

# What is Account-Based Marketing, and is it Right for You?



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# Targeting Accounts



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## ABM is all about targeting.

Within every company's database there are certain high-value leads that enormously outweigh the collective value of lesser-known, smaller accounts.

By targeting only those high-end accounts, marketers forgo cold calls, mass emails and impersonal messaging. Everything is, in essence, hyper-specific and completely calculated to the few accounts at hand.

Onboarding three large clients in 2018 for a total revenue of \$6 million, for instance, is thus considered more efficient than onboarding 15 smaller clients for the same dollar amount.

That said, if a marketer whiffs and only collects two of those three big-brand accounts, the financial fallout is much more serious.



# Why ABM Stands Out From Traditional Digital Marketing



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In account-based marketing, you speak to businesses as a whole, which differs from many other types of marketing.

Because today's business decisions are jointly made by anywhere between seven and 20 stakeholders, traditional prospecting is growing more difficult. That's why ABM promotes the understanding of all the people within the stakeholder supply chain who comprise a single "account."

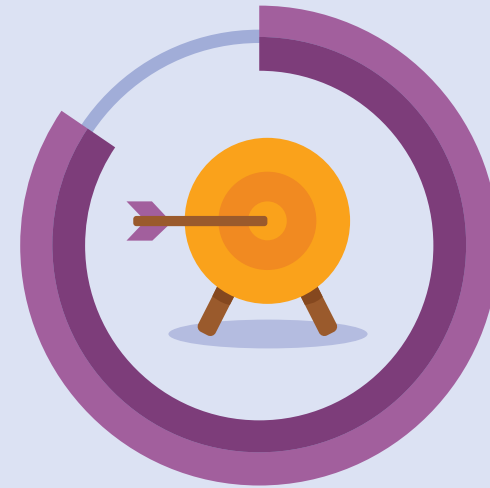
Inbound digital marketing relies on top-of-funnel assets that draw users in organically (aka you cast a very wide net). ABM does the reverse: **You remove soft leads from the equation entirely and focus only on companies that are very likely to become customers at some point.**

Within your target organizations, you then convince their stakeholders to advocate on your behalf (becoming brand champions).

# ABM by the Numbers: Who's Using it?

Consider that only 0.75 percent of leads result in closed revenue. So chasing millions of leads doesn't necessarily improve your sales pipeline or bottom line.

That's why **86 percent** of marketing and sales professionals state their organizations have implemented targeted account strategies, to some degree (only 20 percent have a dedicated ABM model). That said, 60 percent of B2B marketers intend to move toward a true ABM model in the near future.



Of those firms that have already experimented with ABM, **97 percent** report higher ROI relative to traditional marketing activities, and **85 percent** state that ABM allows for greater client retention and upsell opportunities.

The No. 1 challenge B2B marketers face is generating high-quality leads, so ABM is a natural next step for the vast majority of businesses.

# Benefits of a Sales-Enabled ABM Model

The overarching utility of an ABM model is a more seamless sales-marketing alliance. As every marketer can contest, uniting these two departments, or at least making them operate with the same mindset, is the organizational goal of goals. Sales reps then become marketing assets and marketing teams facilitate sales enablement.

More specifically, ABM benefits include:



Singular goals across departments.



Stronger user experiences for targeted decision-makers/stakeholders.



Higher ROI that's easier to track.



Less resource waste.



Better engagement and relevance.

If the old philosophy of “80 percent of your sales come from 20 percent of your clients” is true, why bother talking to everyone else?



# Common ABM Challenges

As stated, ABM is not without its drawbacks, and, at a basic level, smaller organizations will have an inherently more difficult time succeeding under this model.

That's because ABM:



Is very resource intensive.



Has a very narrow and slow sales funnel.



Requires automation tools that may be expensive.



May alienate other audience segments.



Necessitates a high level of skill in content production and personalization.

Allocating the vast majority of your marketing budget toward three accounts is very risky if your team or agency partner is not able to effectively execute on every touchpoint of the campaign for a sustained amount of time. One misstep could sink the entire account, thus sending one-third of your budget down the drain.

# Does ABM Work?



Whether ABM will work for your organization is completely dependent upon investment and execution. But, speaking from an industry standpoint, yes, ABM has been proven to drive results for those companies that have implemented it. **With 97 percent reporting higher ROI**, that's pretty conclusive evidence to argue against.

Marketers in 2018 are considering ABM a no-brainer, and you'll be hard-pressed to find a CEO who isn't interested in comprehensive sales and marketing alignment.

As martech capabilities expand, the ABM barrier to entry may be lowered for many B2B firms, making its adoption more ubiquitous moving forward.

ABM is shown to outperform traditional marketing in:



Close rates.



Customer lifetime value.



Contract value.



Accurate measurement and attribution.

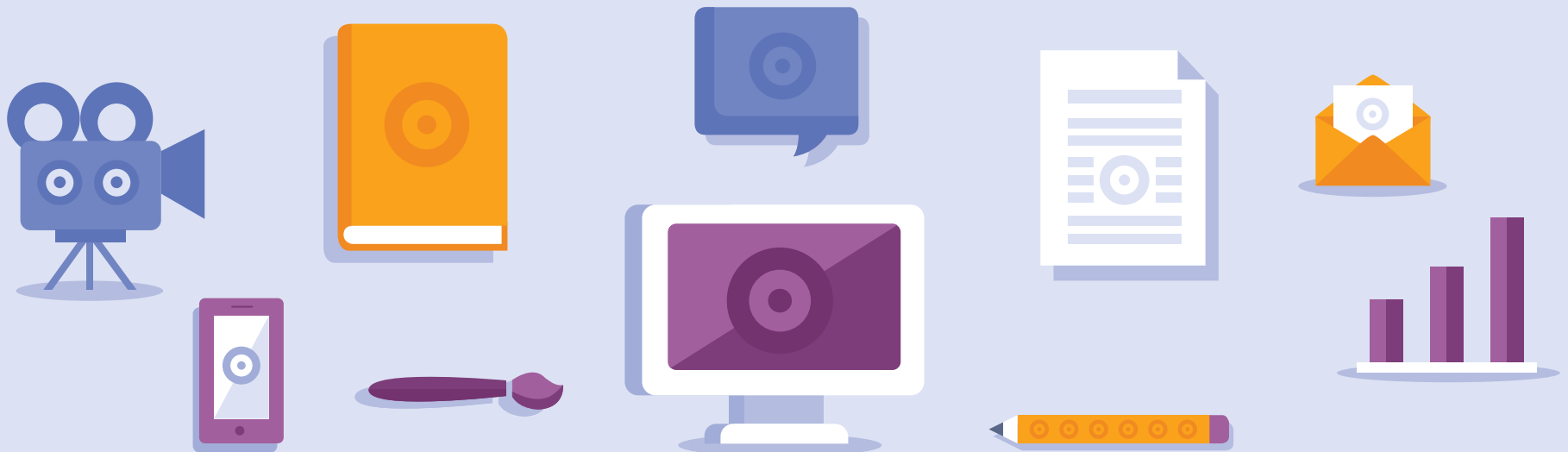
# Content Marketing with ABM

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B2B companies already have the ABM wind in their sails should they be interested in full-scale adoption. That's because the majority of businesses employ content marketing, an existing structure which ABM can complement.

The only way to create unique customer interactions is to produce content of all types. Email and social touchpoints must include content that's targeted and engaging, making ABM a perfect vehicle for which to ramp up content production.

In many ways, ABM is a natural evolution of content marketing.  
**It's marketing that's efficient and waste-free.**



# ABM in 2018: Is it Worth Your Time?



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Because it is so difficult to not only generate high-quality leads but to actually close those leads, every new marketing tactic is worth a try.

To ensure your ABM program is a surefire investment, conduct your due diligence first. Such items include:

- ✓ Do you have singular accounts large enough to support dropping all other marketing programs?
- ✓ Do you have the automation, talent and experience to stick to ABM for a full year?
- ✓ Are you able to make reasonable projections for sale cycles and deal sizes?
- ✓ How sophisticated are your current content and email marketing strategies?

Answering these questions should give you a better idea of whether ABM is in your cards in the near future.

# Conclusion



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ABM may be on the tips of marketer’s tongues, but for smaller teams with fewer resources, it’s likely not a realistic investment.

Because of the time, resource and labor commitments, ABM is more so a strategy for companies that are already well-versed in B2B marketing and have solid teams, pipelines and targeting tactics in place.

But that shouldn’t discourage marketers from at least integrating some of the core tenets of ABM into their programs in 2018, such as personalized campaigns, customer segmentation, lead qualification and sales alignment.

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