

Transitioning Your Team to an Account-Based Mindset: A Guide for Agency Leadership



Account-based marketing is more than a trend in the world of digital marketing; it is a critical approach to business-to-business marketing and sales.

Whether you've been tracking its rise in the digital space for a while or you're trying to introduce it to your team for the first time, ABM requires buy-in from multiple areas within an organization.

If you're looking to truly implement ABM effectively, you'll have to invest time and resources to shift the mindset of your team.



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Should My Agency Offer Account-Based Marketing?

If you consider your agency as a leader in the marketing realm, ABM will be an imperative component for your growth, especially if you retain B2B clients.

- If you're not offering ABM services now, your clients will be asking you about it soon.
- If you educate clients about ABM before they hear it through the grapevine, they will trust your ability to guide them to success.

To state it plainly, if you want to be relevant in the digital B2B space, yes — you should offer ABM services — and you may already have more of a head start than you realize.

Agency Offerings: Past Mindset

Over the past couple of decades, there has been an increased emphasis on content marketing as a way to educate audiences about products and services so that they can make a buying decision on their own time rather than being bombarded by unwanted messages.

The idea behind content marketing is helpfulness — enabling companies to focus on the audience's experience and what an ideal journey looks like from lead to customer. This premise of inbound marketing, or bringing a prospect in through educational content, has become an effective strategy for marketing agencies to help clients thrive.

As the digital landscape continues to change, agencies have introduced an integrated approach using inbound methodology along with a range of channels to reach prospects from a variety of angles while still being helpful and educating leads about solutions that can solve their problems.

This mixture of inbound and outbound tactics has facilitated a move towards aligning marketing and sales efforts, which expands the idea of how companies approach their pipeline process.

Due to this shift, agencies began to expand their service offerings by thinking about including more areas of business, like sales enablement to complement the marketing functions.

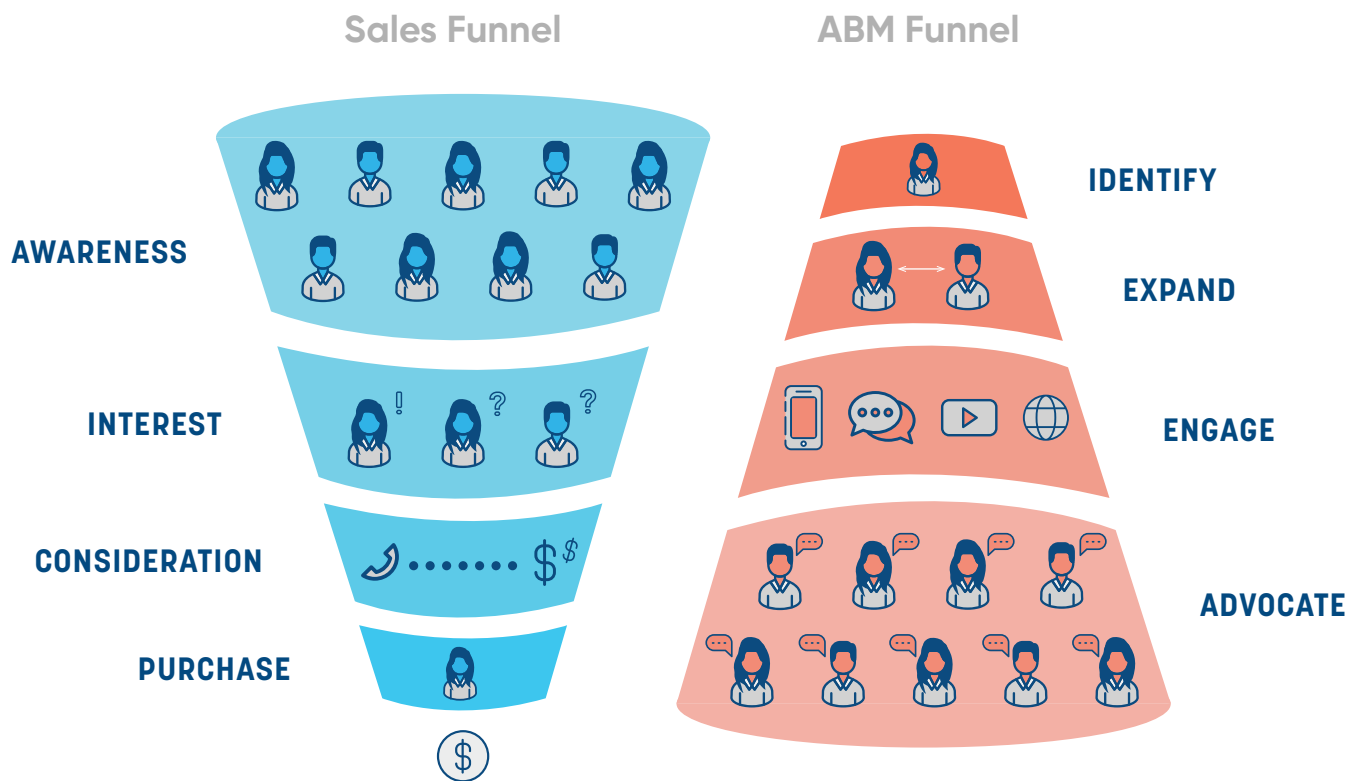
WE'VE GOT GOOD NEWS.

If you're already offering a multi-channel approach to inbound or content marketing, you're well on your way to offering ABM services that complement these foundational elements of a comprehensive marketing strategy for clients.

When Did ABM Originate?

While there's growing interest in ABM to drive revenue in B2B companies, the truth is that the core tenet of ABM has been put into practice well before the buzz-term was recently coined.

If you think about a typical sales funnel, the goal is to get as many leads as possible so that the right ones will trickle down and become customers. The idea behind ABM is to flip the typical sales funnel so that you start with ideal accounts and target them directly, without wasting time on leads that will never convert.



HERE'S WHAT ABM LOOKED LIKE BEFORE THE DIGITAL ERA:

Imagine way back when a local service company wanted to win the largest company in town as a customer. They might have identified people in that company, perhaps by buying names from a list broker, and made their approach by mailing these company employees a compelling letter (or even a fax).

They were identifying ideal client profiles (ICPs) by choosing who they wanted as a client, while also figuring out contacts within the account who would influence the buying process to close the deal.

That's the premise of ABM! While the terminology was different, the core ideas of ABM have been used for decades by sales and marketing teams.

In the past, the process of researching and developing an effective plan to reach these accounts was a very cumbersome process, so with the rise of available information and technology at our fingertips, the capability to implement ABM has accelerated greatly in recent years.

In the early 2000s, the phrase “account-based marketing” started gaining momentum when B2B companies focused their attention on accounts (or companies as a whole) to target instead of individuals since there are typically multiple decision makers in a large B2B transaction.



Technology has now put the ability to execute an ABM strategy across multiple marketing channels, into the hands of any company.

However, to many marketers, the ABM methodology is still a mystery and the tools have been very complicated and expensive for many companies, agencies, and B2B marketers.

Some tech companies started getting savvy to make it more accessible, like HubSpot’s ABM Software launch in 2020, but they still require a lot of work behind the scenes to put ABM strategies into practice effectively.

If you’re wondering how you might be able to implement ABM for your marketing agency to offer as a service, you’re in good company. But there are tools that make it easier than ever to be running campaigns in no time – but it requires a mindset shift.

LET’S BREAK IT DOWN.

Transitioning to an Account-Based Mindset

By now, you've likely realized that ABM involves way more than just marketing. That's why we're expanding the acronym to stand for Account-Based Mindset.

A mindset shift will empower your team to broaden their view of ABM because it's about an entire organizational approach, not a secluded strategy.

Change tends to stir up a feeling of unrest, but with the right steps in place, helping your team transition their mindset can be as simple as 1-2-3.

1. Help Your Team Understand the WHY

As a leader, the way in which you approach change is more important than what change you're introducing. A basic tenet of change management is to get team buy-in so that they will feel ownership and a sense of pride and passion in their work.

Help your team understand the benefits of ABM for your agency and for your clients. ABM enables companies to pursue high-value accounts, and it allows more access to potential leads in order to get a higher conversion rate. In the grand scheme of things, that all means MORE ROI, which benefits everyone.



ABM BENEFITS, ALPHABETICALLY:

- A** – Aligning marketing and sales
- B** – Bigger wins
- C** – Close rates increase
- D** – Delivering consistency and personalization
- E** – Efficiency & expansion

Yes, implementing an ABM program takes time and effort, but if you've already laid a foundation with great content that effectively tells the story of a company, adding in a layer of ABM strategy complements your existing approach.

Think about it: with general inbound, it can sometimes feel like we're screaming into the universe, but by targeting specific accounts that are an ideal fit for your products and services, you have a focused goal that cuts out the noise and helps you rise to the forefront. That means your team can see how their work has a direct impact, which is something to celebrate.

2. Align Sales and Marketing

Marketing and sales teams tend to work separately from each other in B2B organizations. Seems counterintuitive, right? There are often attempts for marketing to send sales-qualified leads to the sales team, but sales and marketing can end up blaming each other for poor results if they don't communicate needs effectively throughout the process.

SALES AND MARKETING ALIGNMENT WORKS JUST LIKE ANY OTHER RELATIONSHIP – THROUGH GOOD COMMUNICATION!

Marketing and sales teams can work together on ABM strategies by meeting regularly, planning and personalizing for best-fit accounts, and sending out regular updates on campaigns and deals.

HOW TO ALIGN MARKETING AND SALES PROCESSES:

- Define your ICP (Ideal Client Profile)
- Determine your goal
 - Know who you want to target (choose top accounts)
 - Determine if you have the right data
 - Segment appropriately (for prioritization and messaging)

Unifying the efforts of marketing and sales teams is a huge win in B2B processes. It allows for collaboration and a seamless experience for prospects and customers in the pipeline.

3. Build a Strategy and Repeatable Processes

A GREAT ABM STRATEGY STARTS WITH BRIGHT MINDS.

Make sure you have the right people in the right roles to execute effectively. An ABM team typically consists of a strategist who oversees all steps, a technical marketer who does the targeting and pushes the buttons on the chosen platforms, and other creative marketers who do the daily implementation, like copywriters, designers, and analysts who can look at the progress of campaigns.

PULL THE RIGHT TECH STACK AND BUDGET IN PLACE TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE EXECUTION.

Here's where your content engine comes in strong. You should have an ongoing flow of content that will guide and educate leads through the funnel in a helpful way that brings value and differentiates you from the competition. It should speak directly to your segmented audiences through personalized messaging and design that resonates.

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Learn from real examples of ABM challenges, and the tested strategies your team can use to solve them.

DOWNLOAD OUR EBOOK:

5 ABM Challenges and How to Solution for Them

DON'T EVER SET IT AND FORGET IT: EXECUTE, ANALYZE, AND UPDATE CAMPAIGNS.

Think of ABM campaigns as a living entity. They can grow and scale, get to know prospects, and even get stale if they're left out too long. Make sure that your team is keeping a keen eye on how the campaign is doing by running regular reports, testing out options for copy or creative, and updating as needed when the time is right. The more you get to know your goals, campaigns, and target accounts, the more effective your ABM program will become in time.

About BrandGen

BrandGen.io is a self-service digital ABM advertising platform that enables B2B firms and their marketing partners to accelerate sales and drive revenue growth through targeted, cost-effective advertising campaigns.



BrandGen.io builds your brand over the length of your sales cycle while helping you to generate demand at targeted accounts. BrandGen.io is future-proof in that we anticipated the demise of the 3rd party cookie and have developed solutions that enable you to directly reach the buying group at companies that should be your next customers even as 3rd party cookies are deprecated. The tool is designed to make setting up advertising campaigns a breeze, and it's deeply integrated with the HubSpot marketing PaaS to help you to create your leading-edge ABM technology stack.

We get it: ad targeting is complicated, but you can make it happen with BrandGen. Book a demo to learn more:

