budget prioritization on event marketing — a sharp decrease from last year's 41%. Instead, the report revealed that budgets are being shifted toward ABM (61%), content marketing (60%), sales enablement (48%) and personalization (43%), with the goal of unifying all stages of the sales funnel.

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DGR'S 2021 DEMAND GENERATION BENCHMARK SURVEY REPORT



“Decision-making panels aren’t sitting in a room together anymore and fewer people are answering cold calls,” said Victoria Albert, Head of Marketing for **INFUSEMedia**, in an interview with *Demand Gen Report*. “An omnichannel approach has become even more important to ensure you’re nurturing prospects everywhere, providing multiple touchpoints across every platform and stage of the funnel and creating valuable content.”

To that end, Ashley Shailer, VP of Marketing for **Inverta**, explained that organizations need to ask themselves if they’re a “gazelle” or an “elephant” when it comes to switching directions. Organizations must shift away from singular planning and budget modeling to creating several different scenarios across multiple channels that enable pivoting when needed.

Throughout this report, the role of demand generation will be examined through the lens of videos, webinars and artificial intelligence (AI) with a focus on digital marketing. The uses of lead conversion and generation, sales enablement and curating a digital experience will be highlighted to reveal:

- The best strategies for folding videos and webinars into existing marketing portfolios by identifying a product’s demand and developing those findings into buyer-focused content;
- Keys to successful AI implementation and proven tactics for scaling it;
- Capitalizing on the ever-increasing value of digital marketing; and
- ABM’s role in creating brand recognition to lay the groundwork before formal outreach



Harnessing & Embracing Videos & Webinars

Given the importance of meeting customers' engagement demands immediately, video marketing and webinars are proving to be a key factor in generating leads. In ***Demand Gen Report's State of Demand Generation Benchmark Survey Report***, almost a third of respondents indicated that video marketing successfully generated the most qualified leads throughout 2020, while 42% indicated webinars as the top format for converting and accelerating leads in the middle and late stages of the funnel.

According to John Steinert, CMO of TechTarget, video marketing and interactive content take on two forms: Short and long. Short form is designed for branding and top-of-funnel strategies to drive initial engagement and pique interest, while long form dives into the “meat” of the product and is better for lower- to mid-funnel engagement.

However, to see success with those content forms, marketers need to take a hard look at how videos are created by studying the market, identifying the amount of demand for a product and developing those findings into content that resonates with buyers and meets their needs, explained Steinert.

“B2B gets caught up in this idea that, ‘Oh, I’m a serious brand, my messaging and marketing needs to be serious,’” added Shailer. “The reality is that to connect with an audience, you want messaging that dials down the polished and hygienic marketing jargon.”

While some may view removing the traditional marketing façade as unprofessional, it’s a compelling strategy that humanizes marketing efforts and provides a personal connection. Potential customers can’t be treated as just as another number — there’s a living, breathing person on the other side of the screen.



“People like to learn and get to know other people,” said Shailer. “Don’t try to put a pretty package around your video; just let your team be themselves and relate to the audience. Dialing down the production value of the video and making it more intimate and personal is so effective in that regard.”

Furthermore, webinars should always be thought of as marketing assets — companies need to take a hard look at how they’re conveying their messages to ensure they’re maximizing the information they’re projecting. Hana Jacover, Dir. of Demand Generation at **Madkudu**, suggests distilling the important information into “little nuggets” of information that resonate strongly with target audiences and saving the clips for later use in marketing campaigns or promotional purposes. This is where an account-based marketing (ABM) strategy should be utilized, as it’s an exhausting and time-consuming feat to customize video and webinar content for each member or department of an organization.

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The Power Of An Account-Based Approach

Today's prospects are thorough with their research and often spend a few months reviewing companies and their solutions before initiating outreach. As a result, ABM plays an interesting role in traditional demand gen initiatives by taking a more proactive, personalized approach.

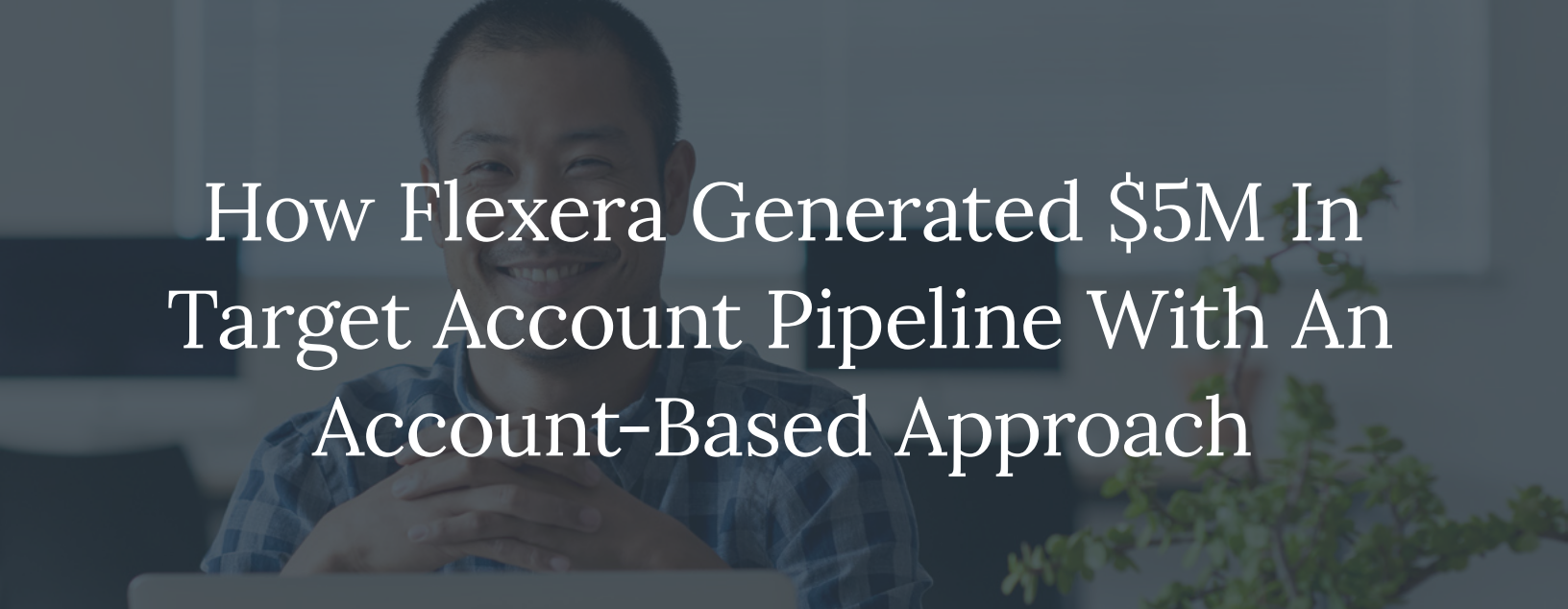
"ABM focuses on reaching the right buyers in a specific set of target accounts, while traditional marketing relies heavily on lead capture to determine interest," said Kirsten Yee, Director of Marketing for [Triblio](#). "The problem with traditional demand gen is that prospects are often researching vendors for more than 90 days before they fill out a lead form. They've already looked at you and your competitors, and you're going to be late to the deal because you haven't reached out yet. ABM helps you reach prospective buyers ahead of time instead of waiting for them to raise their hand."

Organizations must lay the foundation for brand recognition before a prospect's first formal interaction with a brand. Instead of shouting into the internet void and hoping qualified leads are listening, ABM strategies enable marketers to take a more streamlined approach that helps generate brand recognition on all levels, which is likely to increase engagement rates that lead to sales opportunities.

"We see a lot of customers using account-based advertising to provide air cover for the sales team to accelerate deal progression," said Yee. "This builds brand awareness and helps prospects get familiar with your logo and messaging, making them more likely to click a link or respond to an email."

Yee explained that Triblio offers Smart Pages, which are unique content pages that are automatically customized to the needs, interests and buying profile of a specific account. This allows marketers to deploy these pages at scale to promote 1:1 buying experiences while targeting thousands of accounts.

In fact, Triblio's account development representatives see that emails with a Smart Page link have over 50% increased engagement, and the average time spent on a Smart Page is 188% higher than other pages, according to Yee.



How Flexera Generated \$5M In Target Account Pipeline With An Account-Based Approach

Flexera, a SaaS-based IT management solution, had a problem: It was struggling to allocate its limited budget across a large account list. Laura Wille, Flexera's Manager of Global Demand Generation, knew that the company needed a more targeted approach to demand generation in order to scale marketing's impact on pipeline growth. Simultaneously, the team would need a new technology partner to support account-based audiences, deliver on intent-based targeting and execute customized cross-channel campaigns.

Through a partnership with Triblio, the marketing team could focus its resources on reaching, engaging and converting select accounts by providing:

- Real-time intent data scales;
- Account visibility;
- Campaign personalization; and
- The ability to layer on first- and third-party intent signals to its account data.

With Triblio's real-time intent integration, Flexera can manage dynamic audiences and scale personalized campaigns for high-fit, high-intent accounts. To test the efficiency of its new, one-to-few advertising strategy, Flexera set up an A/B test for its top 40 accounts. Half of the accounts were heavily targeted with display ads and an email campaign, while the other half served as the control group.



The results of the campaign showed that of the 20 ABM accounts, three became late-stage pipeline opportunities and one moved to closed-won. In the control group, none of the accounts moved to pipeline.

Now, Flexera generates over 400 MQA's and nearly \$5 million in target account pipeline. Equipped with Triblio's account visibility and personalization capabilities, Flexera can now cater its messaging to a focused list of target accounts, growing engagement and moving the needle on pipeline. The company's ABM strategy has decreased the number of unengaged target accounts from 7% to just 1%.

[Watch the video below to learn more.](#)





Increasing Revenue Through Virtual Events

Losing the ability to attend in-person events left a huge gap in demand generation strategies that virtual and hybrid event models are quickly fixing. However, this transition to virtual events wasn't the smooth process organizations were hoping for. According to Yee, event organizers and sponsors were forced to quickly test different platforms and formats to explore what might provide an effective alternative to live events. While wading through options, organizations discovered new opportunities to engage prospects and customers alike.

For example, Yee explained that the loss of Triblio's Real World ABM Tour, a lunch and learn-style event, was an initial setback — but the marketing team responded by doubling down on digital-first programs. The team also viewed the setback as an opportunity to connect with existing customers in a more personal way by creating TableTalk, a virtual learning event specific to customer needs.

"We started Triblio TableTalks as a weekly event for us to connect with our customers at the start of the pandemic," Yee explained. "We'd meet to talk about ABM-related topics, marketing in general or even tips on navigating marketing in an all virtual world."

As it stands, online conferences aren't just a band-aid fix until travel restrictions are eased or lifted and the industry can gather in person — they're likely here to stay, according to experts.

However, marketers can't treat the in-person and virtual platforms interchangeably — each event requires a unique demand generation strategy, according to Steinert.

"If sponsors are looking for virtual events to accomplish the same engagement as physical events, they're thinking about it wrong," he said. "Instead, sponsors need to think about how they engage a specific type of audience in the long term and what the role of the virtual event is in supporting their engagement goals."



However, virtual events make it more difficult to capitalize on that influx of attendees, as you can't grab someone walking past your booth, according to Steinert. Marketers need to take a multi-step approach and generate a marketing strategy that draws people into their digital booth. The most in-demand content is those that are accessible and easily digestible, which is where virtual events have an advantage.

The shorter time frame is both a blessing and a curse — while less time-consuming, virtual events have no wiggle room for presentations and webinars to run a few minutes over their scheduled time. However, the challenge lies in recruiting people to attend those webinars, Steinert explained, as there's always concurrent events that might hold more interest.

To increase a particular webinar's appeal, the two biggest things marketers can do, according to Steinert, is to find their target audience and create engaging content that's built around what the attendees are looking for.

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JOHN STEINERT, TECHTARGET



Overcoming The Challenges Of Artificial Intelligence

The artificial intelligence (AI) market is nowhere close to reaching its full potential yet, in terms of technological advancements and implementation. According to Drift's **2021 State of Marketing AI Report**, 65% of marketing teams are still in the research stage of implementing AI, while only 17% are scaling it. Surprisingly, internal teams are AI's biggest enemy, as "humans can be roadblocks to AI" due to a lack of understanding, explained Jacover.

Two of the biggest hurdles cited in Drift's report are that many companies don't understand the full potential of AI and are undereducated on the best forms of implementation and integration. Unfortunately, there's no quick fix to suddenly bring internal teams up-to-speed on the best utilizations of AI — that can only be achieved through independent research. Once companies identify the gaps that automation can fill, they can embrace AI to its fullest to drive demand generation results.

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HANA JACOVER, MADKUDU



“We need to work with AI, not against it,” said Jacover. “If demand generation marketers can find a way to cohesively work with artificial intelligence and technology that helps meet internal goals, we boost efficiency and accuracy.”

However, it’s important that companies don’t bite off more than they can chew. Steinert suggests marketers don’t try to go to the Super Bowl immediately and instead scale their integration so they’re not overwhelmed.

This integration is eased by the evolving role of scoring and prioritizing, as new solutions have emerged that provide data-based insights into aspects of scoring criteria. Instead of focusing on a single party, the new wave of scoring and prioritizing takes a more comprehensive, expansive approach.

“Scoring and prioritizing demand has taken on a life of its own because there’s so many more dimensions of criteria that we can look at now,” said Shailer. “In the past, we mainly looked at first-party interest, but the way we score and prioritize demand is much more multi-dimensional than it’s been in the past.”

There’s no one-size-fits all solution for marketing teams to improve demand generation, as each organization’s priorities, goals and sizes are different. However, research proves that companies who embrace the benefits omnichannel approaches of video marketing, virtual events and artificial intelligence hold to drive demand generation to accelerate revenue will see the most success.

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Recognizing Digital Marketing's Enhanced Value

While the long-lasting impact of the pandemic is yet to be seen, marketers can focus on the information that's already available to meet customers where they need the most help, understand how the virtual lifestyle impacts decision-making and anticipate any potential pitfalls. As potential customers are connected to the internet essentially the entire day, the opportunity to connect with them online is more prevalent — and tricky — than ever.

“We’re on screens more; that’s just the reality,” said Shailer. “The positive outcome of that is there’s more opportunities to reach people digitally. The negative, however, is marketing and advertising fatigue. Companies need to maximize the impact of their digital channel by applying a lot of rigor around the synchrony and coordination of the messaging and program so customers are realizing the real value.”

To avoid the exhaustion that comes from a marketing overload, organizations must take measures that enable customers to maximize the time they spend on the website. This can be accomplished through providing content that stands out, whether it’s more targeted messaging or a focus on empathy.

“A lot of the value for demand generation comes down to doing a better job of finding, understanding and engaging your target audience,” explained Steinert. To improve lead generation, marketers need to identify what information their clients are getting elsewhere and work to proactively meet those needs.

Attraction and engagement are two important factors of this, especially in today’s virtual environment. It’s easier — and less guilt-inducing — for customers to disconnect by clicking a little X on a chatbot or ignoring an email compared to hanging up the phone while speaking to someone when they’ve had enough.

“The customer is really in control of the digital channel,” said Steinert. “It’s critical that you’re serving the customers’ needs and, to do that, you can’t just execute what you’re told to do. You have to listen to and study the data and improve the content as if it were part of the content you’re trying to sell.”

Additional Resources



Triblio's Account-Based Marketing (ABM) solution equips marketers with the platform and expertise to scale multi-channel campaign orchestration. Backed by IDG Communications, its AI-powered account-ID engine drives advertising, web personalization, and sales activation for businesses such as Nasdaq, Insperity, and Booz Allen.

[TRIBLIO.COM/REQUEST-DEMO](https://triblio.com/request-demo)



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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