

2023

# ABM

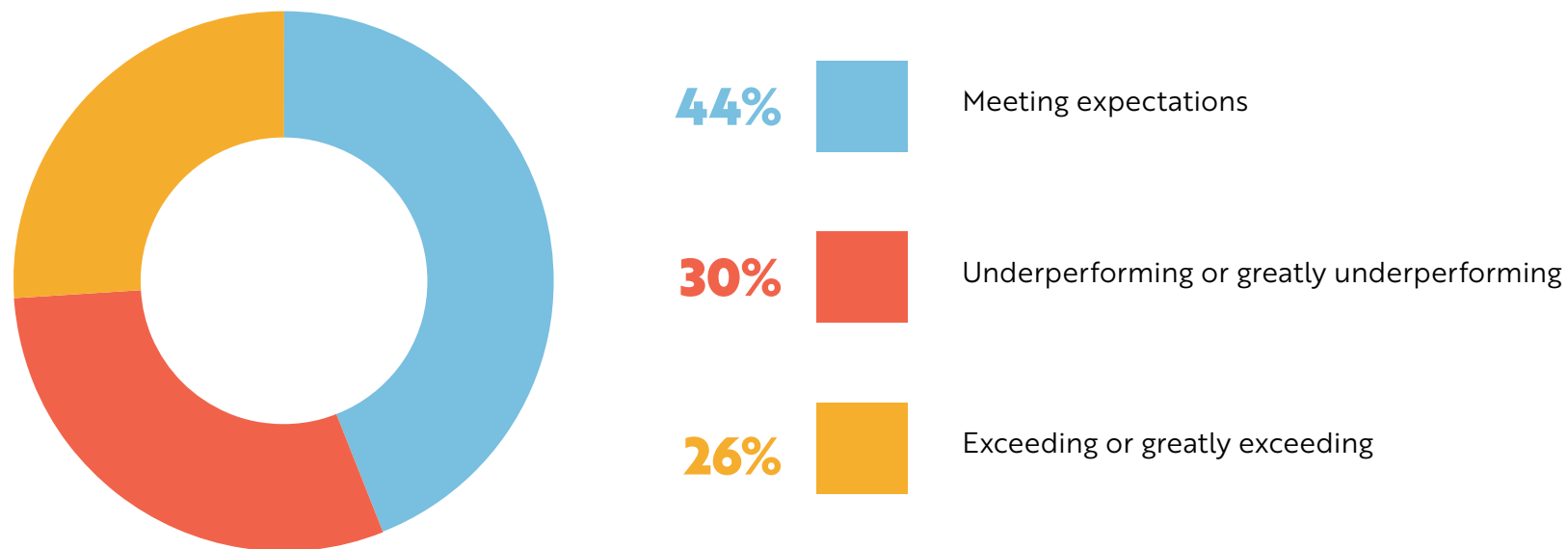
## BENCHMARK SURVEY

Orgs Increasing ABM &  
Demand Gen Integration;  
Focusing On New Tech &  
Data Sources



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than two-thirds (67%) of practitioners are leveraging an account-based marketing (ABM) strategy — and for those who aren't, 81% plan to adopt an ABM approach within the next year. Given the (soon-to-be) wider spread of ABM adoption, the “2023 ABM Benchmark Survey” revealed the nuances of each company's account-based strategies. Specifically, practitioners' views of their strategy's success varied greatly, as most marketers were merely meeting expectations and nearly one-third were underperforming.



When unpacking those numbers, it's clear that more successful ABM strategies are those that are older, more mature and, by default, more advanced. In other words, companies that have been running ABM plays longer often see better results. For example:

- 51% of under-performing campaigns have been running for more than 1 year, compared to 66% of high-performing ABM campaigns; and
- 49% of under-performing campaigns have been running for less than 1 year, compared to 34% for high-performers.

With the first-year slump in mind, the top challenges of lower-performing strategies include scaling existing efforts and lack of internal resources — but more on that later. Throughout this survey report, we'll examine the current state of ABM to understand practitioners' creation and deployment of ABM campaigns. Notable findings include:

- The increased integration of demand generation and ABM to enable stronger personalization and account targeting;
- The top technologies and partnership opportunities companies are relying on;
- The specific datasets practitioners are relying on, with insights into how successful companies are enriching and cleansing their data;
- The most popular content messaging, formats and channels; and
- The top benefits marketers derive from their ABM campaigns.

## INTEGRATING DEMAND GEN & ABM EFFORTS; FOCUSING ON TECH

When asked how they'd best describe their ABM initiatives, survey respondents noted that they:

Practice 1: Few strategies



Use their current tech stack to target certain accounts



Practice 1: Many strategies



Practice 1: 1 strategies



Have a dedicated ABM platform integrated into their tech stack to streamline efforts



As marketers advance and grow their ABM programs, they're taking technology and platforms under more consideration. Notably, just 26% of marketers used a dedicated ABM platform in 2022, representing a 7% increase year-over-year. With the baseline of ABM execution solidly drawn, practitioners are orchestrating and deploying those strategies by:

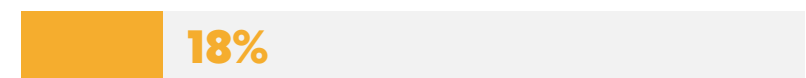
Integrating demand gen and ABM processes to streamline marketing efforts



Prioritizing traditional demand gen over ABM efforts

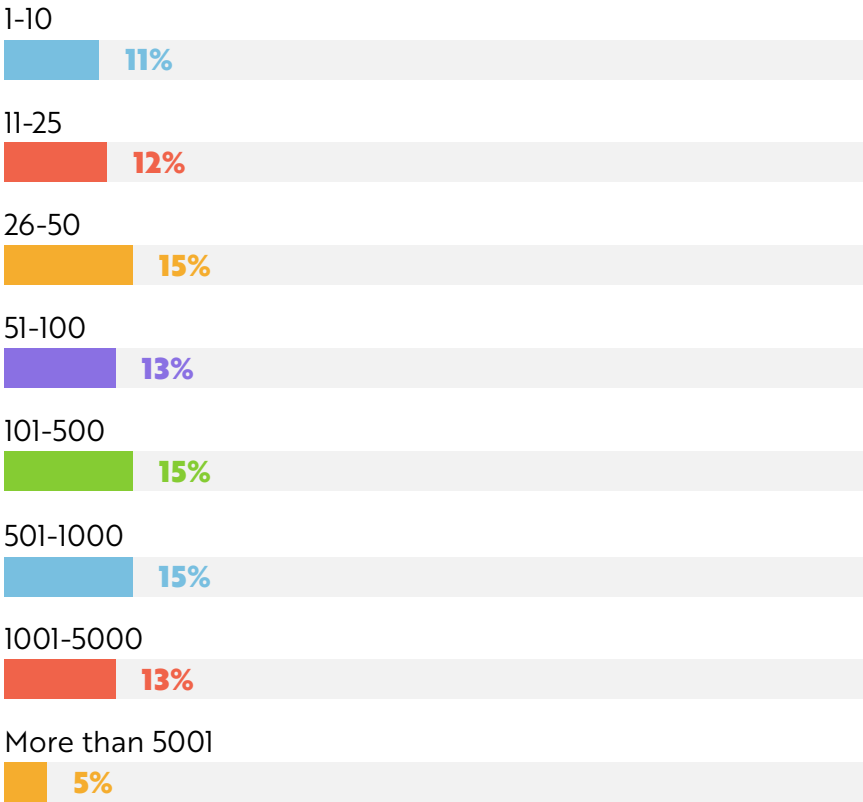


Prioritizing ABM over traditional demand gen efforts

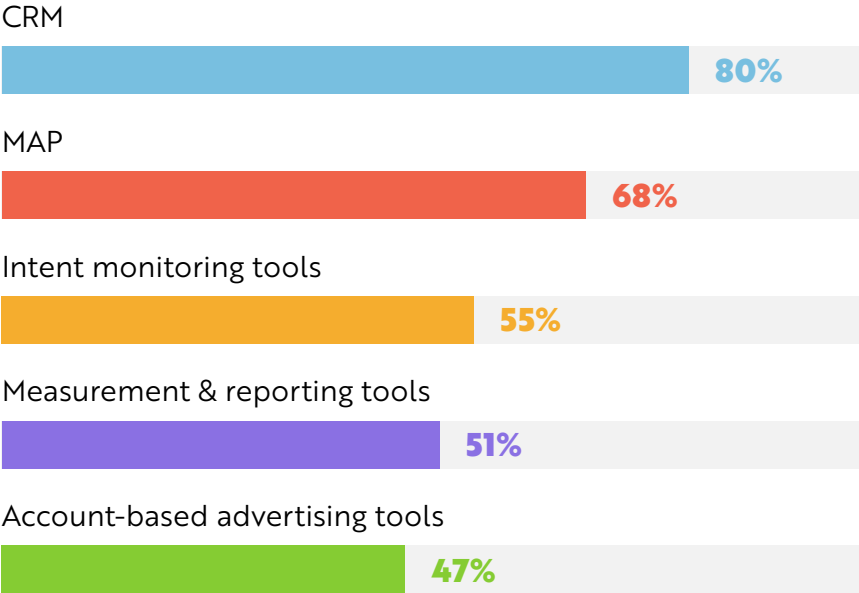


When broken down by leaders and laggards, overachievers are more likely to operate with integrated demand gen and ABM processes (66%), while most underachievers focused more on prioritizing traditional demand gen over ABM (60%). This reflects the more sophisticated nature of successful ABM campaigns, as the integration of these two strategies enables stronger personalization and better account targeting.

Speaking of accounts targeted, there’s no real “sweet spot” of accounts to target. Instead, practitioners were across the board when asked about how many people they target in their ABM programs:



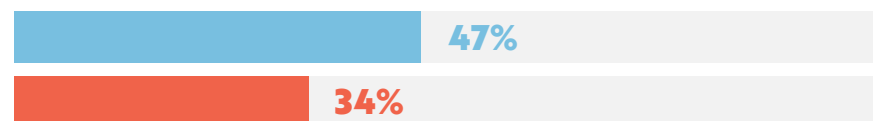
Given the sheer number of accounts certain organizations target, it makes sense that they’re increasing their reliance on various technologies to power their strategies. Specifically, the top tools marketers currently utilize to support their ABM strategy include:



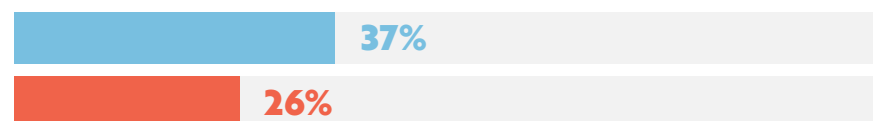
While the top five tools were consistent between high-performers and low-performers, there were some notable differences outside of the top spots. For instance, leaders were more likely to leverage:

■ High-performers ■ Low-performers

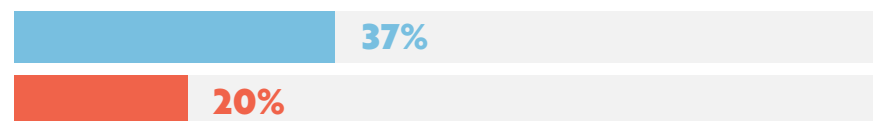
#### Insights and intelligence tools



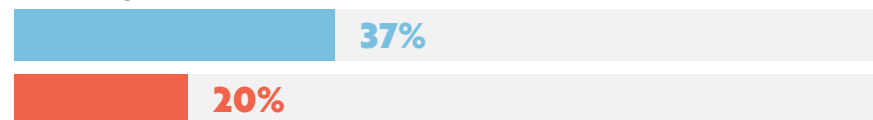
#### Web/content personalization



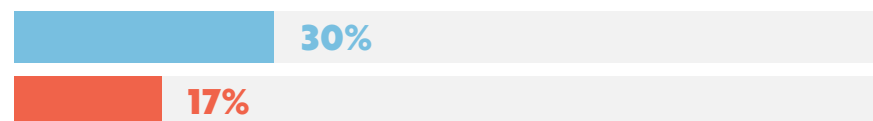
#### Lead-to-account matching



#### Data augmentation tools



#### Content management tools



Given the advanced nature of ABM strategies in 2023, it's not surprising that practitioners are grappling with multiple challenges. Specifically, their top-three struggles include:

#### Aligning marketing and sales



#### Proving ROI/Attribution



#### Personalization at scale toward target accounts



While the top three challenges remained consistent year-over-year, two long-term struggles dropped off in 2023: Identifying/predicting accounts that are in-market and developing targeted content for specific accounts or personas. Usurping those two from the top five are:

#### Lack of internal resources



#### Scaling existing ABM efforts



Both challenges are closely related, as scaling efforts typically require more resources to assist with the expansion. However, the unpredictably volatile market is undoubtedly responsible for the shift in leadership, which implies an economic course correction will help remedy those issues and enable expansion efforts.

## FIRMOGRAPHIC & TECHNOGRAPHIC DATA TAKE PRIORITY

Of course, accounts don't magically appear in practitioners' pipeline. When respondents are thinking about accounts to include in their existing or potential ABM program:

- 47% have a strong handle on their ICP with room to improve coverage;
- 38% agree that sales and marketing are aligned on ICP and already have strong coverage;
- 37% are using intent tools to identify/predict new accounts or industries to target;
- 36% can identify their ICP using standard firmographics and technographics; and
- 27% are still trying to define and strengthen their grasp on their ICP.

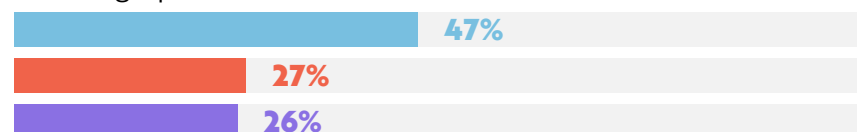
In terms of the data powering those strategies, practitioners across the board are balancing a mix of firmographic, technographic, behavioral/intent signals, predictive analytics and sales-selected leads. Specifically:

Currently use Plan to use Have no plan to use

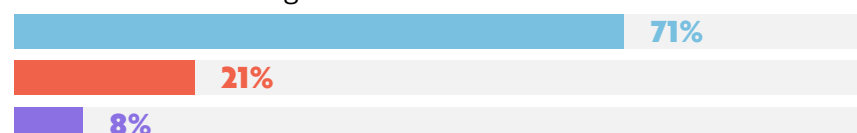
### Firmographic



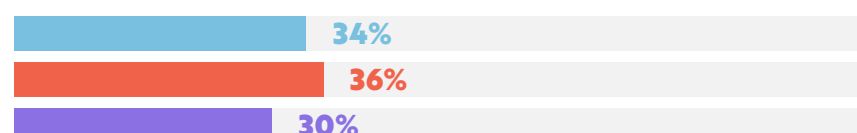
### Technographic



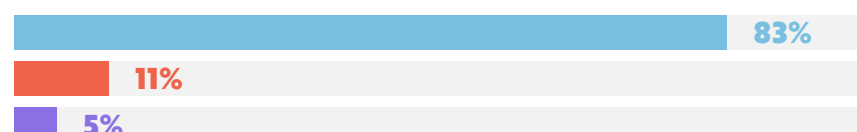
### Behavioral/intent signals



### Predictive



### Sales team-selected



Most notably, the use of firmographic — 55% in 2022 — and behavioral/intent signals — 60% in 2022 — sharply increased year-over-year, while the use of predictive analytics saw a heavy decrease from 47% in 2022. However, it's important to view those changes through the 2023 economic lens: Maintaining and improving predictive models can be resource- and time-intensive — and marketers are in short supply of both.

For the practitioners that are leveraging predictive analytics, 34% currently work with a predictive analytics provider to build a list of likely buyers, while 27% have plans to form a similar partnership.

Still, marketers that aren't leveraging a predictive analytics partner are forming partnerships elsewhere: 65% currently work with data providers to identify target roles and titles, and another 53% leverage a data provider to enrich existing contact information. In terms of solution providers, 44% currently have a partnership with a provider and 28% plan to form one in the next year.

As budgets remain small and unstable, there is an increased number of practitioners who are performing manual, internal research to augment account profiles — 84%, compared to 70% in 2022. However, this isn't a trend that's anticipated to hang around; instead, it's likely a temporary measure given the economic climate.

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## FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS, SHORTER MESSAGING SHAPING ABM OUTREACH

If data is the meat-and-potatoes of ABM, then content serves as the garnish. When asked what types of messaging and content practitioners are leveraging in their ABM outreach, survey respondents pointed to:

Targeted content based on account challenges/needs



Targeted content tailored to specific industries



Targeted content tailored to specific roles



Templated versions of generic content with some customization



Personalized/custom content for each account



When broken down by high performers and underachievers, those exceeding their ABM expectations are more likely to tailor content to specific industries and roles, while those underperforming are most likely to leverage templated versions of generic content. The distinction here is clear: More personalization means better results.

In terms of the content delivering those messages, the top five formats include:

Case studies



Articles/blogs



Guides/E-books



White papers

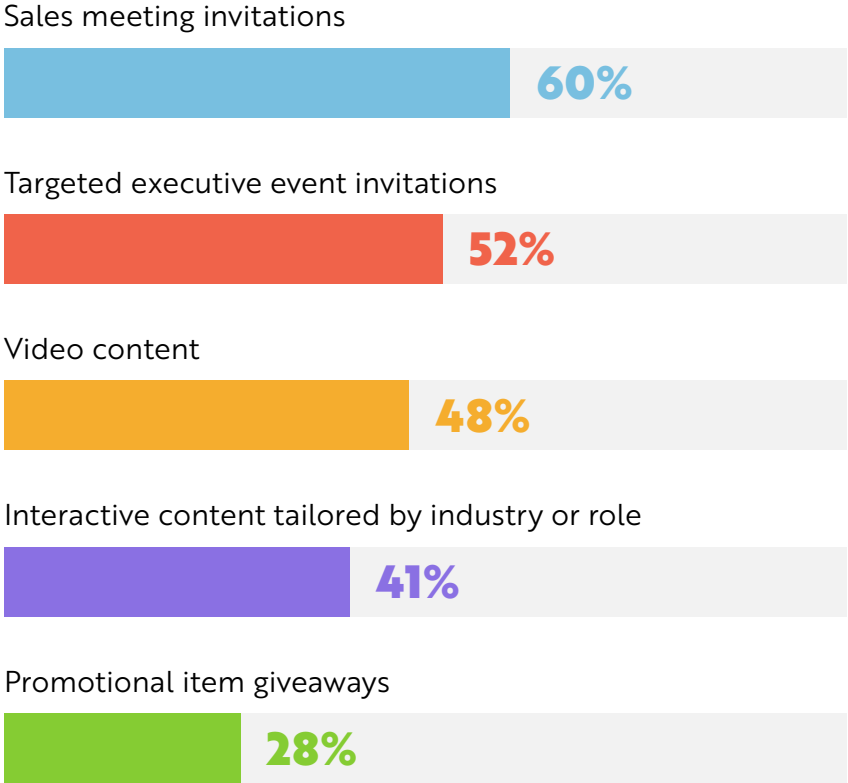


Research



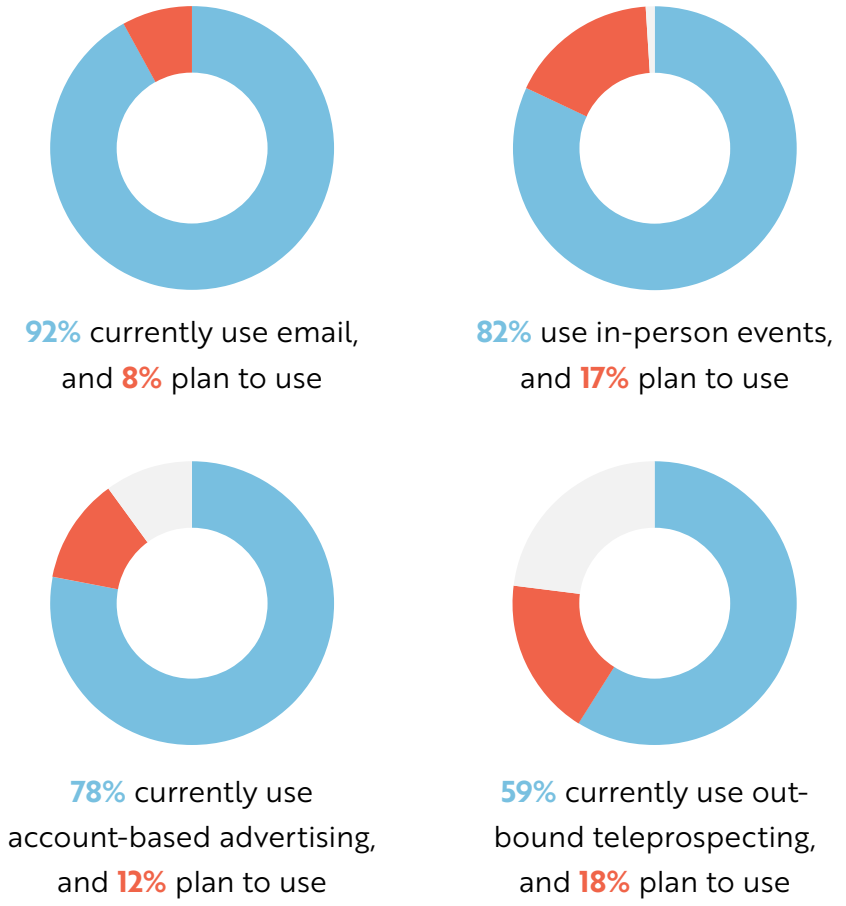
Case studies and articles/blogs saw a meteoric rise year-over-year, as only 62% of practitioners leveraged case studies and just 55% relied on articles/blogs last year. Another notable area that saw a sharp increase from 2022 was video content (47% versus 33%), with several write-in responses pointing to webinars as the main vehicle to convey video messaging.

Following the content thread, the delivery experiences they provide are just as important. When practitioners were asked about the current experiences they offer as part of their ABM initiatives, they pointed to:



Sales meetings, in particular, skyrocketed year-over-year, as only 44% of respondents in 2022 leveraged them as part of their ABM strategies. This doubles-down on companies' stronger handle on their ICP, as they feel the accounts they're engaging with are more qualified and likely to convert.

Over on content engagement, there are four key channels that practitioners leverage:



As noted earlier, practitioners aren't completely alone in their ABM initiatives. In addition to partnering with solution and data providers, organizations are turning to agency and consulting partners. The top reasons companies opt for outside help include:

Setting an overall ABM strategy



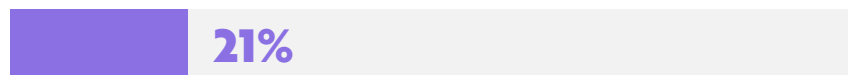
Developing content assets



Designing creative/campaign themes



Seeking alignment between marketing and sales



In addition to partnering with solution and data providers, organizations are turning to agency and consulting partners for help with ABM initiatives.

## CONCLUSION

Success comes in many forms, and measuring the outcomes of ABM strategies is no different. When asked how they're measuring their ABM efforts, respondents pointed to:

Net-new accounts engaged



Number of qualified leads



Win rates



Pipeline velocity



Contribution to pipeline revenue



The focus on pipeline contributions continues to grow, as pipeline velocity was only prioritized by 40% of marketers in 2022, while total pipeline contribution came in at 43%. This demonstrates that organizations are viewing ABM successes holistically.

In terms of keeping account lists fresh, just over one-third of marketers made changes and additions quarterly, while 20% reviewed their lists monthly. However, what's more telling is the write-in responses: Several practitioners indicated that list reviews are an ongoing, daily process.

ABM strategies are a proven method to better engage and personalize assets to target accounts. When asked about the positive impacts ABM initiatives have on their businesses, respondents pointed to:

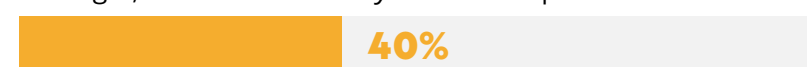
Better sales and marketing alignment



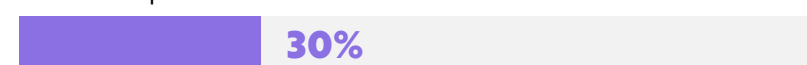
More efficient use of marketing resources



Stronger, more trustworthy relationships



A clearer path to ROI



Marketers are increasingly taking technology and platforms into consideration as they advance and grow their ABM programs. It's clear that ABM's evolution will undoubtedly continue, with technology, data analytics personalization poised to play pivotal roles.



Salesforce is the world's #1 CRM. For top retailers worldwide, Salesforce puts shopping at the center of every experience with AI + Data + CRM. Learn how Salesforce drives costs down and loyalty up for top retailers worldwide with custom-built industry solutions [here](#). Ready for peak shopping season? Get real-time data from 1 billion global shoppers to power retail success [now](#).



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