

WHAT'S WORKING IN INTENT-BASED STRATEGIES?

Sales & Marketing Teams Turning To Signal
Data To Inform Content Offers & Channel
Mix To Reach Buyers At Key Stages



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— DAVID LEWIS, DEMANDGEN


Introduction

Context and relevance are table stakes in B2B marketing and selling, as buyers expect vendors to understand their needs, pain points and expectations. With that said, progressive organizations are utilizing intent data as a foundational layer of their go-to-market efforts.

Research from *Demand Gen Report* shows that more than half (**53%**) of B2B companies identified intent data as their top priority for intelligence they want to collect about their target audience. The result of this surge in interest in signal data has been an expanded list of data sources that can include third-party intent providers, solutions designed to help companies garner intent signals from their first-party data, as well as the intent signals used in many of the demand generation, ABM and content syndication platforms available.

Initially, B2B companies tested the waters with intent data to fuel account and lead prioritization. However, experts agree that intent data has grown past its initial use case to begin to help address key pain points in B2B companies' go-to-market initiatives — including channel selection, TAM assessment and personalization strategies.

“As the world has been very rapidly shifting to engagement and commerce happening online, technology has been keeping up with that shift,” said David Lewis, CEO of **DemandGen**, a demand generation and lead management consultancy. “Historically, when people were in shopping mode and buying mode, they'd enter a retail store. And the visual cues from buyers were picked up by people within those retail stores. So, we were able to see different stages of the buying process in retail. What intent data enables us to do is look for that digital body language online.”



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— JESSIE COAN, ABERDEEN

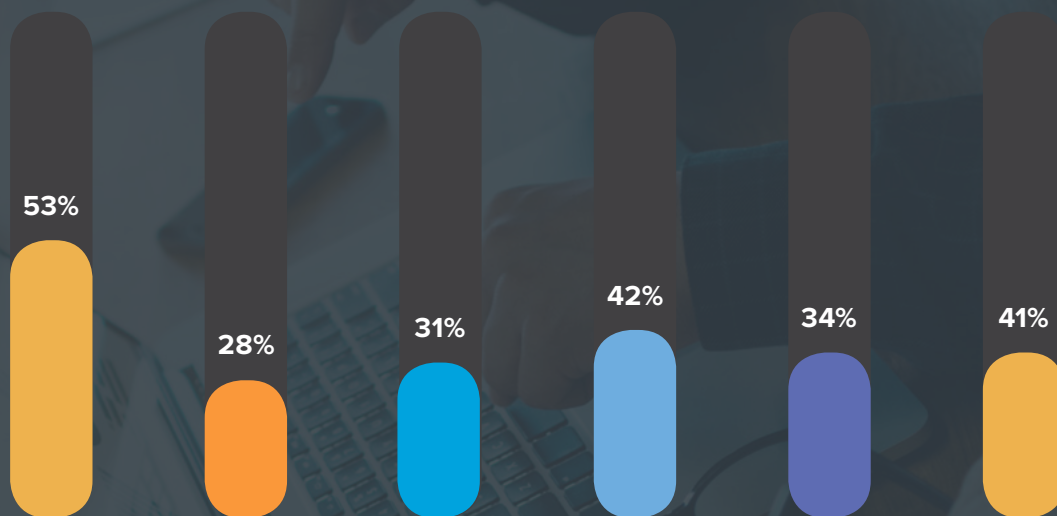
Experts added that, with the help of intent data, sales and marketing teams are now positioning themselves to offer the personalized customer experiences buyers have come to expect. These efforts fueled by intent can ultimately streamline the sales cycle by ensuring accounts and leads are being engaged when and where they want with relevant messaging.

“Intent basically changes the way marketing and sales need to conduct business, as it changes the landscape of how marketing and sales do their jobs,” said Jessie Coan, VP of Marketing for **Aberdeen**, provider of intent-based marketing and sales solutions. “It allows both marketing and sales to know that the effort they’re putting forth is headed in the right direction, rather than guessing. Marketing has done a wonderful job of trying to figure out a way to get ahead with intent as the proof. Ultimately, the confidence gained if you are implementing it correctly, consuming it correctly and using it correctly within your organization is incredible.”

This report will provide an assessment on how best-in-class B2B organizations are utilizing intent data throughout their entire organization. It will share expert insights from analysts and practitioners alike, highlighting specifically what’s working — and what’s not — with intent data in B2B marketing and sales, including:

- The current state of intent data as a practice in the marketplace;
- Where intent data is benefiting channel selection to optimize marketing and sales outreach;
- The impact of intent data on TAM assessment and personalization strategies;
- How intent data is driving results for content syndication initiatives;
- The value of first- and third-party intent data used in tandem; and
- An in-depth case study with LogMeIn, detailing how intent data is utilized in the company’s go-to-market initiatives.

INTENT DATA: BY THE NUMBERS



More than half (**53%**) of B2B companies identified intent data as their top priority for intelligence they want to collect about their target audience.

28% of practitioners struggle with identifying/predicting accounts that are in market and ready to purchase.

31% of B2B companies are challenged with developing target content for specific accounts or personas. — Demand Gen Report's [Account-Based Marketing Benchmark Survey](#)

42% of B2B marketers are prioritizing using intent and signal data to identify new opportunities in 2019 and beyond.

34% planned to test and deploy signal and intent data in 2019. — Demand Gen Report's [Demand Generation Benchmark Survey](#)

41% of organizations said they plan to spend more or significantly more on intent monitoring over the next 12 months. — SiriusDecisions, [2019 State of ABM Study](#)



LOGMEIN PRIORITIZES SPEND, NARROWS TARGETING WITH INTENT INSIGHTS

LogMeIn, a SaaS remote connectivity services provider, partners with a variety of intent data vendors to better understand how each of its business units are spending budget and prioritizing target accounts for all its key products.

The Challenge

As a large organization with multiple business units, each of which contains multiple products, prioritizing outreach and targeting is vital to ensure marketing spend is being allocated and used in a meaningful way. The company began to do some analysis and evaluation of intent versus regular ICP targeting based on firmographics and individual profiles in order to streamline efforts and better segment emails and content to the right audiences, according to Will Vasquez, Senior Marketing Manager for LogMeIn.

The Solution

Sam Welden, Sr. Manager of Corporate Marketing at LogMeIn, said LogMeIn has a wide variety of marketing data sources available at any given time across its business units. Employees across the organization currently use data from companies such as Bombora, MRP, Demandbase, DiscoverOrg, G2 and DemandWorks, among others.

“We are always striving to find the tool or tools that allow us to get the most ROI as we target different audiences for our various products,” said Welden.



“We've utilized intent data wherever we can, but it isn't necessarily the only silver bullet, right?” Vasquez added. “It is part of the technology layer that we look for. So, when vendors do have intent data, typically we participate in activating that. That participation usually means keywords or topical phrases. It could also include something more along the lines of branded search terms.”

For content syndication, LogMeIn uses **DemandWorks**, which utilizes its first-party intent data to prioritize outreach against the company's target account lists.

The Results

While the company is still experimenting with and learning from several different intent data providers, LogMeIn has seen some promising signs in terms of increased engagement rates and more efficient targeting. Welden added that the company will continue to test and measure its intent data usage to ensure marketing spend is driving results.

“The propensity for someone to open an email based on the content that the intent signal was showing a surge in or a higher level over indexing for that segment [resulted in] better open rates and better engagement rates,” said Vasquez.

“Intent data will definitely be part of the mix in LogMeIn's marketing efforts moving forward,” Welden concluded.



Intent Data Helps Boost Channel Identification

Intent data has become a unique source of insight for those looking to identify the “watering holes” their prospects leverage to educate themselves. This leads to enhanced targeting of an audience that may be off a B2B company’s radar.

Content syndication, in particular, is considered one such tactic benefiting greatly from deeper usage of intent and signal data. Research from Demand Gen Report shows that 30% of respondents consider content syndication a successful demand gen tactic, up from 24% in 2018. The practice is unique because it is helping companies expand their channels to generate new demand from new places. Expanding their total addressable market via syndication creates even more opportunities to drive top-of-funnel demand.

“From a content perspective, [intent data] allows content marketers to be confident in what they're saying, because they know who they're saying it to,” said Coan. “Within the buyer’s journey, you're able to understand how and when people are consuming content, who's consuming it and all the activity around it.”

Experts noted that intent data also has a clear impact on orchestration solutions and practices within B2B organizations because it can provide a deeper understanding of the audience, while also positioning users to leverage that insight across multiple channels at scale.




“With the right orchestration, what marketers can do is identify the needs of an audience and their intent, then they can match it to content,” said Mark Ogne, Founder and CEO of **ABM Consortium**, an ABM advisory and analyst firm. “I can serve content based upon that, and the delivery through two and a half times more channels.”

The value doesn’t necessarily come from the increased number of channels to market through — it is more about how intent positions reps to have more valuable conversations at scale, according to Ogne. “From a first- and third-party data perspective, understanding what the needs of the audience are and honing that relationship at a segment level allows you to start scaling that intimacy many take for granted,” he said.

That intimacy across a variety of channels can also have a positive impact on account-based marketing initiatives, according to Coan.

“There’s lots of teams that are ABM focused and have had challenges being as successful as they hoped,” she said. “But with ABM, tied with the right intent data, you can get really targeted with what you’re saying to that account at that given moment.”



DEMANDWORKS CO-FOUNDER HIGHLIGHTS INTENT DATA'S ABILITY TO DRIVE ABM, SYNDICATION & MORE

Intent data plays a key role in DemandWorks' success. In a conversation with Demand Gen Report, Co-Founder Mat Phillips, shares his perspective on the current state of intent data and how it has impacted his company's relationship with clients. Phillips dives into why intent data has helped ABM grow and the value it brings to overall go-to-market initiatives.

***Demand Gen Report:** What, in your opinion, is the current state of intent data as a practice in the B2B marketplace?*

Mat Phillips: The demand for intent based data is growing rapidly, but there is often confusion around what "intent" really means. Is the intent data first- or third-party? How is the data being collected, collated and scored? Is intent being monitored at the company or contact level? In addition, the term "intent" can mean different things to different vendors and customers.

***DGR:** How has ABM as a practice benefited from the use of intent signals in go-to-market initiatives?*

Phillips: ABM activity has grown tremendously as a result of "intent" signals, with "intent" arguably now being the main driver of ABM. Historically, account lists were compiled based on territory or industry or install bases, and to a certain degree, that's true today. But when overlaid with powerful intent signals, it's like hitting the turbo-boost button on campaign ROI.



DGR: Do you believe intent data has become a backbone to effective content syndication best practices? How specifically does intent data impact DemandWorks' offerings?

Phillips: Intent data has played an integral part of DemandWorks' success since inception. Indeed, it would be fair to say the company was founded on delivering the right content to the right buyer, at the right time, with intent signals providing the backbone of incredible ROI. For **DemandWorks**, intent was baked into our solutions from day one, even if clients weren't aware. And that's a key point to understand; Customers don't have to request an "intent-based" campaign. For DemandWorks, there's no other way. Because of this our clients continue to report strong ROI, and it's also why clients who took the leap with us in early 2015 continue to be our best customers.

DGR: In your opinion, how valuable is utilizing both first- and third-party data in go-to-market initiatives?

Phillips: DemandWorks relies on first-party data gathered at the contact level, which is a key distinction with other intent offerings. We often hear how companies are "surging" or "in-market," but the reality is, when trying to sell into large enterprise accounts, there are potentially hundreds of buyers and budget holders. The key with DemandWorks' first-party intent data is targeting the specific buyer at the right time — the decision maker who can pull the trigger when the time is right!



“Scale is not a substitute for intimacy, all this conversation on intent data is about trying to understand the needs of your audience.”

— MARK OGNE, ABM CONSORTIUM

Intent Signals Helping Companies Scale Customer Experience Across The Full Buying Journey

Along with identifying the right prospects to engage and where to engage with them, intent data also positions companies to scale out their TAM and personalize experiences for segmented audiences. Experts agreed that this will ultimately lead to more targeted, personalized experiences for customers, as the brand scales its efforts and leverages these intent signals throughout its go-to-market initiatives.

“Scale is not a substitute for intimacy,” said Ogne. “All this conversation on intent data is about trying to understand the needs of your audience.”

Ogne added that data management platforms, in particular, are leading the charge with automating first-party intent and ensuring each business unit is positioned to use that insight as they make decisions on their go-to-market strategy.

“Interestingly, they're also generally pretty good at operationalizing the intent data,” he said. “They can onboard that data and make it automated, rather than a manual effort for a marketing ops person.”

Experts added that intent data has its place throughout the entire customer journey, as well as a positive impact on personalizing experiences at every stage of the funnel. Andre Yee, CEO of **Triblio**, noted **during his 2019 Buyer Insights & Intelligence Series session** that, instead of applying intent data to solely top-of-funnel demand gen, you can activate intent deeper within the funnel by putting it in the hands of your sales team. The company can then coordinate messaging across your other channels to ensure messaging is consistent and continues to accelerate the deal.



“If you activate intent, you’re adding value to your account execs to engage on topics that are relevant to their prospects.”

— ANDRE YEE, TRIBLIO

Yee highlighted three specific methods for activating sales teams with intent data signals:

- **The “Competitive Box-Out:”** Analyzing third-party intent of competitors to position reps with insights to proactively counter the competition with the right information and messaging.
- **Focused Interest & Concerns:** Utilizing intent signals to uncover key interests and concerns within target accounts based on their website and content engagement.
- **Detecting “Ghost Replies:”** Identifying account activity on first- and third-party websites despite those accounts being unresponsive to sales inquiries.

“This is where you’re adding value to the selling process by giving them insight into the intent of buyers in the middle of what might be a very competitive selling cycle,” Yee concluded. “If you activate intent, you’re adding value to your account execs to engage on topics that are relevant to their prospects.”

While scale is always a goal, B2B businesses must focus that scale around creating intimate conversations that build meaningful relationships with target accounts and prospective customers.

“I think people are always worried about scale,” said Ogne. “So, they gravitate towards really immature versions of orchestration, in which its just more messages and channels. And that doesn't work because it lacks intimacy.”



DemandWorks' unique demand generation programs enable you to deliver your content, to the right buyer, at the right time, on any device. With personalized user experience, dynamic content, intent based targeting, mobile optimization, and custom 'pay for performance' pricing, you can be sure of 'guaranteed response' with some of the best conversion rates in the industry.

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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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