

From Inbound to Account-Based Marketing

HOW SAAS MARKETING LEADERS CAN
EMBRACE ABM TO DRIVE QUALIFIED
LEADS & PIPELINE



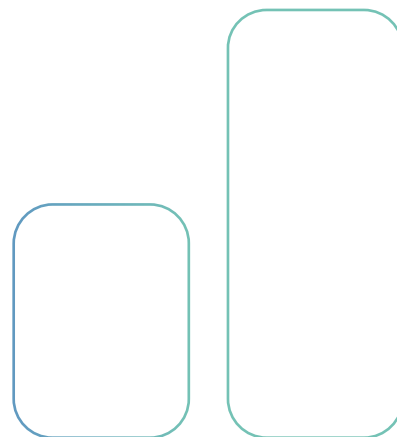
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 **Clutchgrowth**
SaaS Marketing

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01

Introduction

Introduction

Over the years, inbound marketing has brought many companies success. Creating quality content, educating prospects, and tailoring messaging for key personas has resulted in increased brand visibility, authority, and revenues.

In today's SaaS world, there's more noise than ever. It seems that your competition has caught on to the inbound approach.

That's why it's harder than ever for SaaS companies to get qualified leads for an affordable cost. Or secure the top search results for their content.

Sure, you're bringing in new leads, but are they high-quality contacts with the budget to buy your solution? More often than not, qualified leads are few and far between. And that means your sales team is going hungry.

THERE ARE SOME KEY REASONS FOR THE ELEVATED MARKETING NOISE YOUR SAAS COMPANY IS COMPETING AGAINST TODAY:

SaaS products have more features today than ever before

Venture-funded startups and SaaS giants have money to invest in various marketing channels, including advertising

Marketers have caught on to some of the tactics that have driven insane growth for unicorn companies, and are trying everything to achieve growth

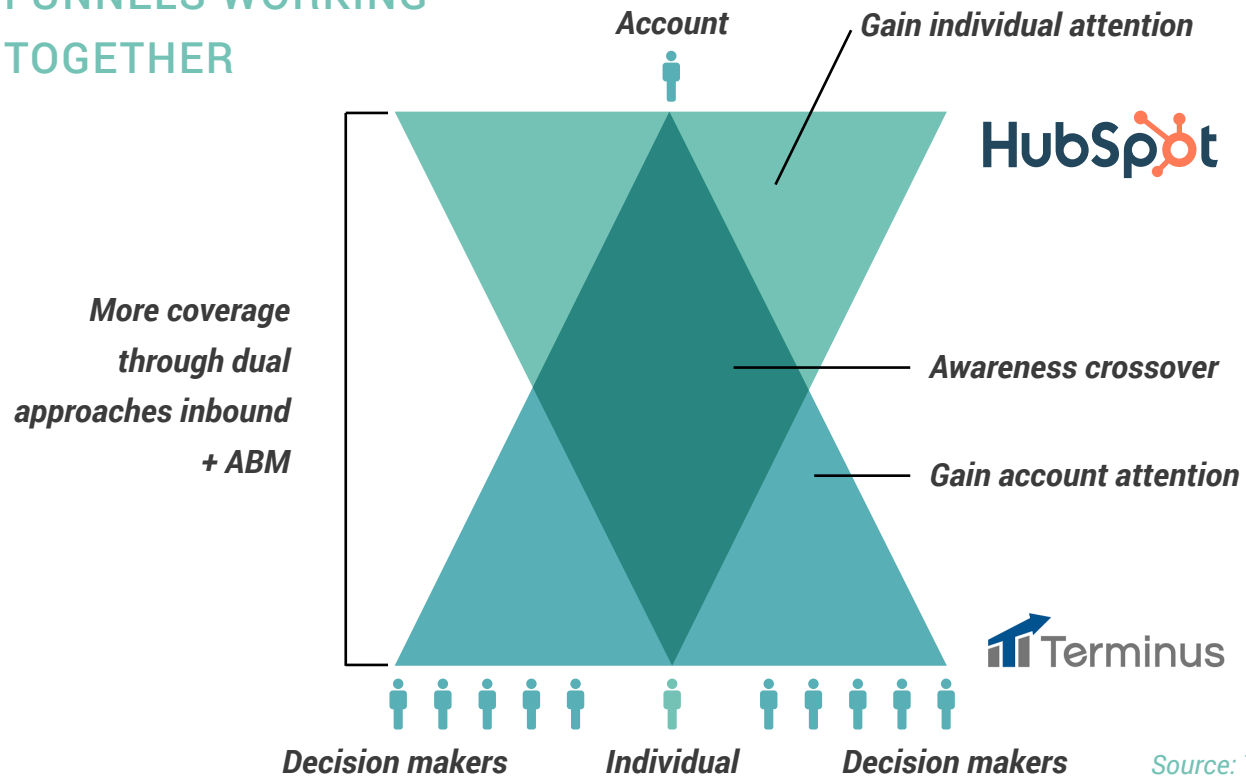
Prospective customers today want a solution that addresses their immediate needs and solves their core challenges.

These shifting dynamics have forced marketers to reconsider their approach. Instead of trying to win the market contact-by-contact, marketers are attempting to drive deeper personalization and relevance across the company-level.

As a result, interest in Account-based marketing has skyrocketed. With online and offline elements — and preceded by a more sophisticated focus on Enterprise accounts and key verticals — ABM forces Marketing to get more targeted in their efforts.

Today's smart SaaS marketing leaders are trying to supplement their inbound marketing efforts with a broader approach lower in the funnel.

FUNNELS WORKING TOGETHER



Instead of focusing on expanding the top-of-funnel alone, smart marketers want to gain attention from key decision makers at the companies that have the budget to afford their SaaS solutions. So ABM presents an expanded opportunity to marketing — to have a greater role in sales' success and in contribution to driving pipeline. It's an open invite... ready to accept it?



**ABM PRESENTS AN EXPANDED OPPORTUNITY
TO MARKETING — TO HAVE A GREATER ROLE
IN SALES' SUCCESS AND IN CONTRIBUTION
TO DRIVING PIPELINE. IT'S AN OPEN INVITE...
READY TO ACCEPT IT?**

Why do SaaS Companies need ABM?

SaaS companies have high Annual Contract Values (ACVs) and Lifetime Values (LTVs), and with higher prices comes longer sales cycles.

SaaS platforms today are often used by multiple teams and often integrate with solutions being used by other departments. So taking an account-level approach to marketing, and influencing key decision makers, is crucial for SaaS companies.

WHY SAAS COMPANIES NEED ABM

High ACV products require accounts with budget

Key competitors influence your prospects

Enterprise accounts have high LTVs

Move accounts through the funnel

Long sales cycles

Prospects often need integrated solutions across departments

Multiple decision makers and departments

Should I Abandon Inbound Marketing?

I'm not suggesting that you move 100% of your marketing budget into ABM. Inbound marketing can still be very effective. But as the bowtie funnel image illustrates above, inbound and ABM working together is a killer combination, if done right.

Allocating a percentage of your budget towards ABM will allow you to strategically target top Enterprise accounts, or accounts in a defined vertical, or ones that Sales is most excited to speak with. Or all of the above!

It's time to get Marketing, Sales Development, and Sales into a room and discuss an account-based approach. The more time you invest into creating a robust ABM plan and align with sales, the more likely you are to succeed.



*Want your ABM program to succeed?
It starts with proper planning.*

It all falls under Demand Generation

Account-based marketing exists under the umbrella of your demand generation marketing approach, along with inbound marketing.

Successful marketing teams position their marketing automation system, synced with the CRM, as the central component to demand generation. Here's where HubSpot comes in.

This guide helps embrace ABM while still using your HubSpot instance to manage all of the lead nurturing, scoring, persona-based marketing, and much more across all demand gen efforts. And you'll learn how to structure, execute, and optimize your ABM programs, along with dashboards and reports your team needs to have success with tracking it all in HubSpot.



HubSpot

Certified Partner

02

How to Structure Your ABM Program

How to Structure Your ABM Program

Internal Research and Alignment

Before you do anything, you need to take stock of what you know — the “known knowns”. Where are you today? It’s time to ask questions like:

Where is our brand positioned?

Who is interested in what products we sell?

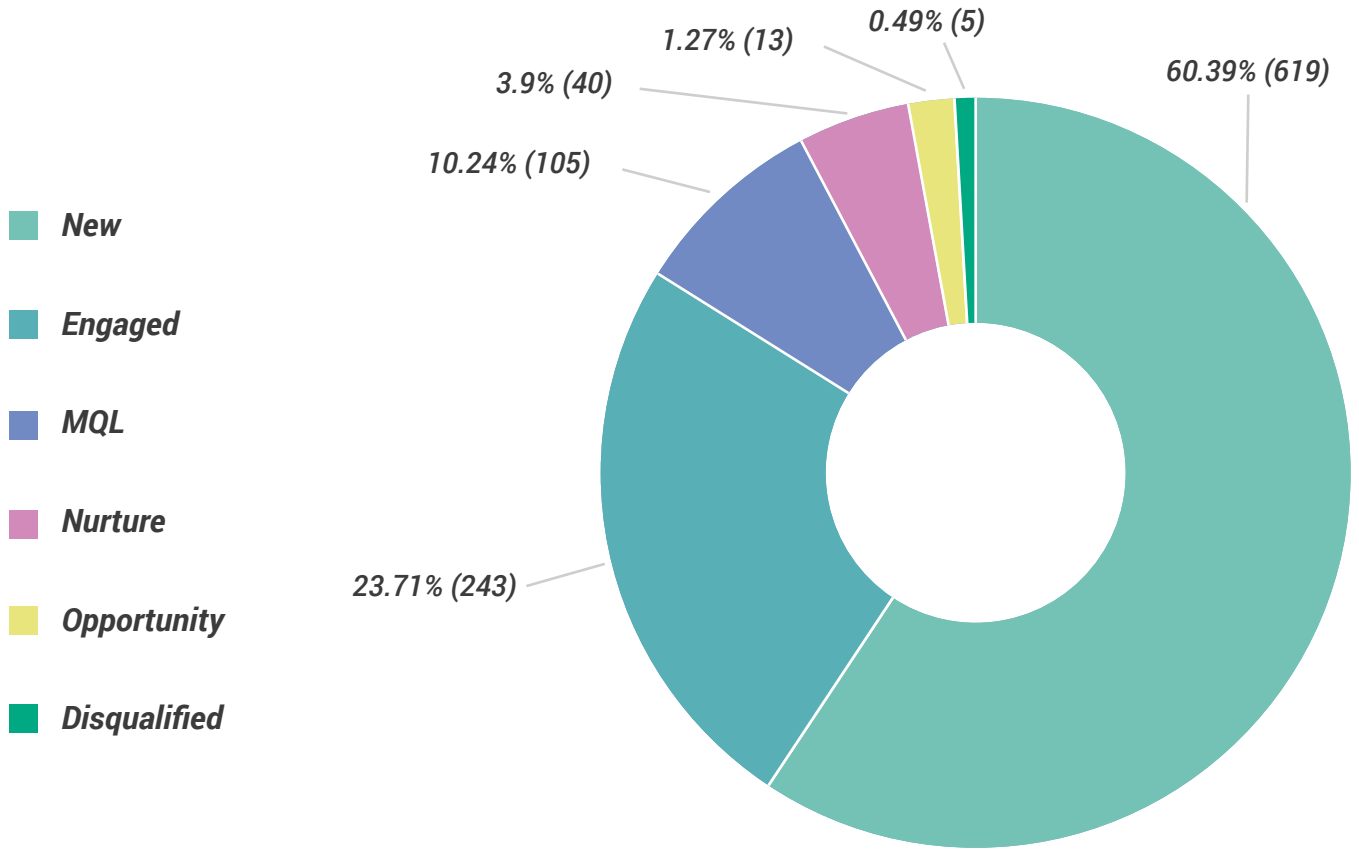
What’s happening in our industry right now?

In our demand gen funnel, where are we missing key opportunities?

Is Sales struggling to close larger deals?

Audit Your Demand Gen Funnel

The first step is an audit of your demand gen funnel, which can be done in collaboration with sales. How many leads does Marketing bring in? How many become MQLs? How many does Sales actually value? How many is Sales closing?



When you analyze it, you'll realize that Sales closes less — maybe much less — than 1% of the total leads Marketing brings in, if you're like most companies. That means that your inbound marketing is mostly bringing in leads that are not buyers.

Align With Your Sales Team

Who can you count on from your sales team? Studies show that when companies assign a leader to a project, it's 70% more likely to be a success. Who is your sales leader when it comes to ABM?

You also want to understand if your sales team is struggling to close larger deals. Sales actually speaks with prospective customers all day. If they're losing large accounts because your website doesn't currently show that you can serve big brands, you need to create case studies and success stories with similar companies in the market.

Marketing and Sales should each own a part of the ABM program in the form of service level agreements (SLAs). Before launching any program, you should understand who is responsible for what.

If Marketing is gung ho about ABM but Sales is not, I can almost guarantee your programs won't work. You need buy-in and ownership from Marketing, Sales Development, and Sales... from process to follow-through.



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Understand Your Target Audience

Of course as a marketer, you know that understanding your target audience is a must. So who is your target audience in your ABM program?



Are you selling a specific product to a specific persona? For example, your company built a CX platform, and the decision-makers you're targeting are only CX professionals.

Are you selling a product to specific teams? For example, CoSchedule is a content and social scheduler. They target content and social teams.

Are you selling a higher ACV, multi-faceted product across several teams? For example, HubSpot touches marketing, sales, and customer success.

Are you selling to people who aren't buyers at all, but can influence buyers? For example, Expensify very successfully markets to people who submit expense reports. Those users influence their accounting team to buy Expensify, as it's a simple solution that makes their reimbursement process faster and easier.

**ORGANIZATIONS WITH A STRONG IDEAL CUSTOMER PROFILE
(ICP) ACHIEVE 68% HIGHER ACCOUNT WIN RATES**

Source: TOPO 2019 Account Based Benchmark Report

Each of these forks in the road requires a different strategy. For example, if you're trying to sell to only one persona (e.g. LegalZoom to small business owners), you probably won't need to invest in an ABM tool that can target 19 different departments.

When you understand who you think your customer is, don't stop there. Create an Ideal Customer Profile (ICP). Organizations with a strong Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) achieve 68% higher account win rates (TOPO 2019 Account Based Benchmark Report).

The ICP impersonates your key customers. Each market segment will have its own ICP. To determine your ICP, list your top customer accounts and buyer personas. Find the common attributes like:

Industry

job titles

size of the organization

reasons they bought your solution

Primary pain points that drove them to your solution

Most important features of your product they wanted

The buyer journey they went through

Customer insights

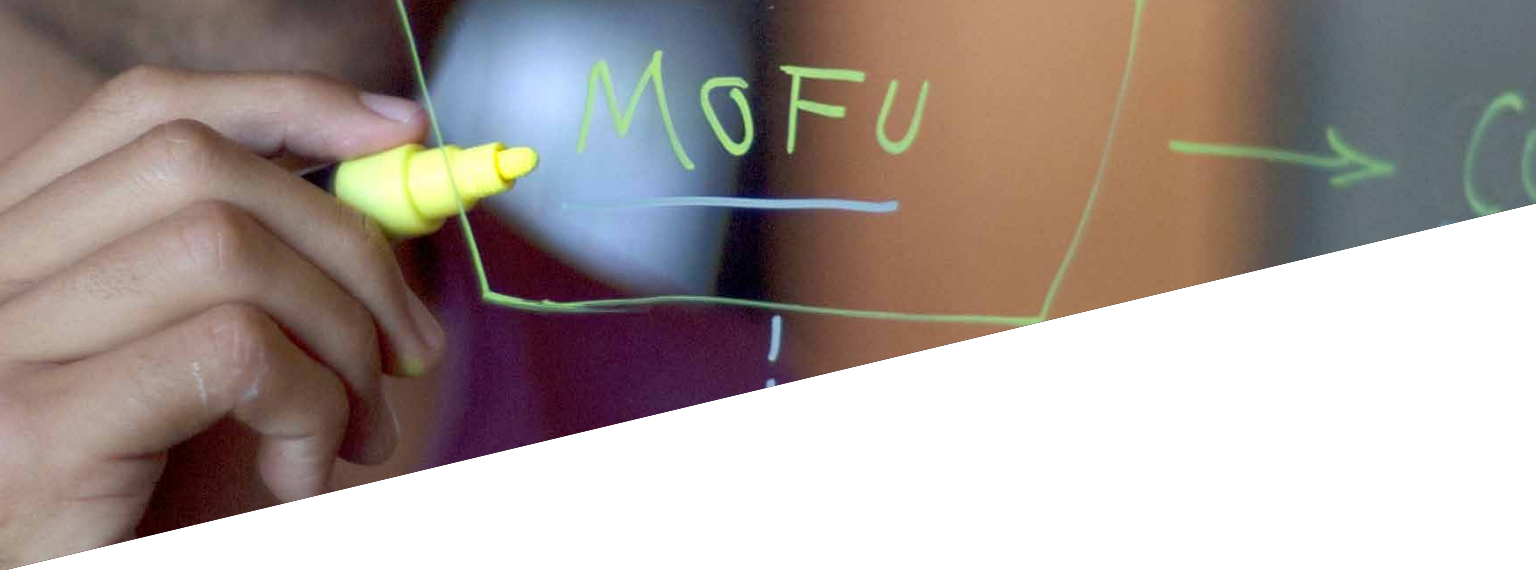
What will you get out of doing this exercise? A profile of your most valuable customers in each market segment. Having that template can help you identify “look-alike” audiences when you come across them, so it’s a worthwhile exercise.

Your Annual Contract Value and Sales Cycle

SaaS companies have wide ranges of annual contract values (ACVs). A SaaS business whose product is a content and social tool may have a \$2,000 average ACV, whereas one whose product is a robust all-in-one CRM may have a \$50,000 average ACV.

Another consideration is the length of the sales cycle, from first touch to contract signed. A \$2,000 ACV business may have a one-month average sales cycle and want to close 100 new deals a month. A \$50,000 ACV business may have a 9-month average sales cycle and want to close 10 new deals a month.

If your ACV is smaller, consider a volume-based approach to ABM. Targeting 100 companies may be a good pilot program, but you’ll need a much larger audience to see big wins. You’ll lose some personalization, but you can still understand the top features and benefits of your product and the key outcomes it drives for the customers you’re targeting. These findings will be leveraged in your ABM messaging.



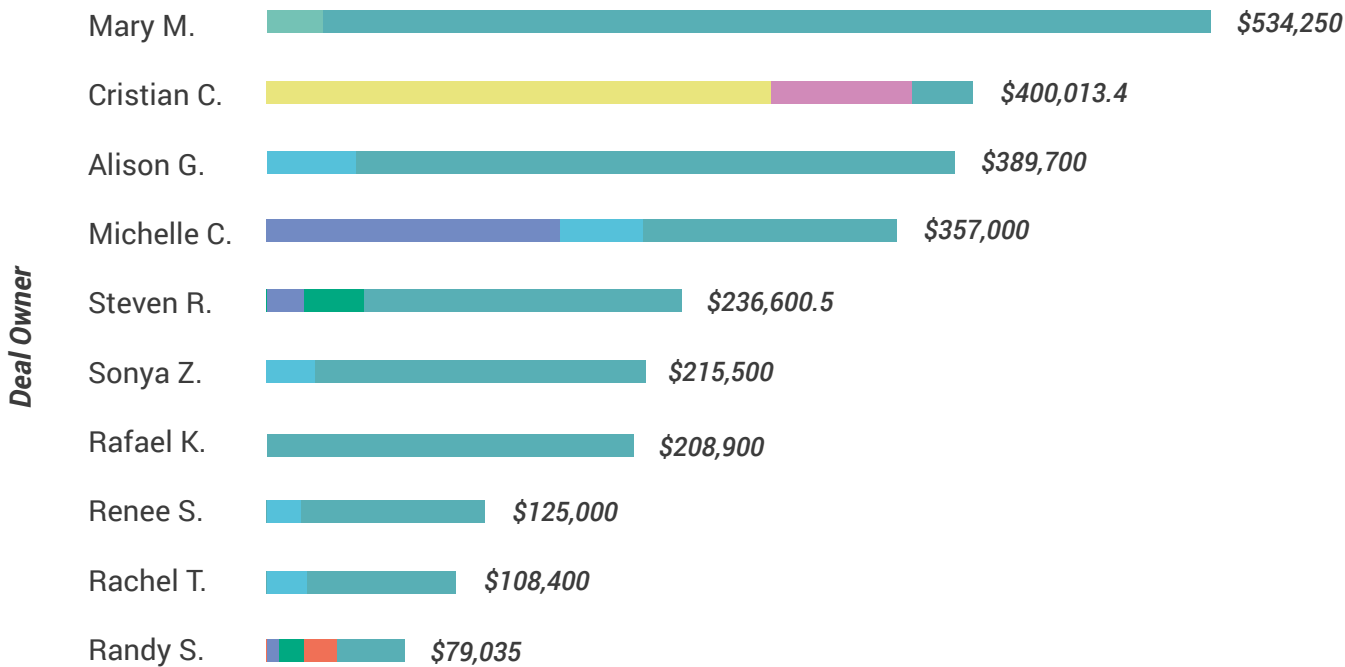
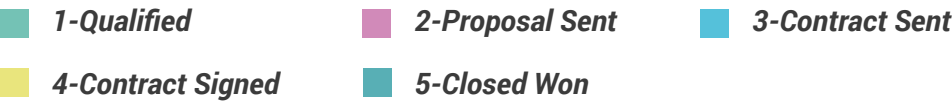
The companies with longer sales cycles need sustained advertising visibility across the top target accounts that Sales wants to land. For most of your deals, you are vying for business against your top competitors. Marketing needs to provide air cover on the advertising front during the sales cycle.

Your Sales Team's Close Rates

One of Marketing's goals is to drive awareness at the top-of-funnel. In competitive SaaS environments, marketing is actually expected and measured on driving revenue from their efforts. You'll need to understand your sales team's close rates to be successful.

While you're planning your ABM program(s), research your sales team's opportunities: open, closed-won, and closed-lost. This can be done over a 2-3 year period or whatever you deem appropriate.

DEAL REVENUE LEADERBOARD



Forecast amount in company currency (\$)

What percentage of Opportunities became Closed Won deals? What percentage became Closed Lost? Why? Make sure there’s no bias and that your sales team is **logging every opportunity**.

On the Marketing side, there's a key thing you can do to line Sales up for success – create content that will help Sales close deals faster. Here are some examples:



COMPETITIVE CAMPAIGN

Does your company lose deals to a few key competitors? Create a competitive campaign and highlight your product/tech/vertical superiority vs. your competition.



CASE STUDIES/ TESTIMONIALS

Help the prospective account understand this move is the best move for them to make. Bonus points if you can showcase happy clients who made a similar switch from your competitor's offering to you.



WHY CHOOSE US

What's so great about your company, anyway? Whether it's your passion for the space, vision for the industry, technical capabilities, or a host of other items, make sure you highlight that distinctly.



SALES FUNNEL CONTENT

Sales is always complaining about the lack of content from Marketing that is relevant to closing deals (rightfully so!). Here's your chance to be sales' partner in helping close their deals.



DIRECT MAIL/ VIDEO

Highlight the human element. Especially important if sales cannot go and meet their prospective clients. Show you care!

03

Setting Realistic Expectations

Setting Realistic Expectations

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When you're investing a good amount of time across multiple teams for the purpose of creating and implementing new programs, it's important for teams to align — marketing, sales, product, etc.

But beyond cross-team alignment, it's important to align with executives as well. SaaS startups have ambitious growth goals, given the investments being made and the assumption that the product is scalable.

Whenever there's a considerable investment of time and resources and dollars allocated, executives want to see:

Growth and revenues

Scaling successful marketing programs

Rapid progress towards goals and objectives



IMPLEMENTING ABM MEANS SHIFTING YOUR MINDSET FROM DRIVING LEADS ON AN ANYONE/ANYWHERE BASIS TO STRATEGICALLY BRINGING IN THE HIGH-VALUE PERSONAS FROM KEY ACCOUNTS. YOU'RE PIVOTING TO A GUERILLA MARKETING MINDSET ACROSS VARIOUS AUDIENCES AND PROGRAMS.

If your executives don't have a timeframe for results from you, they'll make it up, or hold you to something you're probably not prepared for. They're not managing the day-to-day, so they won't understand how many moving parts are involved. Expect to hear questions like:

"So... when are we landing some of these Enterprise clients? How many can we land next quarter?"

"How long before our ACV increases 50%?"

"Glad this ABM pilot program is working... can we scale this 10x next month?"

Account-Based Marketing Works...

For these reasons, setting, communicating, and aligning on realistic expectations is critical.

When you decide to implement ABM programs, you're not just launching a quick campaign or setting up a webinar or preparing for an event. ABM is a marathon using strategy, execution, data-driven refining and modification, and tactic optimization.

Implementing ABM means shifting your mindset from driving leads on an anyone/anywhere basis to strategically bringing in the high-value personas from key accounts. You're pivoting to a guerilla marketing mindset across various audiences and programs.

And it really works well if you do it right, and stick with it.

... But It Takes Time.

As a SaaS company, your sales cycles likely take months. And when you have a higher ACV, or sell into multiple departments, these cycles get even longer.

The bigger the accounts you're selling to, the longer deals take. So if you're targeting Enterprise prospects for your ABM efforts, results won't happen overnight. However, consider the numerous benefits and outcomes you'll achieve:

You're going to close Enterprise prospects faster doing ABM than waiting on them to come in via inbound marketing

Your ACVs with Enterprise clients will be higher

These companies are more likely to have the budget to work with you

If your product and service delivers, they're likely to renew and be a high-value client for years to come (especially if you get adoption across multiple teams)

They can become a key or even anchor account to your business, a huge logo for marketing, and a success story you can share with other prospects

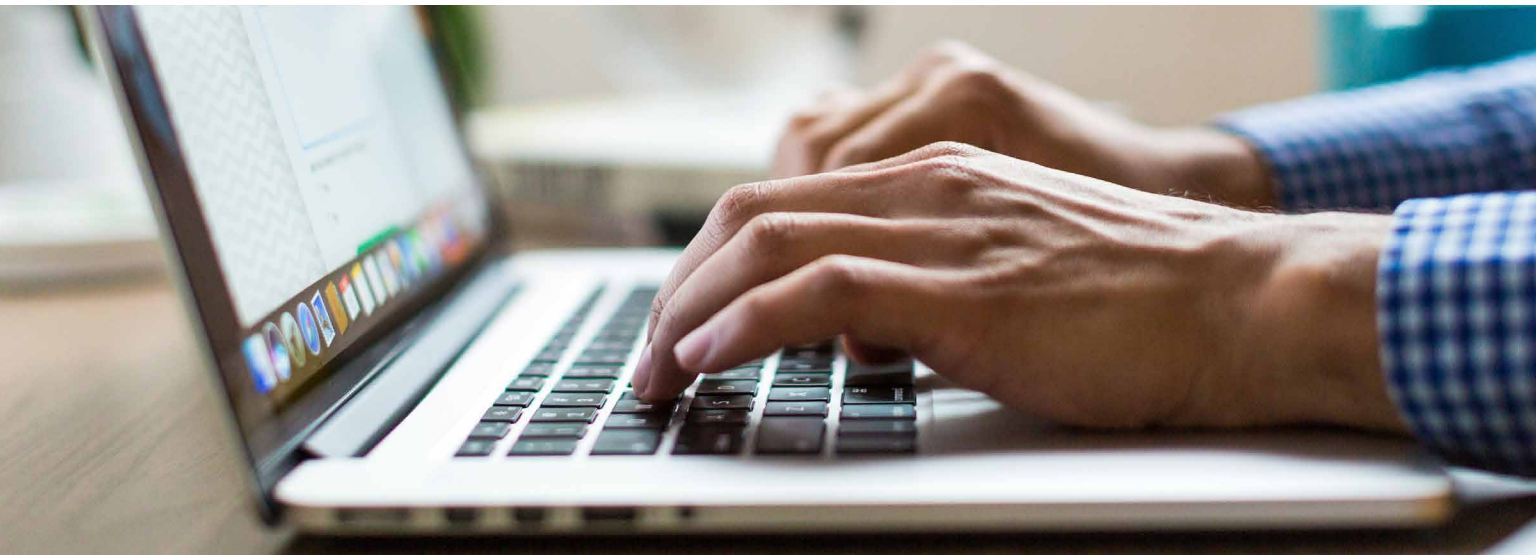
If you're breaking into a new vertical and using ABM to penetrate this new vertical, you'll have to prove yourself early on to these prospects. And again, these deals may take longer.

Let Your Execs Know

Set expectations appropriately. SaaS companies that want to move up-market and increase ACVs embrace ABM. ABM is not a fad, rather it's an effort to make marketing more targeted, personalized, and effective. It's a long-term, ongoing effort that will pay dividends if done right.

The sales cycles will likely be long at the start. However, communicating the many benefits that come along with ABM should ease any concerns your execs may have.

Initial traction will provide reassurance and silence negativity or doubt.





Align Beyond Expectations

Don't just set expectations. This is a two-way relationship.

You also need...

Buy-in. A shared understanding and agreement that this is an important initiative for the company, not just for Bob the marketing leader.

Ownership. For ABM to truly work well, each department needs to display ownership. Assign leaders and hold people accountable.

Commitment. People get pulled in different directions, often understandably so. But when you're trying to build a flywheel and key components fall off, you will fail. You need a long-term commitment from the people involved and the executives overseeing the budget.

04

Taking Action On Your ABM Program

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So far, you've been in the pre-planning phase. Now that you understand how to structure your ABM program, it's time to actually take action.

Note: In the years ahead, ABM budgets will grow from 20% of overall marketing budget to more than 40% of overall marketing budget (TOPO 2019 Account Based Benchmark Report). Invest some time and energy into setting up your Account-based marketing programs; you can expect them to pay dividends down the road.



**ABM BUDGETS WILL GROW FROM 20% OF
OVERALL MARKETING BUDGET TO MORE THAN
40% OF OVERALL MARKETING BUDGET**

Source: TOPO 2019 Account Based Benchmark Report

A Bird's-Eye View of Your ABM Program

Here's your actionable ABM checklist.

Write down the answers to each of these questions:

MACRO GOALS

- ☐ *What does success look like?*
- ☐ *What key metrics will you track at each stage of the program?*

TARGET ACCOUNTS

- ☐ *What ICPs are you targeting?*
- ☐ *What are your specific target accounts?*
- ☐ *Tier your accounts in order of importance.*

TEAM

- ☐ *What are the key items agreed upon across all stakeholders?*
- ☐ *What does buy-in look like across each stage of the program?*
- ☐ *Who is responsible for what at each stage of the program?*
- ☐ *Implement all SLAs.*

FUNNEL

- ☐ *What are the stages of your ABM funnel?*
- ☐ *What happens to a new account?*
- ☐ *What channels are you using?*
- ☐ *How will you qualify and nurture ABM leads?*
- ☐ *What are the benchmarks of each stage?*

PROCESS

- ☐ *Who is the first level of outreach (Marketing? Sales development? Account executives?)*
- ☐ *What happens next?*
- ☐ *How will Marketing hand off information to Sales, and vice versa?*
- ☐ *What assets do you need for each of the following components of your program:*
 - ☐ *Paid ads* ☐ *Copywriting* ☐ *Videos*
 - ☐ *Landing pages* ☐ *Design* ☐ *Gated assets*
 - ☐ *Emails* ☐ *Direct mail*
- ☐ *Which tools are you using?*
- ☐ *How are you enriching data?*
- ☐ *Where are you gathering data?*

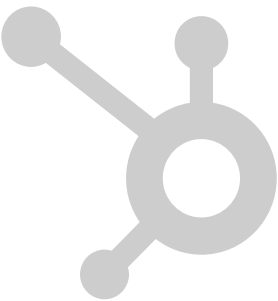
05 How to Set Up Your HubSpot Instance for ABM Insights

How to Set Up Your HubSpot Instance for ABM Insights

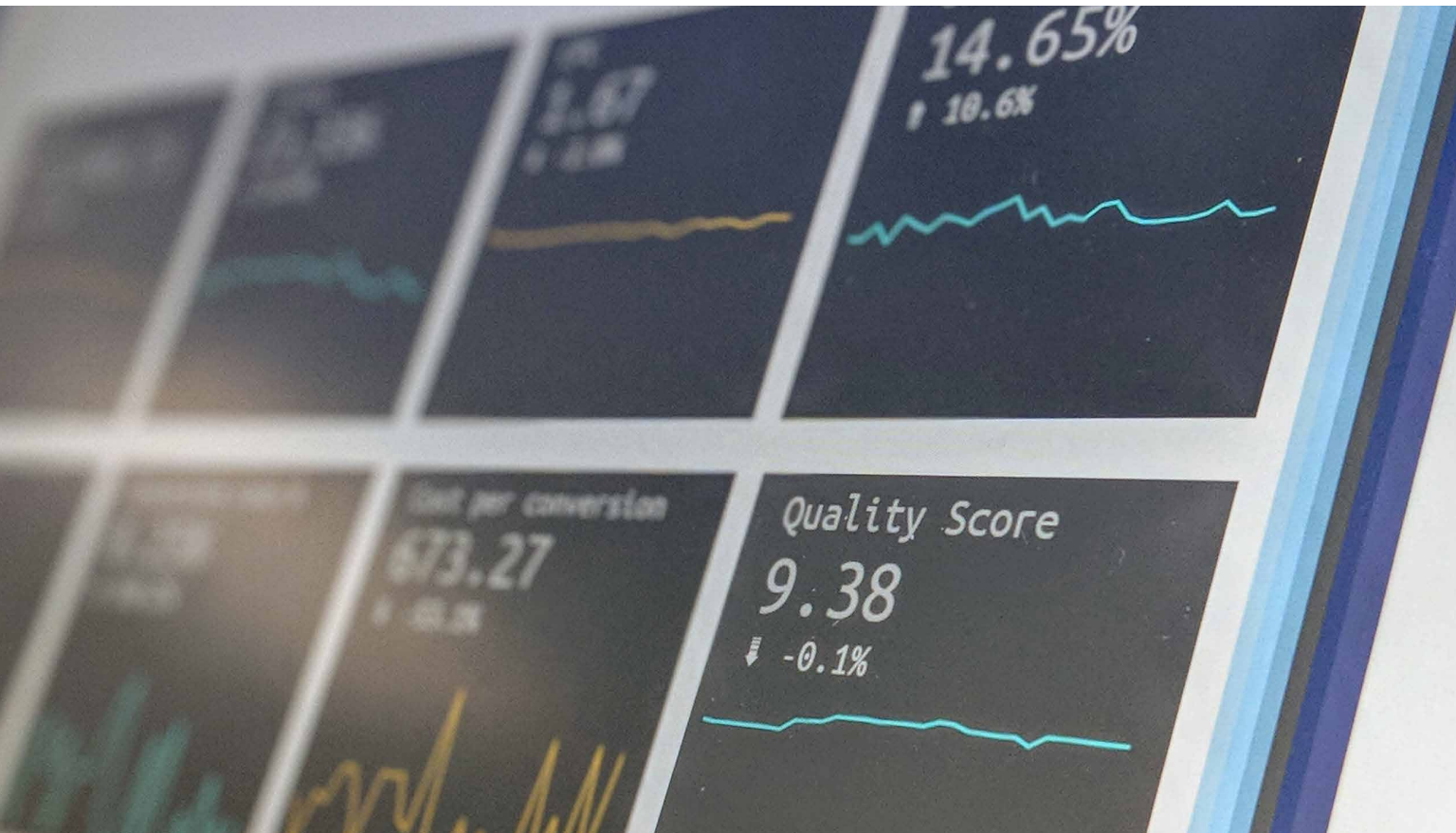
HubSpot Marketing Hub

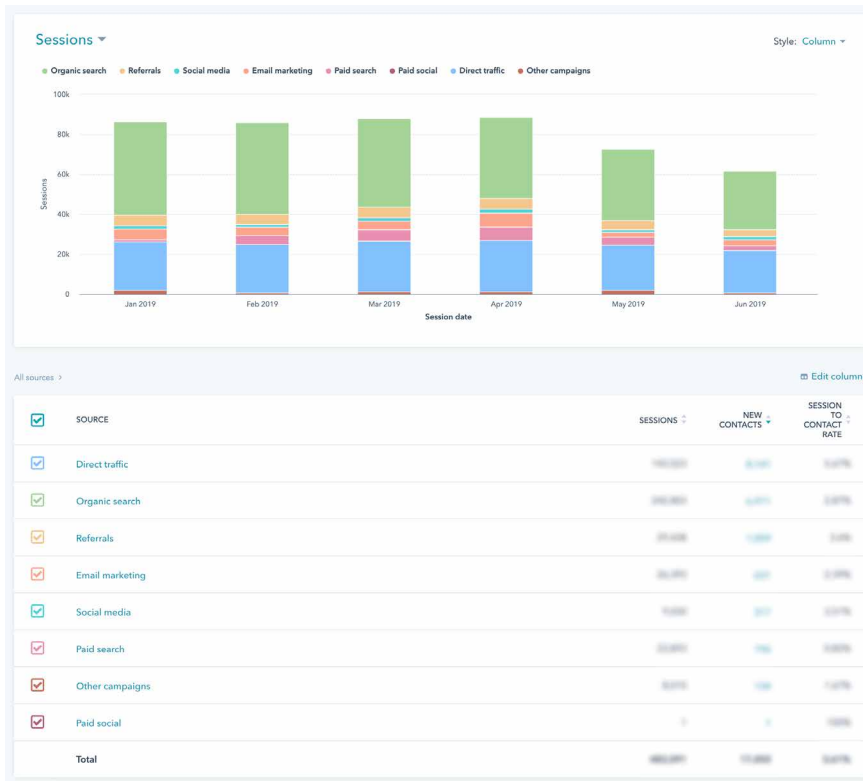
Your marketing automation platform is where your marketing data lives; the place to manage contacts and track efforts. An ABM platform is not going to replace all of the work your HubSpot Marketing instance does; lead scoring, lead nurturing, deal tracking (syncd with CRM), personalized workflows, key dashboards and reports, and more.

ABM platforms will help you hone in on accounts, account progression, buying signals, and more. But your marketing automation platform will help you understand the relationship between accounts, contacts, deals, campaigns, lead sources, and more.



Unfortunately, the vast majority of companies, SaaS included, underutilize their marketing automation platform. This is because — among other reasons — there's a gap between the marketing leader and what they want to do, and the marketing operations person and what they know how to do. The following insights aim to bridge this gap and help you accelerate your understanding of what can be done in HubSpot.





Visits and leads report, by marketing channel

Inbound Marketing Reports

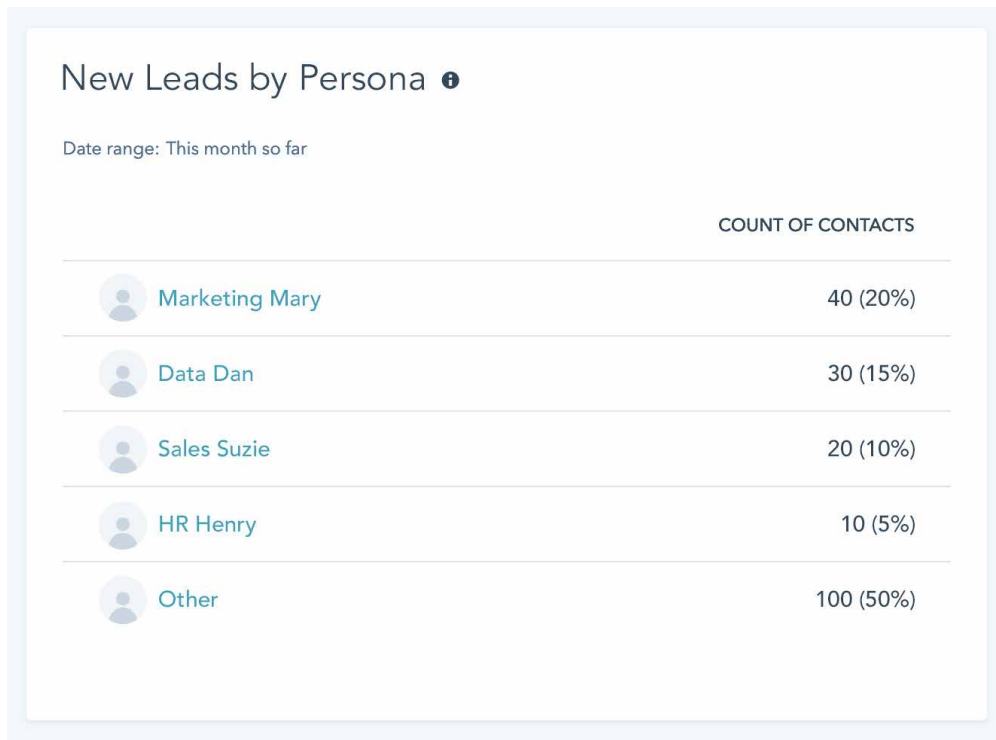
Based on your inbound marketing efforts, you should already have several key dashboards and reports in place. If you don't, build them out soon.

A visits and leads report helps you understand how many website sessions occur in a given time period, the new leads you gain, and your visitor-to-lead conversion rate. You can also see marketing performance by channel.

You should be using UTM codes to track all marketing activities, so you can understand the performance of each activity. This includes new campaigns, marketing channels and efforts, content promoted, ad variants, etc.

	CAMPAIGN	SESSIONS ↕	NEW CONTACTS ↕	CUSTOMERS ↕	BOUNCE RATE ↕	NEW SESSION % ↕	PAGE VIEWS / SESSION ↕	SESSION LENGTH ↕
☐	workbooks	11,276	180	0	80.04%	50.73%	1.40	38 seconds
☐	general all workbooks	1,044	7	0	80.07%	47.38%	1.34	38 seconds
☐	presentation principles workbook	6,107	70	1	80.77%	50.77%	1.3	38 seconds
☐	workbook records	4,085	10	0	79.07%	79.07%	1.27	37 seconds
☐	workbooks	1,084	10	0	77.40%	40.7%	1.75	37 seconds
☐	workbooks workbooks - last september 2017	1,038	40	1	87.04%	50.77%	1.30	38 seconds
☐	general workbooks - last june 2017	1,487	40	1	77.04%	70.04%	1.34	38 seconds
☐	workbooks workbooks - last september 2017	1,076	30	0	80.07%	70.07%	1.30	38 seconds
☐	workbooks workbooks - last june 2017	1,087	30	0	80.07%	70.07%	1.27	40 seconds
☐	workbooks workbooks	1,480	30	0	79.74%	70.74%	1.40	37 seconds
	Total	40,710	407	4	79.04%	70.04%	1.40	40 seconds

Track all of your campaigns, and drill into any area for source/medium information



Persona-based marketing dashboard

Create personas, and group your contact's roles and departments into those key buyer personas as needed. And then set up a **persona-based marketing dashboard** to track how many of your target personas inbound marketing is bringing in, versus new leads that are not your core buyer personas.

Account-Based Marketing Reports

Want to uncover some awesome ABM insights in HubSpot, before you even buy an ABM platform? Here are some dashboards, reports, and lists that you need to build out.

Create lists of your top target accounts that marketing and sales have agreed to target for ABM. Name your lists, something like “ABM List - X Vertical - Enterprise Companies”, or whatever the specifics of the list happen to be.

Then, create an ABM dashboard in HubSpot. In this dashboard, you’re going to add and save some key reports.

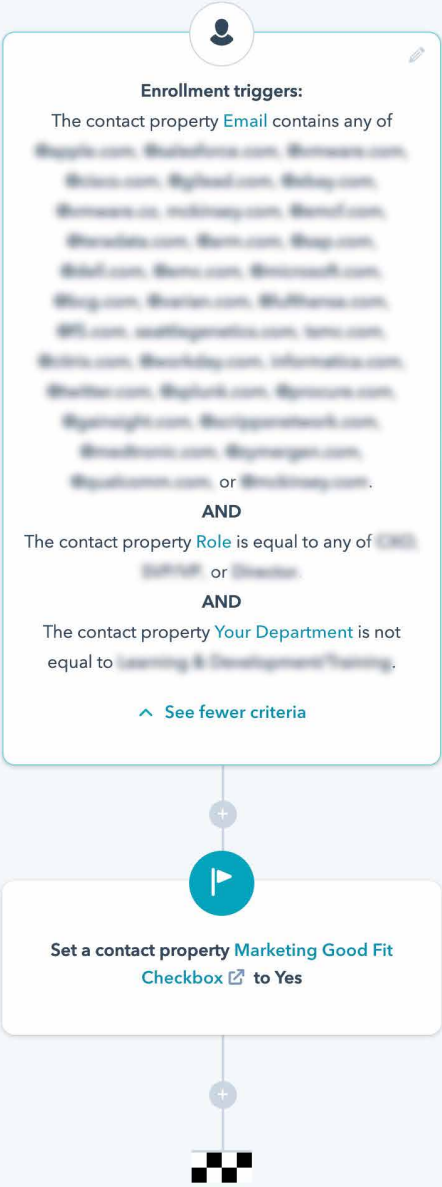
Create a report of **website visits by target account**. This will inform you who you’re reaching, and you can drill into the contacts to understand what pages and emails they’re looking at and content they’re engaging with.



Next, create a list of **new leads by target account**. Compare this with the previous report. For which accounts are visitor-to-lead conversion rates high and which are low? Adjust your approach and content based on these results. Looking at this before you launch your ABM program helps you understand in which accounts you already have traction.

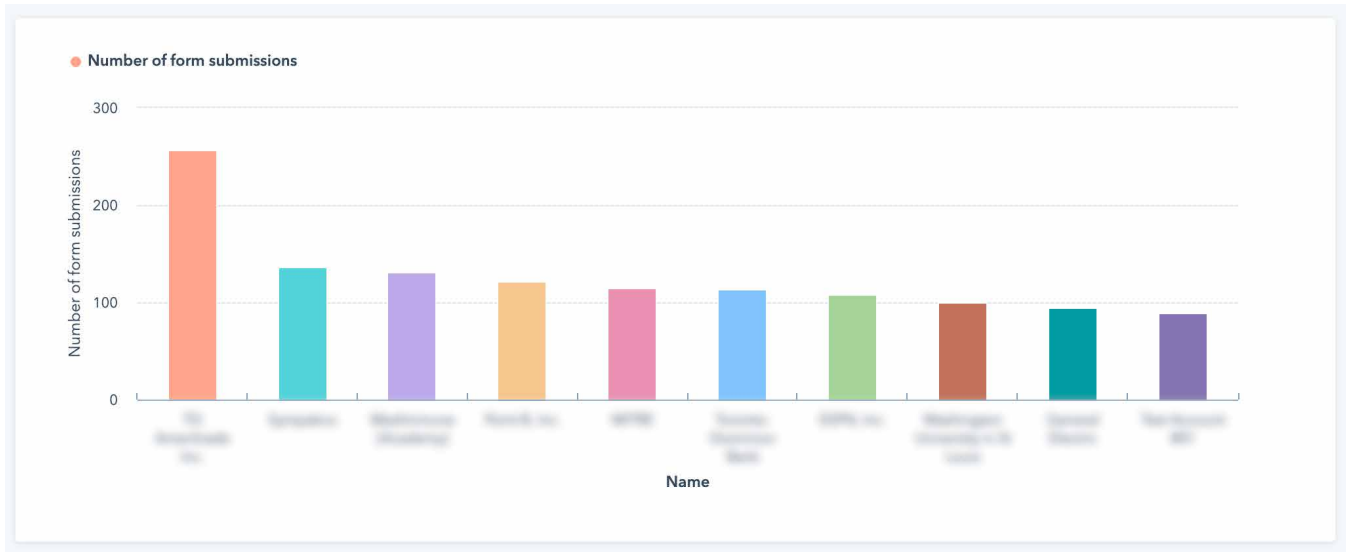


New leads by target account



Next, create your **ABM leads workflows**. From scoring to nurturing to communications and sales alerts, you'll follow your ABM program and exclude these leads from your normal inbound marketing processes.

Next, create a dashboard specifically for **SQLs by target account**. Sales will find it super helpful to know that six contacts at a given company are interested in your SaaS solution!



Marketing qualified leads by target account

Make sure to track all of the post-click actions across your ABM campaigns.

Your ads, outbound email, etc. that lead to landing pages should include UTM tags (at least campaign, source, and medium), so you can track how many visitors and leads came from which ABM efforts

Set up a lead source for ABM efforts in your HubSpot instance. You can even include hidden fields in your web forms.

Track all of these actions through the funnel for closed-loop reporting.

And there's even more...

You can even track these items in HubSpot as well:

Campaign and advertising metrics

ROI, spend, and revenue per ad or campaign

Attribute the campaigns, ads, and contacts to closed-won deals

Landing page visits, leads, and conversion rate

Email performance

Performance of marketing activities, efforts, and channels

*Pro tip: Do **not** use your HubSpot Marketing instance to send emails to non-opt in contacts. For your ABM efforts, you can email opted-in contacts at the companies you're targeting, but don't upload a list of non opt-in contacts and send ABM emails out. Your marketing automation platform is not meant to be a sales prospecting platform! Your email reputation will take a hit. Instead, use Outreach, or HubSpot's sales sequences, or a similar outbound prospecting tool that is not subject to CAN-SPAM.*

HubSpot Sales Hub or Salesforce

HubSpot Sales Hub and Salesforce are CRMs that can yield some amazing insights that help marketing and sales align and increase pipeline.

Closed-loop reporting

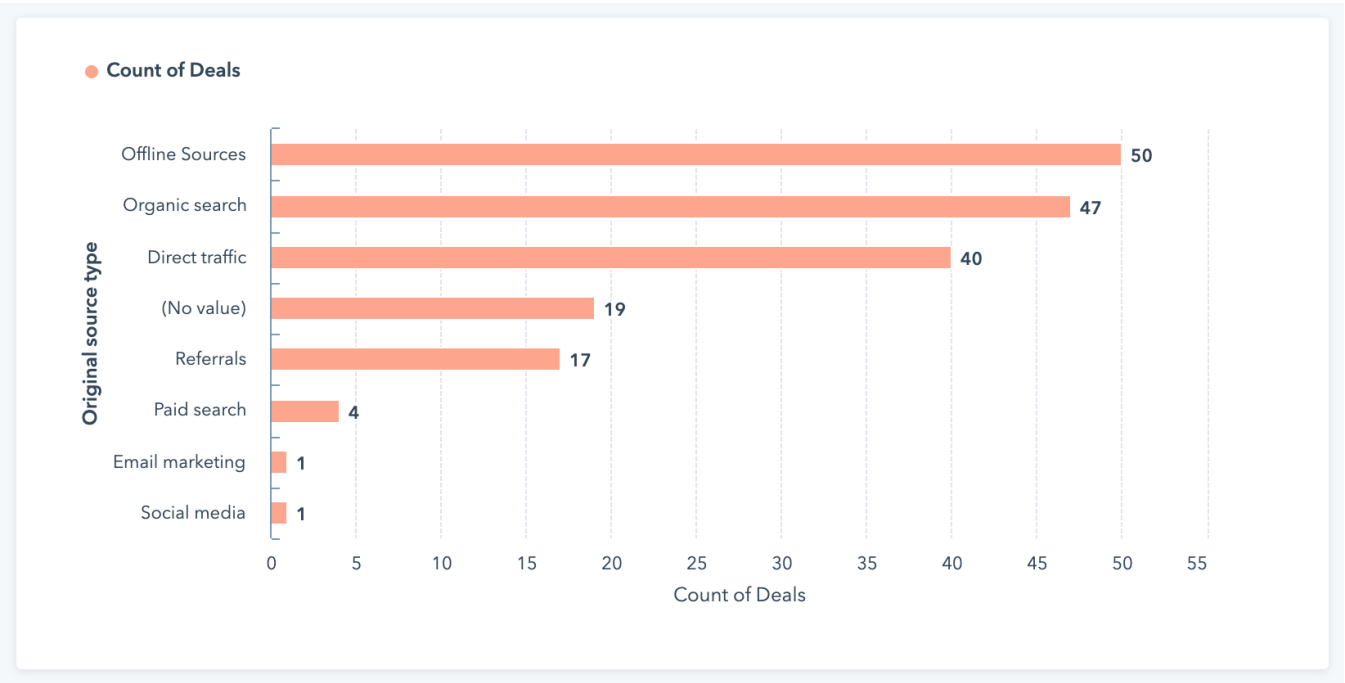
If you're on HubSpot Marketing Hub and HubSpot Sales Hub, that is ideal because you have one system you're using that is tracking all marketing and sales activities. You can track prospects from start to finish, and create reports that provide a full picture of what's going on. The reporting is only as good as the activity being logged and the processes you're adhering to, so it's still up to your marketing team to create campaigns, use UTM codes, and be disciplined about measuring the data. Equally, your Sales team needs to log activity and prospect movement across various stages of the sales cycle.

Bi-directional sync

Many companies use Salesforce instead for their CRM. HubSpot and Salesforce have a bi-directional sync, so you can still achieve closed-loop reporting by building out your dashboards and having your data flowing and updating each system.

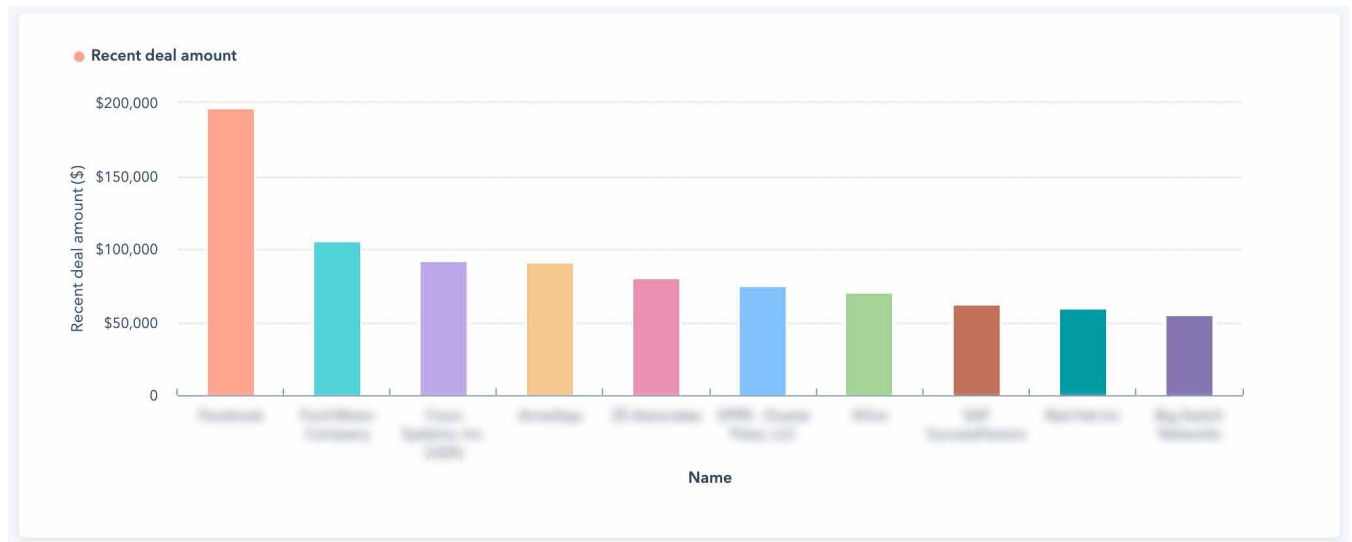
Whether you use HubSpot Sales Hub or Salesforce, here are some reports that you'll want to set up.

Opportunities by lead source. The top demand generation marketers today are trying to drive pipeline, not just new leads and MQLs. This report helps you understand where Opportunities came from, and how successful your various campaigns and activities are at turning leads into customers.



Opportunities by lead source

Sales pipeline by target accounts. What ACV do you stand to make if you can close these high-value deals? Review your deal stages and how many of your target accounts fall in which stage.



Sales pipeline by target accounts

Products purchased by target accounts. If your business has multiple product lines, uncover what your target accounts are buying. Are your enterprise customers more interested in your higher-tier offering? Are your customers in a certain vertical more likely to opt for a more affordable offering? Understand who is buying what. You'll have an opportunity to cross-sell and upsell them.

Think about the data that you need to see, and build that in your reporting. For example, are you using a land and expand strategy? You can create a dashboard for key accounts by largest change in sales from one year to the next.

Setting up dashboards and reports across your marketing automation system and CRM is critical. Remember that ABM falls under the umbrella of your demand generation strategy.



06

Choosing the Right ABM Platform for Your Needs

Choosing the Right ABM Platform for Your Needs

Here are 4 key considerations when choosing an ABM platform:

Remember who your business serves and who you're selling to.

Understand that ABM strategies vary, based on end goals. Are you interested in new customer acquisition? Influencing opportunities? Landing and expanding? First nail your approach, then identify the solution that best supports your approach.

What does marketing and sales orchestration look like? What marketing and sales activities are happening, when and how?

Have a good understanding of your ABM stage progression and what you need in a platform. This progression will vary depending on the particulars of your campaigns. It may look something like this:



Now that we've identified these 4 key points, here's a high-level overview of some of the popular ABM platforms on the market today.



Terminus is a self-service or fully managed ABM platform that allows you to import your accounts directly from Salesforce. Users can set up campaigns and tactics, and then launch display advertising campaigns.

You can choose which departments you'd like to target across accounts.

Terminus has powerful programmatic advertising features including the ability to automatically optimize ads served based on impressions, clicks, and click-thru rate, saving the marketer both time and money.

Key insights include target account identification, account-based analytics, and anonymous website visitor intelligence.



Using artificial intelligence, Demandbase identifies accounts and key decision-makers to target, and then performs account-based advertising. The platform can also engage website visitors with AI-based, personalized web experiences.

Demandbase uses two blended methods of targeting: IP/cookie targeting for accounts, and intent cookie targeting for buying committees. To identify and target members of buying committees, Demandbase uses real-time buyer intent signals and monitors the behavior of buyers at target accounts to make specific keyword recommendations.

Demandbase executes display advertising, and then leverages social advertising for retargeting engaged contacts.

Demandbase has also partnered with Drift to provide conversational advertising within its platform.

Companies looking to gain insights on accounts and contacts with buyer intent, or wanting to create lookalike audiences with in-market signals find Demandbase to be a powerful ABM platform.



METADATA

Metadata is known for its ability to create lookalike audiences of your current customers and then build and execute B2B campaigns at scale.

The platform allows clients to build rapid multivariate tests to quickly determine the most effective creative, content, and channels for their respective target audiences.

Metadata then executes ads at scale, and optimizes ad spend with machine learning and pipeline data from Salesforce to accelerate marketing efforts aimed at driving leads from target accounts.



Engagio is primarily a platform for marketing and sales orchestration. The Engagio's platform includes account heat maps, alerts, and engagement.

With Engagio, Sales and Marketing teams are able to realize a holistic view of an engagement — what is happening and who is doing what.

Engagio is a powerful platform for teams who simply need higher levels of engagement and transparency, and who want to focus more time and energy on strategy and tactics when targeting accounts.



LinkedIn's account targeting matches your key account list with existing LinkedIn company pages, and identifies your custom-target audience — all the way down to specific roles, functions, and specific companies.

Once you have your target audience identified, you can launch advertising campaigns including sponsored content, InMail, and more.

You can run native lead gen ads with gated content, drive people to a landing page, retarget website visitors, share product info, and book sales appointments.

LinkedIn is a self-service alternative to the investment required in an ABM platform.

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ABM Program: Optimizing Post-Launch

ABM Program: Optimizing Post-Launch

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You've launched ABM, your campaigns are live, and you've been collecting data. It's time to review campaign performance and identify optimization opportunities. Look at the following two factors to take the pulse of your campaign.

Account Movement Through Funnel Stages

One of the main objectives of your ABM program was likely to get your top target accounts to move through your funnel. Now is a good time to diagnose any funnel-related issues or obstacles.

Study account movement. How did your ads, outbound emails, direct mail, content offers, etc. perform?

If you're using an ABM platform, did the accounts you're targeting move from brand unaware to brand aware? Did the Enterprise companies you're targeting engage with your content? Did the vertical you're targeting express interest in your SaaS solution?



SUCCESSFUL ACCOUNT BASED STRATEGY REQUIRES A COORDINATED EFFORT ACROSS ALL CUSTOMER-FACING FUNCTIONS INCLUDING MARKETING, SALES DEVELOPMENT, AND SALES. WHEN MARKETERS RANKED THE MOST IMPORTANT TACTICS, THEY SELECTED SDR OUTREACH—NOT TRADITIONAL MARKETING TACTICS—BY A WIDE MARGIN.

Source: TOPO 2019 Account Based Benchmark Report

Marketing and Sales Orchestration

“Successful account based strategy requires a coordinated effort across all customer-facing functions including marketing, sales development, and sales. When marketers ranked the most important tactics, they selected SDR outreach—not traditional marketing tactics—by a wide margin.” - TOPO 2019 Account Based Benchmark Report

What were some key findings your SDRs and Business Development teams uncovered? Were SDRs able to book demos and sales appointments with promising prospects? What did Business Development learn at the sales appointment about an account’s needs and key factors in making this decision? Did you uncover key decision-makers to include in your marketing efforts?

Beef Up Your ABM Program

The first step in any marketing campaign that falls short of your objectives is not to kill the campaign. You first want to identify opportunities for optimization. Now that you’ve done a pulse-check, you might feel inspired to make changes and remove blockers.

Still feeling lost about where to improve your efforts? Here are some common areas where ABM programs need improvement:



CONTENT

If you're not providing enough value up-front before asking for a form submission, you're going to have a high cost per lead (CPL) and low engagement. Instead of taking people to a landing page with a form front and center, try to create long-form content that provides value or answers key questions. Make your forms short on the first submission; you can always capture more information via data enrichment or future form submissions. Incorporate video into your landing page, along with a chatbot. Increase your visitor-to-lead conversion rate.



ADVERTISING

Get a handle on the key metrics, from CPM and CPL to CPC and ad visibility across target accounts. Some ABM platforms will automate bidding and ad spend, so you can invest more time in making sure your ad creative stands out, your messaging is intriguing, and your offer is worthwhile. Companies commonly see declining CTRs on their ads over time; it's crucial to update your ad creative every 30-45 days.



LANDING PAGES

Using the same landing pages on your website to grab a specific vertical's attention? Are Enterprise prospects seeing the same messaging as your one-size-fits-all message? Not enough information on a landing page but a form with 12 fields? These are all going to kill your conversion rate. Create dedicated landing pages specific to the audience you're targeting, explaining how your solution helps make them more efficient, productive... better.



SLAS AND ORCHESTRATION

If you're sending leads over to Sales, and Sales isn't following up because they're busy with other things, that's going to hamstring your ABM efforts. Regroup with your team to make sure all stakeholders are living up to their expectations.



SDR FOLLOW-UP SUCCESS RATES

If ABM is bringing in leads at the ideal companies Sales wants to land, but SDRs are having little success in booking meetings, it may be time to change the SDR outreach strategy. “Hi (name), I noticed you downloaded our guide on X, I’d love to book 30 minutes with you to show you our solution...” ...this approach is likely not going to work. Your SDRs will need to get clever about their sales outreach.



BETTER MESSAGING VIA SALES CONVERSATIONS

Good marketing messaging emerges as a result of knowing your audience well. Through sales demos and discussions, you may uncover key feedback that helps you understand how to improve marketing messaging for the accounts you’re targeting. Sit with Sales or review recordings and meeting notes.



LAND AND EXPAND

Running ABM ads at the top-of-funnel with little luck? Incorporate a focus on growing existing customers, and validating your messaging. By focusing on your friendliest audience, you can expand business and increase revenue. You'll get great insights and confidence to market to the colder, tougher audiences... and better yet, referrals from existing customers to their friendly contacts at your target accounts.



INFLUENCE EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES

If your SaaS business is losing deals to the same few competitors, consider incorporating a competitive campaign. Your salespeople can share this content with contacts that are open opportunities. Do you have testimonials and success stories from companies who switched from your competitor to you? Share this content with your Sales team and get it into the hands of decision-makers that are weighing their options. Get smart about how Marketing can help Sales close more deals, faster, and beat out the competition.

You might be wondering, “This sounds like a ton of work!” It is. If you’re not getting the desired results out of ABM and need a helping hand to turn things around fast, consider bringing in ABM experts that can steer the ship in the right direction.

Best wishes for your continued success with your demand generation marketing programs!



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About the Author

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Zaki Hussain is a seasoned SaaS demand generation marketer and HubSpot expert based in Silicon Valley. Zaki is the CEO of Clutchgrowth, and helps marketing teams drive top-line growth.

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About Clutchgrowth

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