



DEMAND  GEN[®]
REPORT

2022 STATE OF ABM:

Account-Based Strategies Continue
Experiential Evolution

SPONSORED BY



INTRODUCTION

The continuous evolution of ABM best practices presents a unique challenge for B2B marketers. While ABM is beyond its infancy — according to [ITSMA](#), almost 50% of all ABM programs are in the “expanding” or “embedded” stage — marketing teams are still learning how to ease growing pains.

As marketers begin to master some elements, such as having [a handle on their ICP](#), other aspects of ABM elude them. According to the “[2021 ABM Benchmark Survey](#),” the two biggest difficulties for ABM marketers are personalization at scale and proving ROI and attribution. And in the era of buyers’ demand for experiential content, organizations must structure their ABM programs accordingly.

ABM practitioners are turning to campaign customization to better identify accounts where they are to increase engagement. The result is account-based experience (ABX), which provides a more tailored approach to campaigns with immersive content to boost engagement by building an emotional connection with buyers. Examples include custom websites, content geared to address the company’s pain points and small in-person events.

ABX goes beyond traditional marketing-centric interactions to include sales, sales development, customer success and other revenue teams.

“Crafting and executing a prospect experience isn’t new,” said Carey Straetz, Head of Demand Generation for data science platform [Mode](#). “What is new here is doing it within named accounts and targeting multiple personas in multiple ways that are orchestrated for that individual persona. The experience with your brand is an opportunity to build affinity for your brand, and that’s a game changer for ABM.”

This report will share tips, best practices and use case examples of how marketers are upping their ABM game. It will highlight how ABM leaders are increasing their personalization efforts for maximum revenue generation and brand building. Specific topics discussed include:

- How marketing teams are evolving from ABM to ABX strategies to increase relevance and personalization;
- The necessity of incorporating interactivity and experiential assets into account-targeting strategies to increase engagement;
- The increasing importance of leveraging signal/intent data to identify relevant assets and create trigger-based campaigns;
- The most popular ABM campaign measurement metrics and how top practitioners are mapping accounts to sales/marketing and proving ROI; and
- The top tools and solutions practitioners are using to de-anonymize and target in-market accounts.



CREATE AN EXPERIENTIAL ACCOUNT JOURNEY

As marketers faced a cancellation of in-person events during Covid-19, they sought to hone their approach to ABM. ABX — the next generation of ABM — takes intent and engagement signals to develop a customized campaign at the account level.

The evolution from ABM to ABX requires getting granular with named accounts, Straetz added.

“This means, within our named accounts, we identify the personas we want at the deal table, and the associated messaging, channel mix and offers that resonate with each individual within the named account,” she explained. “And, for each individual or team, we orchestrate a full experience with our brand that drives them down the funnel with multiple touches, in digital and physical manners, including content, live events, gifting, case studies and personalized CTAs.”



HOW ABM IS DRIVING MARKETING INNOVATION IN 2022

By Jodi Cerretani, Sr. Director of Demand Gen at RollWorks

There's no denying it: Marketing is still changing. But while the pandemic certainly altered how marketers engage with their audiences, the evolution of the practice was already well underway with the slow death of the cookie, ongoing calls for greater transparency in advertising, the rush to personalization and the myriad of other trends affecting the future of marketing.

In the B2B world, specifically, marketers are facing even more of a challenge given just how much compounded complexity the buying marketplace has experienced in recent years. To boot, B2B buying now is largely a self-guided process and the majority of buyers would prefer not to interact with a vendor at all (even though they recognize that they have to).

With such a fragmented journey, marketers are facing a collective conundrum in how to effectively reach those buying committees now. The audience is too disparate, the landscape too complex, the decision makers too numerous.

But there's a light at the end of the tunnel: In a world where self-directed fact-finding is leading the charge, ABM strategies are shining as incredibly reliable approaches for marketing teams looking to drive business results. So much so that about one-third of marketers who've never used ABM told [HubSpot they're planning to invest in it for the first time](#) this year.

As both an ABM practitioner and the demand gen leader for ABM platform RollWorks, I'm excited by the long-overdue influx of marketers looking to incorporate ABM into their strategies this year. Here's how I think their investment is going to further shape our ever-evolving industry.

1. Marketers Will Lean Into Stage-Specific Approaches To Drive Conversion

Rather than measuring leads through traditional stages defined by someone else, we're already seeing marketing transition to measuring accounts as they move through custom-defined buying stages. Being able to visualize all accounts progressing from unaware to post-sale gives marketers the power to make trend-based decisions and take the next-best action that directly impacts the ultimate KPI: Revenue (rather than staring at results thinking "too little, too late").



2. Marketers Will Deepen The Effectiveness Of Inbound

While incredibly effective at capturing demand using a wide-reaching approach, inbound alone doesn't help create it. Whereas ABM — largely an outbound strategy that complements your inbound and traditional lead-based models — creates demand by concentrating marketing and sales resources on engaging specific high-value target accounts through the funnel.

It doesn't take a massive overhaul of strategy to get started. We're seeing marketing teams amplify the effectiveness of their I:Many channels like email, display, content syndication and more simply by targeting the right accounts (versus everyone in their TAM).

Over the last year, marketers have continued to embrace a world where inbound and ABM complement one another to drive the most ROI, and I expect we'll continue to see an increase in how partnerships like our integration with HubSpot are helping teams of all sizes and growth stages achieve better results, faster.

3. Marketers Will Finally Achieve Alignment With Sales

In 2020, [Demand Gen Report's ABM Benchmark Survey](#) found that sales and marketing alignment was respondents' second-biggest ABM-related challenge. Fast forward two years, and I recently saw on [Forrester](#) that 35% of B2B marketing leaders "will prioritize improving marketing alignment and collaboration with other departments over the next two years."

At the end of the day, ABM is key to sales acceleration with its ability to automate faster sales cycles, go more upstream and focus on the higher quality opportunities that are going to ultimately drive the most revenue growth. Given such a concerted focus across the marketing function to invest in ABM, I think this is the year we'll finally see businesses of all sizes go-to-market with a unified, aligned marketing and sales strategy.

I truly believe ABM is one of the most effective ways to drive demand — we know from our own research that [74% of marketing and sales professionals consider ABM a critical part of their mix](#). And as ABM continues to converge with inbound, marketing automation and other demand gen strategies, there are going to be infinite opportunities this year for marketers to bring some much needed innovation back to marketing.

But it's important to keep in mind there is no one-size-fits-all approach to success; how you implement ABM into your own organization depends a lot on the size and scale of your team, the sophistication of your marketing function and so much more.



TAKE NOTES FROM CONSUMER-FACING BUSINESSES TO ENHANCE ABM

The overall goal of ABM is to create a B2C experience at the account level, noted Jennifer Leaver, Senior Global ABM Manager, [Bazaarvoice](#), a provider of product reviews and user-generated content (UGC) solutions.

"As a consumer, you want to have an experience tailored to your preferences," said Leaver. "We're applying that in B2B marketing at the account level. We leverage intent data by rolling it up to the account-level view, and we look at website engagement and the resources they are browsing."

To that end, she pointed to ABX tools such as personalized websites, brochures and videos. Additionally, when examining intent data, ABX marketers must look at how prospects are engaging with competitors.

"While you're building a brand experience for your prospects, you have to remember you're not the only game in town," said Mode's Straetz. "The experience you offer has to position yourself against your competitors, which you often only see with intent data."

Paying attention to these signals enables marketers to kick off a nurture with content that aims to neutralize competitors, Straetz noted. "Up the ante with your experiences when you're down to the wire, and really see where the deal is sitting in the funnel with the intent data."

While intent data can be instrumental to ABX, there are other signals that can direct a campaign, said Nick Ezzo, Vice President, Marketing, [Auditoria.AI](#), a provider of AI-driven automation solutions for corporate finance teams.

"We look at revenue, but then we look for some things that are maybe a little bit indirect," said Ezzo. "We identify the industry they're in and whether they have a high velocity or high volume of transactions in their accounting department, where they could benefit from us."



WHY IT'S TIME TO MOVE BEYOND ACCOUNT-BASED ACRONYMS

By Mark Ogne, ABM Consortium

Customer experiences. Digital experiences. Employee experiences. Product experiences. Retail experiences. "Experiences" is the term du jour, a ubiquitous catch-all phrase for brand engagement, product usage and interaction with a physical or digital asset, so it's no surprise the word infiltrated our industry. Move over ABM; account-based experiences (ABX) is here to help marketers focus on customer experiences and relationships.

So, what exactly is ABX? Much like the outdated but once pervasive "Web 2.0" or "Big Data," "experience" seems to mean everything and nothing at the same time. The universal: ABX is not ABM — it is ABM evolved.

The concept of ABX resonates because it promises to help marketing and sales teams meet the real changes the B2B landscape underwent over the past 18 to 24 months. [Primary research](#) from [MRP](#) and [Demand Metric](#) found that 77% of marketers reported the pace of marketing efforts are faster than a year ago — and this number rose to 83% for enterprise marketers.

The No. 1 ABM shift marketers reported was changing account profiles (39%), followed by targets' preferences for new channels (28%) and demands for new content formats (20%). As digital transformation initiatives have driven a change in roles, behaviors and priorities across the purchase process, marketers are facing unprecedented challenges when it comes to making meaningful connections with prospects and customers.

ABX can sound like an ideal solution to these challenges. Who can argue with orchestration, data-driven action or aligned teams? In fact, these are the terms and concepts that define our industry today because they are so integral to ABM. True ABM has always involved more than just marketing; it encompasses every aspect of creating long-term customer relationships and differentiated customer experiences.



Understand Audience Needs For High-Performing ABX

The path to high-performing ABM traditionally included offering consistent, relevant and responsive connections to prospects and customers wherever they interact with the brand. This is the real work of ABM, and it's hard but rewarding.

High-performing ABM has always been about the audience, their needs and their experiences. ABM that truly delivers a superior customer experience is a comprehensive, orchestrated, global strategy that connects with sophisticated buyers. It's personalized based on the needs of the audience, not the marketer, and adapts messaging to fit changing concerns during lengthy buying processes.

High-performing ABM marketers are already dialed into the importance of personalized connections and experiences. These ABM leaders personalize messaging to a higher degree across more touchpoints: 84% use three or more systems to deliver marketing messages and 46% automatically adjust content to match viewers' stages of engagement within the customer lifecycle.

To fuel these programs, almost all (90%) of ABM top performers reported close, cross-functional collaboration between marketing and sales to create successful ABM strategies. Eight in 10 (80%) top performers reported three or more systems contributing data to ABM, and even more (84%) said their tech stack is very or completely integrated, more than double the percentage (30%) of those with negative or unmeasured ABM impact.

These marketers are doing ABM right. They don't need a buzzword or splashy ad campaign. But for too long, particularly within the enterprise, ABM execution has lagged behind the promise. Less than one-third of enterprise marketers have achieved a significant revenue impact from their ABM program.

Adopting A Comprehensive ABX/ABM Program

While ABM should provide a differentiated buyer experience, many ABM platforms have historically maintained a narrow focus on tactical campaigns because they lacked the technical abilities required to accurately understand audience needs and adjust personalized experiences across multiple channels.

These very real black holes in data management, intent, prediction and orchestration can't be resolved by merely rebranding existing processes as "ABX." In fact, when you look under the hood, most of, if not all, "new" ABX strategies rely on the same old technology infrastructure that delivers siloed solutions for audience management, intent data and campaign activation.



Adding “ABX” can even make performance worse by creating yet another wholly disconnected silo, increasing the chances that companies will overmarket and targets will receive inconsistent or even conflicting messaging. These outcomes undermine the experience ABX is intended to improve.

Making ABX Programs Actionable

Slapping a new name on existing ABM technology and strategies is not the same as making an effort to innovate and improve ABM so that it drives even more growth and revenue for marketers, particularly those in large, complex, global businesses.

The reality is that enterprise B2B marketers are facing real changes and need real solutions — not acronyms. Just as you can’t build a better relationship with your teenager simply by starting to talk about a parenting “experience,” marketers can’t make better connections by using a new buzzword. They need to fundamentally change the way they engage.

If we can come together as an industry around a fundamental change in how we engage, and not around a new buzzword or acronym, we will not only better serve our customers, but also create more value for the ABM market overall.

“The reality is that enterprise B2B marketers are facing real changes and need real solutions — not acronyms.”

MARK OGNE, MRP





MEASURE ABM CAMPAIGNS BY SHIFTING TO ABX METRICS

Upgrading ABM campaigns to be more experiential involves not only tracking demographics, but also ensuring that they are measured to improve results. The right KPIs can ensure that marketers are headed in the right direction, explained Leaver.

"You want to know if you're getting more website visits from the accounts you're targeting," she continued. "Are you sending them the right pieces of content?"

Once the sales team is involved, the ABX metrics shift, Leaver continued.

"We look at the number of contacts engaged with sales, and their titles," she explained. "Are they decision-makers? We also look at meetings to opportunities, overall deal size and how quickly deals are closed."

While internal intent data is a solid source of information about where an account is headed, ABX often requires external information, as well. Auditoria's Ezzo said he leverages [ZoomInfo](#), which provides insights into the accounts that are in Auditoria's target account list, and even highlights those who aren't.



THE ROLE CONTENT PERSONALIZATION & INTENT DATA PLAY IN TAILORING ABM CAMPAIGNS

with ZoomInfo's Lauren McHugh

While there's a general ABM blueprint, specific strategies vary from company to company. While most marketers already utilize an ABM strategy or at least recognize they need to implement one, the importance of intent data emerges front and center to increase personalization and scale campaigns.

To learn more about the role intent data plays in structuring ABM strategies, the *Demand Gen Report* team sat down with Lauren McHugh, Sr. Product Marketing Manager of ZoomInfo.

Demand Gen Report: *In your opinion, what's the current state of ABM? What are some of the key trends you're seeing in the space?*

Lauren McHugh: ABM is still a very broad term that can cover a variety of strategies that marketers use to drive pipeline. Though most marketing teams have developed a form of an ABM strategy, it varies from company to company. One thing that continues to challenge marketers is getting the right data aligned from marketing campaigns to sales calls to help scale personalization strategies.

Another trend I continue to see is marketers refining the process around account selection and engagement, which includes having ABM communities for peers to learn from each other.

DGR: *How can marketers refine their ABM strategies for maximum effectiveness? What sort of role does content play here?*

McHugh: Marketers can achieve maximum effectiveness by having clear goals, content and audiences for each part of their strategy. For broader reach, organizations should focus on higher level content tailored to accounts that are just starting to show interest or intent. For more targeted strategies, content should be personalized based on the target account's interest and their online actions.

Content assets across each stage of the funnel should vary in levels of customization.



DGR: How can marketers successfully operationalize data to fuel their ABM programs?

McHugh: Having clean and consistent data is the key to success. Whether the data is housed within an organization's marketing automation platform or customer data platform, it must be actionable — especially if marketers are building insight-driven, next-best actions.

DGR: Have you seen the prominence of intent data in ABM strategies increase over the past couple years? What do you think is fueling the increased reliance on intent?

McHugh: Intent data usage has increased significantly over the years. Most buyers are researching all aspects of a company before even raising their hands to be contacted, which often pits companies head-to-head against their competitors for sales. When trying to beat their competition to the table, many organizations are turning to intent data to generate insights into buyer research before accounts initiate outreach.

DGR: What are the key metrics marketers should be tracking to identify ABM success?

McHugh: Whether it's for demand gen or ABM, pipeline attribution is a key indicator of marketing success — marketers aren't successful unless they're bringing leads to sales that turn into pipeline. Additional metrics include:

- The conversion rate of MQLs to SQLs;
- Conversions rate quarter over quarter; and
- Website click-through rates and page visits.

DGR: As ABM transitions into ABX, what are some key steps to success marketers should keep in mind?

McHugh: The first step to success with ABX is having clear alignment on where accounts are in their buying journey. Then, organizations must ensure their data is up to date and consistent across marketing campaigns and sales engagement. Finally, marketing teams should identify and track KPIs in conjunction with sales. Key components include:

- Clean and accurate data;
- Integrations into key marketing technologies for consistent reporting and tracking;
- Engaging website to convert visitors driven by campaigns; and
- Sales and marketing alignment across the entire portfolio and strategy.



CONCLUSION

ABM strategy is morphing into an approach that is more experiential and addresses obstacles to growth and aligns with competitive positioning and expansion plans.

"It's not enough to have a few pieces of relevant content, some ads and a 'free trial' CTA," Straetz said. Instead, she explained that content must build the organization's trust and connection to your brand at all stages.

The goal of ABX is to garner trust and put a brand in the spotlight with personalized messaging with a bevy of individual stakeholders and rolling that out to the account level. The way to achieve those objectives is to build a marketing stack that can provide an engaging experience with decision-makers at targeted accounts.



MRP Prelytix is the only enterprise-class predictive ABM platform. For organizations that serve multiple partners, lines of business, geographies, or industries, MRP Prelytix is the only ABM platform to empower sales and marketing teams to simplify their environment's complexity and produce measurable and high-performance conversion, pipeline velocity, and closed revenue. Applying the industry's only real-time predictive analytics and data management, we fuel 1,000 ABM programs across six continents to coordinate, execute, and optimize their ABM programs using eight channels, produced in 20 languages. Powered by Kx, Prelytix sits on top of the fastest streaming analytics database in the world. For more information visit: www.mrpf.com

215.587.8800

MRPFD.COM/CONTACT-US/



Accelerate your growth with ZoomInfo, an Inc. 5000 company. ZoomInfo's Growth Acceleration Platform offers the most accurate and actionable B2B contact and company intelligence to help organizations accelerate growth and profitability. The continuously updated database enables sales and marketing teams to execute more effective marketing campaigns and improve sales prospecting efforts with access to on demand direct dial phone numbers, email addresses, and background information.

866.904.9666

INFO@ZOOMINFO.COM



RollWorks offers ambitious B2B companies an account-based platform to align marketing and sales teams and confidently grow revenue. Powered by proprietary data and machine learning, we can help do it all — from identifying your targets to engaging them across channels and measuring revenue impact.

INFO@ROLLWORKS.COM





In a market full of hype, PeerSpot's Buying Intelligence Platform is where tech pros go to get practical, reliable information on enterprise tech - so they can be sure what they buy is exactly what they need. Powered by the world's largest community of enterprise tech buyers, PeerSpot provides in-depth reviews, online forums, direct Q&A support and more, giving professionals the confidence to make the right decision and the happiness of reality meeting expectations.

646.328.1944

MARKETING.PEERSPOT.COM/CONTACT-US/



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.

201.257.8528

INFO@DEMANDGENREPORT.COM



KIM ZIMMERMANN, CONTRIBUTING WRITER