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Account-based marketing (ABM) is a focused growth strategy that is becoming essential in B2B marketing

It's been proven, time and again, that when marketing and sales collaborate to identify a set of high-value accounts and work in tandem to deliver relevant buying experiences, it produces more efficient performance and stronger results.

At its core, ABM is an attempt at establishing and maintaining relationships with key accounts. That is perhaps one reason why many B2B marketers choose LinkedIn as the foundation of their ABM strategy—because of our reputation as the world's most trusted social media platform.

To enable more marketers to reap the benefits of ABM, we've developed a framework to guide you on the path to success.



Before we get started...

Here's a helpful pre-strategy assessment. You don't have to check all the boxes to begin your ABM journey but it's a good idea to understand where, and how, ABM can add value to your organisation.





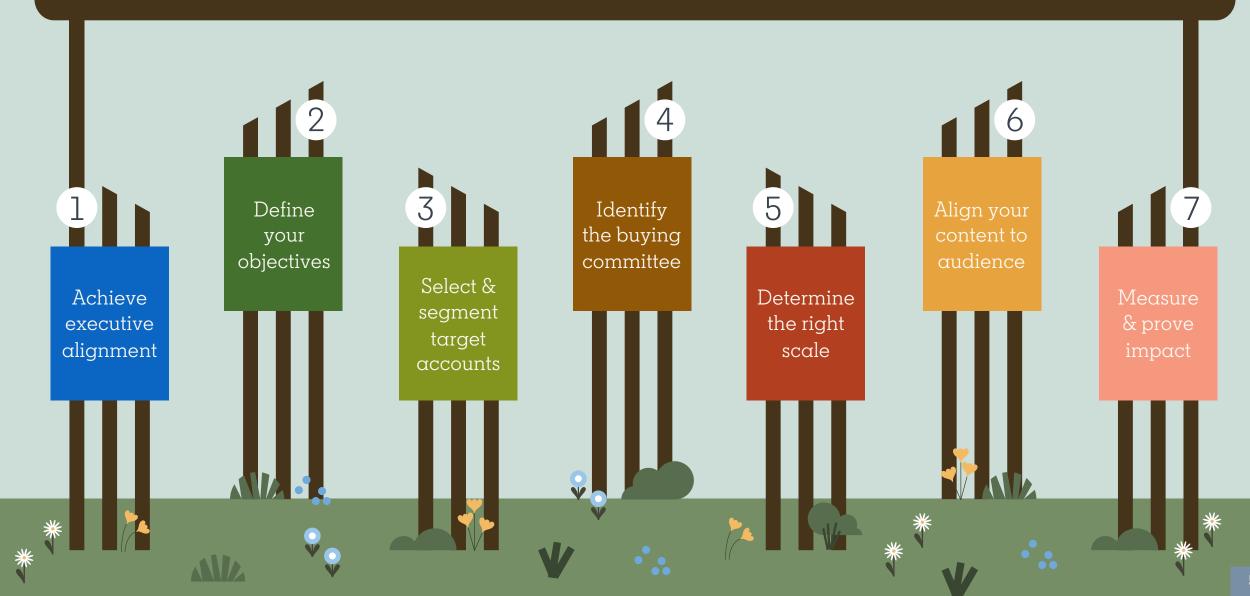
What are your business growth goals?

- Acquisition: We're struggling to turn leads into customers.
- **Expansion:** We have the opportunity to upsell or cross-sell existing customers to increase average contract values.
- Retention: We want to increase customer retention and decrease churn.

Is your organisation ready for ABM?

- **Buy-in:** We can get marketing and sales leadership on-board for our ABM programme.
- Resources: We can dedicate a portion of our marketing budget to our target accounts.
- Measurement: We are prepared to build new reports to track and measure impact using account-based metrics.

Introducing the Marketer's Framework for ABM Success



Step 1: Alignment Step 2: Objectives Step 3: Target Step 4: Identify Step 5: Scale Step 6: Content Step 7: Measure ABM on Linkedl



Achieve executive marketing and sales alignment

While marketing and sales are distinct functions, alignment is crucial to success. The good news is that ABM by its very nature unites the two teams—as long as they agree to work together in the first place. Make this happen by engaging marketing and sales teams early in the process to agree on joint success metrics so that they can work independently but in unison to deliver an effective ABM programme.

92% of highly successful ABM marketers have strongly aligned marketing and sales teams

When marketing and sales are tightly aligned, marketing-generated revenue increases by 208%

Marketing and sales alignment produces a 36% higher customer retention rate

LinkedIn data shows that increasing engagement between marketing and sales can boost sales effectiveness dramatically



Audiences exposed to marketing messages on LinkedIn are 25% more likely to respond to a Sales Navigator InMail from the company's sales reps



Define your objectives

When marketing and sales teams have the same goal, it's much easier to develop a shared vision. There are **four main ABM plays** that you can pursue, depending on your agreed business growth objectives.

Business goal: Acquisition

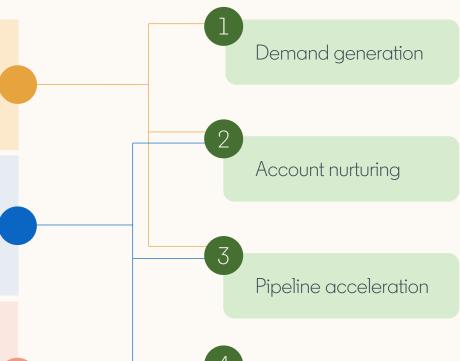
If acquisition is your priority, you'd want to land new companies by guiding new buyers who work at companies not yet doing business with you, from initial inspiration through to purchase.

Business goal: Expansion

For business expansion, you'd want to grow relationships by fostering upsell or cross-sell opportunities with companies that currently use your product or service. This is beneficial for products with tiered offerings or complementary products.

Business goal: Retention

If you want to retain existing customers, you'd want to ensure that they have the information they need, when they need it. This involves delivering relevant, meaningful content to your most valuable accounts.



Account penetration

Step 1: Alignment Step 2: Objectives Step 3: Target Step 4: Identify Step 5: Scale Step 6: Content Step 7: Measure ABM on LinkedIn

1. Demand generation

of marketers who

measure ROI say ABM outperforms other marketing investments

Use it to:

Generate awareness with cold or net-new accounts to improve outcomes for outbound marketing

Make it work:

Share how-to guides, best practices, industry trends, research reports

Look forward to:

Increased brand awareness and engagement, growth in Marketing Qualified Accounts

Measure with:

Growth in number of accounts showing engagement

2. Account nurturing

91%

of ABM marketers indicate a larger deal size

Use it to:

Increase conversion to sales pipeline by engaging key stakeholders throughout an account

Make it work:

Engage with webinars, custom case studies, product demos

Look forward to:

Increased engagement across the entire account

Measure with:

Lead-to-opportunity conversion rate, pipeline created

3. Pipeline acceleration

66%

of companies believe ABM increases pipeline opportunities

Use it to:

Increase pipeline velocity and win rates by engaging a wider audience of stakeholders during the sales process

Make it work:

Offer technical/analyst reports, product and service comparisons

Look forward to:

Shortened sales cycle, faster opportunity progression

Measure with:

Win rates, opportunity-stage conversion rate, sales cycle length, revenue

4. Account penetration

84%

of marketers say ABM helps retain and expand existing relationships

Use it to:

Grow usage of your solutions across the account by tapping into new lines of business or folding new products into the existing portfolio

Make it work:

Develop case study examples of different business units succeeding with your solutions

Look forward to:

New line of business activation leading to an incremental revenue stream

Measure with:

Growth in revenue influenced

Step 1: Alignment Step 2: Objectives Step 3: Target Step 4: Identify Step 5: Scale Step 6: Content Step 7: Measure ABM on Linked



Select and segment your target accounts

A good place to start when selecting your target accounts is by understanding what data you have because an effective ABM strategy relies on high-quality, consistent account and contact data.

Data source	Considerations	
First-party data Your own data	Because this data is directly provided to your company, you own and control it, such as your CRM data. However, this may be incomplete or outdated, and may not provide sufficient scale to help you grow.	
Second-party data A publisher's or platform's data	While this usually refers to compliant data collected through your business partnerships, you wouldn't have control or visibility over how the data is collected and processed, so there may be quality assurance issues.	
Third-party data Data that has been aggregated across multiple sources	Data from third-party providers can help fill gaps in your CRM data and offer insights into customer demand and buying intent. As different providers have different methods for defining intent, some tend to be more reliable than others.	



Develop an Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)

Now's the time to work closely with your sales and customer support teams. Tap on their front-line experience to understand which types of companies see the greatest success with your products and solutions.

First-party modelling is one way to do it.

Take your most successful customers and look for companies with similar firmographic, technographic and economic profiles on LinkedIn.

This allows you to identify new companies that are most likely to match your ICP.

Look for commonalities among your current customers in each company to develop your ICP



Company:

Company Size:
Industry:

Location:

Function:

Job Title:

Seniority:

Skills:

Interests:

(Business or Personal)

Segment your accounts into tiers

With your ICP guiding the way, you will be able to identify a list of high-value, high-potential accounts. As a next step, we recommend segmenting your accounts.

Doing so gives you much greater control over how to steer your investments and efforts. It also allows you to prioritise the accounts that are expected to contribute the most revenue or value to your organisation.

Tier 1

Highest-priority accounts

Tier 2

Mid-priority accounts

Tier 3

Lower-priority accounts

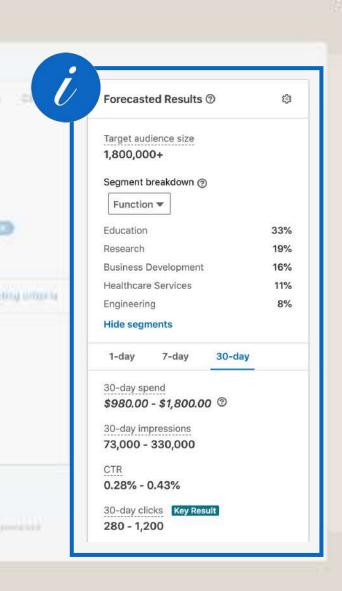


Checklist

It's best to define the account list tiers together with your sales team while considering:

- ☐ Relationship and connection density
- Intent models based on deal stage and engagement
- □ Deal size and potential revenue
- ☐ Client references within the space

Step 1: Alignment Step 2: Objectives Step 3: Target Step 4: Identify Step 5: Scale Step 6: Content Step 7: Measure ABM on Linked



LinkedIn can help

Our first-party, user-provided data is accurate and updated because members are incentivised to keep their LinkedIn profiles fresh for their own business, networking and career opportunities.

Bring your lists onto LinkedIn:

- ☐ Use **Matched Audiences** to upload your target company or contact email lists
- ☐ Use **Audience Breakdown** to find commonalities such as industry and company size

Contact targeting

- Aim for a list size of at least 10,000 email addresses
- If an individual has more than one email address, include them all
- Provide the contact's first and last name as well as company name for more accurate matching

Company targeting

- Aim for a list size of at least 1,000 organisations
- Provide their LinkedIn Page URLs for more accurate matching

Our marketing partners can also help with **enhanced audience data**

While LinkedIn is foundational to your ABM strategy, we've developed an ecosystem of marketing partners across audience data, campaign management and measurement.

Our marketing partners can provide you with intent data, for example, to target companies with a high interest in your brand.

Enhance your audience data with LinkedIn's marketing partners













This is a small selection of our partners. Visit <u>LinkedIn's Marketing Partners site</u> for the full list.

"Bombora's Company Surge data coupled with LinkedIn Sponsored Content has increased our ability to reach and convert a highly engaged audience that's inmarket now for the solutions we're selling."



James Kessinger CMO, Hushly

Hushly used Bombora Surge data on LinkedIn to maximise its lead generation efforts. Compared to LinkedIn targeting alone, it achieved:

-79%

Cost per click

+4]4%

Lead-conversion rate

Overall ROI from



Identify the buying committee

As buying decisions become more complex, the buying committee is growing too. Now, an average of 6.8 people are involved in one buying decision. To succeed, you need to build relationships with the entire committee — not just decisionmakers and influencers, but also implementers and end-users.



Have you considered senior individual contributors?

Senior individual contributors are an oftenoverlooked audience. While they may not have any direct reports, they can have a large say in buying decisions due to their advanced domain knowledge.



Reach the full buying committee on LinkedIn

executives who select or recommend new solutions to purchase

63M

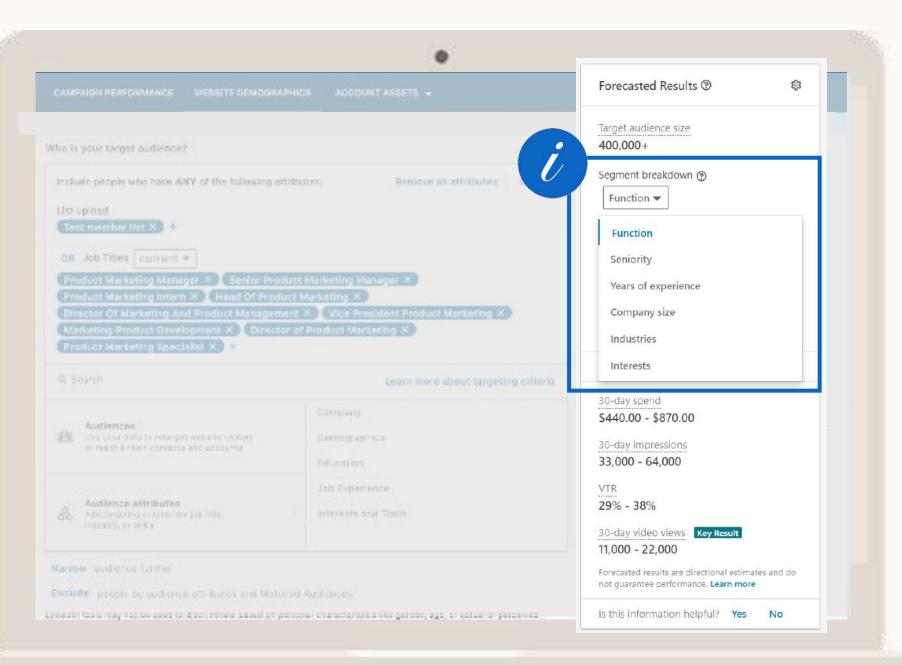
decision-makers who shape the vendor selection process by providing feedback

180M

senior-level champions who seek solutions to be more effective at their jobs

722M

professionals who use LinkedIn to achieve their aspirations



LinkedIn can help

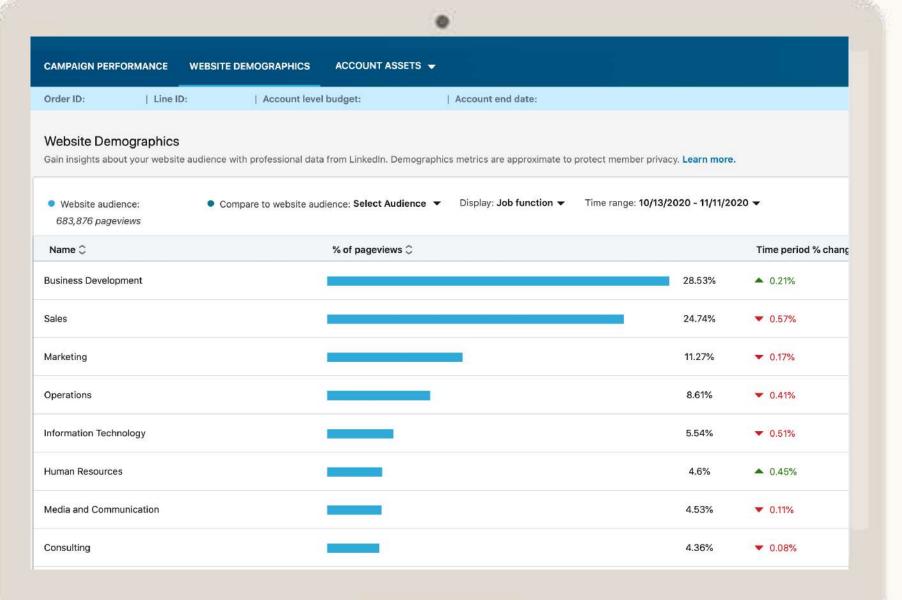
There are three ways to identify your buying committee on LinkedIn:



Segment Breakdown

Upload a contact list and use our Segment Breakdown feature to better understand the demographic composition of your list.

What traits do your contacts share, and where do they differ? These are useful insights that you can leverage to identify key members of the buying committee.

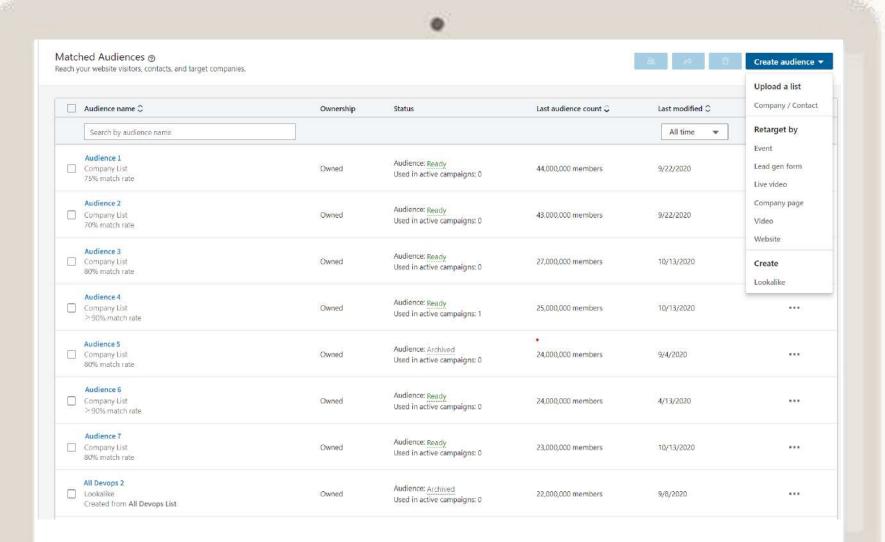


Website Demographics

Install the LinkedIn Insight Tag on your website for a deeper understanding of your website visitors. Filter for product, solutions or payment pages and view who is spending time on these pages and what their demographic profile is.

The LinkedIn Insight Tag is available for free.

Download now



3 Lookalike Audiences

Grow your list by leveraging our Lookalike Audiences feature to build new audiences who have similar attributes to your contact list and/or Ideal Customer Profile.





Determine the right scale

One of the most important things that you need to know about ABM is that there is no one-size-fits-all answer. The spectrum of ABM ranges from one-on-one conversations with your largest accounts, to programmatic ABM targeting hundreds of lower-value accounts. When deciding which scale is right for you, also remember that you can deploy different approaches for different account tiers. Let's consider your options:

1. Strategic ABM

Approach: 1-to-1 marketing Personalisation level: High

Recommended for: Tier 1 accounts or when marketing extremely niche solutions

Tip: When running this on LinkedIn, use company name targeting for 100% matching

2. Scaled ABM

Approach: 1-to-few marketing **Personalisation level:** Medium

Recommended for: Tier 2 accounts or ABM marketers at mid-sized companies

Tip: Create micro-segments of target accounts with similar characteristics or business challenges to deliver messaging that resonates with them

3. Programmatic ABM

Approach: 1-to-many marketing **Personalisation level:** Low

Recommended for: Tier 3 accounts or when targeted demand generation is needed

Tip: Cluster your accounts (e.g., by vertical industries, horizontal functions, solutions or sales cycles) to run relevant campaigns



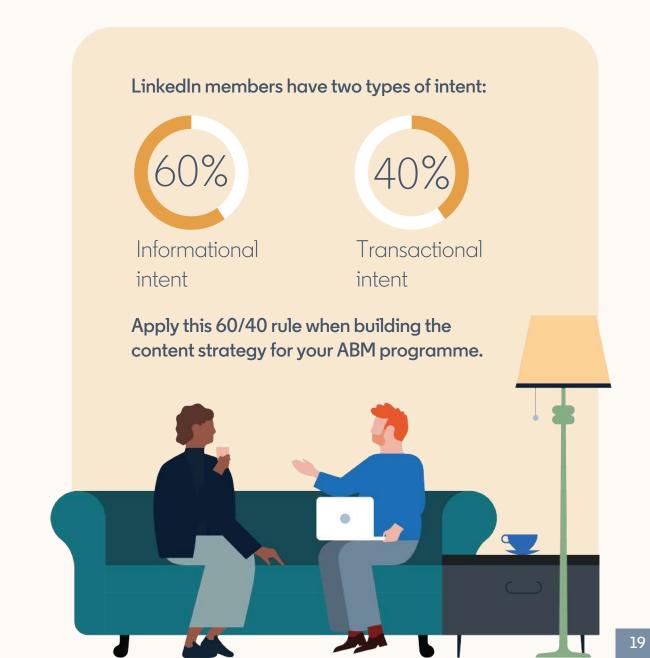
Align your content to your audience and their mindset

On average, each member of the buying committee gathers four to five pieces of information, which may not always tell the same story. They're challenged to deconflict all this information, which is why it's so important that you consistently serve the right content to each buyer at each stage of the journey.

On Linkedln, our members tend to be highly engaged.

They are twice as intent-driven than users of other platforms, which means they visit LinkedIn expecting to learn and be informed.

In other words, they are primed for content that is relevant to their needs.



Strategise your content around your audience's challenges

Audience mindset Audience stage Audience challenge Content approach Content weightage "I'm your target customer, **Build brand awareness** but I am not yet in need of by showcasing customer stories through your product or ready to Problem identification Competing priorities & engaging testimonial videos and relevant evaluate alternatives to what information overload case studies, and sharing thought we use today." 60% leadership through ebooks and guides informational content "I'm researching potential solutions, but I need to know Solution exploration why I should trust you." Nurture consideration & engagement by hosting events, webinars and product Credibility & launches, and share expertise through stakeholder buy-in "I've decided to purchase. industry trend analyses and research Demonstrate to me how you Requirements are going to solve my needs." 40% transactional content Drive lead generation "I've decided to purchase your product. Help me navigate the Selection Accountability with events, webinars, whitepaper contract process." downloads and product guide downloads

Making your content relevant

Your sales team is a treasure trove of information when it comes to developing ABM content. Speak to them to understand the pain points that your target accounts share and use these to inform your content planning.

On LinkedIn, tap on our Content Suggestion tool to discover what content your ABM audience is most engaged with.

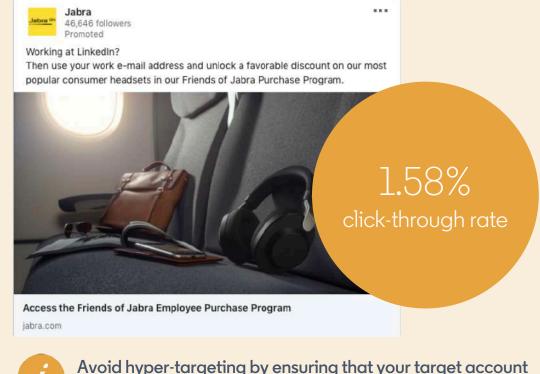
This should spark some ideas for your own campaign.



1-to-1 marketing

Personalise by company name

If you run a dedicated campaign for just one company, grab attention by calling out the company name in your creatives.





Avoid hyper-targeting by ensuring that your target account has a sizeable number of employees

1-to-few marketing

Personalise by stage and engagement

VMware delivered different offers based on the audience's funnel stage and previous engagement behaviour.

In many of its campaigns, it generated 3x higher clickthrough rates and 50% lower cost per lead, compared to industry benchmarks.

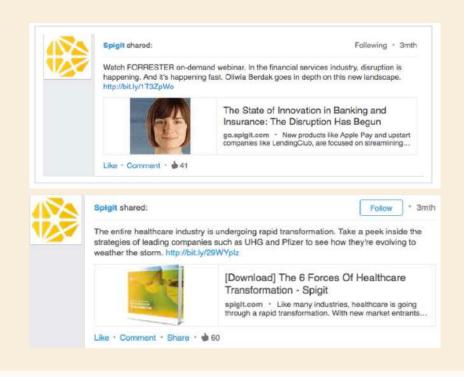


1-to-many marketing

Personalise by vertical industry

Spigit set up six campaigns with original case studies, eBooks and webinars tailored to audiences by vertical.

It earned 7x ROI and 0.8% engagement for specific verticals.

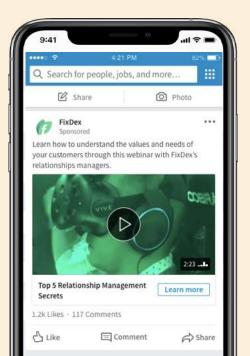


Use the right ad formats for each buyer stage

Linkedln's ad formats are designed to work in harmony to help you advance your objectives at each stage. Here's one way to get started:

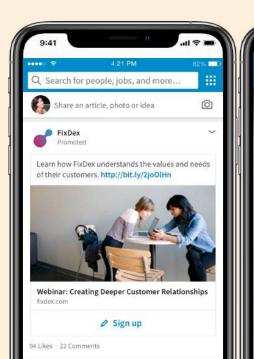
Problem Identification

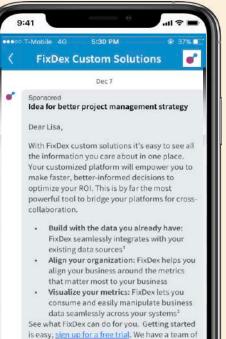
At this stage, focus on building your brand. Use **Single Image Ads and Video Ads** to bring your brand to life directly in the feed.



Solution Exploration

Drive engagement with a feed + inbox approach, using a combination of Sponsored Content and Message Ads.





Selection

Retarget your most highly engaged audiences and drive conversion using a Lead Gen Form in messaging or feed.



Step 1: Alignment Step 2: Objectives Step 3: Target Step 4: Identify Step 5: Scale Step 6: Content Step 7: Measure ABM on Linked

Our marketing partners can also help with **campaign management**

When taking an omni-channel approach, you can bring in a partner to help you more easily orchestrate relevant content across channels.

Our partners in campaign management can help you run multivariant tests at scale and identify your best content performing across paid and social channels.

Manage your campaigns with LinkedIn's marketing partners









This is a small selection of our partners. Visit LinkedIn's Marketing Partners site for the full list.

"Metadata empowered us to make informed strategic decisions about our LinkedIn campaigns almost immediately after launch. The constant dedication of the customer success team to the performance of our program really guaranteed the results we achieved."



Peter Tarrant ABM Manager, Tipalti

Tipalti wanted to generate predictable, qualified leads without relying on standard marketing channels. Metadata enabled its ABM strategy on LinkedIn, resulting in:

500+

Net-new leads

..2M \$330I

in influenced pipeline

in new pipeline



Measure and prove impact

Now comes the most exciting, albeit challenging, part of the ABM process: demonstrating the business value of your efforts.

Since our first step was achieving executive alignment between marketing and sales leaders, you would have already agreed on a set of joint success metrics. This can take many different forms and should be tracked across the entire ABM account journey.



As marketers, your aim should be to measure and optimise for results that you can influence.

For that reason, 60% of marketers use engagement to measure success.



Audience stage

Problem identification

Unique reach

Clickthrough rate

Possible metrics

Solution exploration

Ad engagement
Website activity
Marketing Ready Accounts

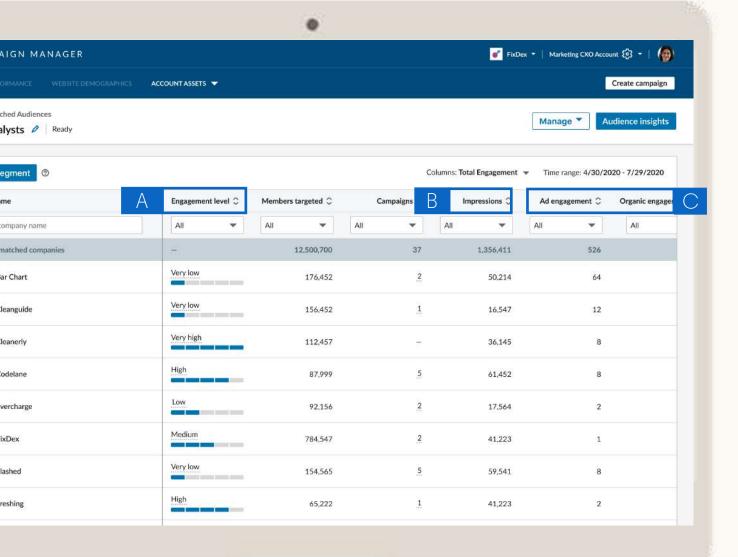
Requirements

Engagement level Leads or conversions Sales Ready Accounts

Selection

Time to close Revenue ROI

LinkedIn can help



Company Engagement Report provides a holistic view of your target account's engagement across your Linkedln marketing activities and views on your website.

A Engagement level

We take organic and paid likes, clicks, shares and comments (and paid video views), as well as website visits to give you a holistic look at engagement levels.

Use this to understand which accounts are showing active interest and are ready for sales outreach.

B Impressions

This helps you understand if your message is getting in front of the people you're targeting with paid content.

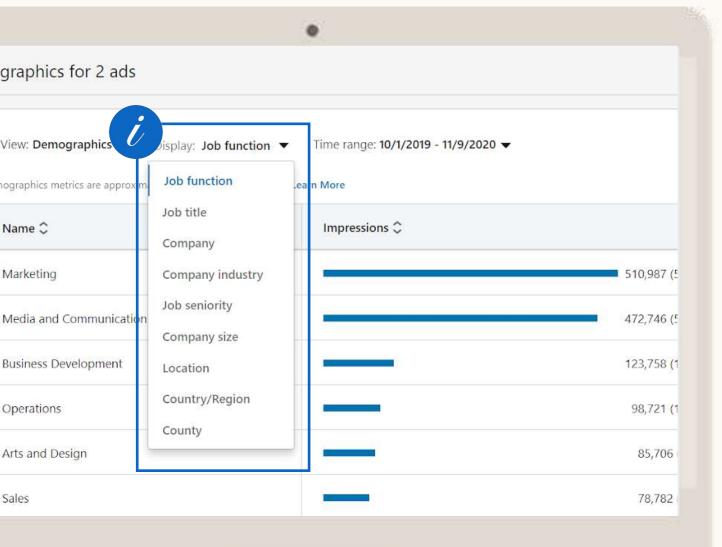
To improve impressions, you may want to reconsider your bid, budget or ad relevancy.

C Organic and paid engagement

These two scores tell you how your ads and organic efforts are landing with your target accounts.

If ad engagement is low, rethink your targeting setup or creative strategy.

LinkedIn can help



Campaign Demographics measure the reach, engagement and conversions you're getting based on your target audience's professional characteristics.

Know who is engaging with your ads

View by company name for an overview of how well your target accounts are engaging with your content, or filter results by job titles, industries and other traits.

Use this to identify your most engaged sub-segments and optimise your campaigns accordingly.

Assess campaign performance

Campaign demographics also offer rich performance insights, including:

- Impressions: The number of people who saw your ad
- Clicks: Total chargeable clicks based on your campaign's objective
- Average Clickthrough Rate (CTR): Percentage of chargeable clicks relative to impressions (clicks divided by impressions)
- Conversions: The total number of times people took a desired action after clicking on or seeing your ad
- Conversion rate: Percentage of conversions relative to clicks (total conversions divided by clicks)

Our marketing partners can also help with reporting and ROI

In addition to the measurement metrics you get on LinkedIn, you may also want to report on metrics such as adoption, churn rate, Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) and Customer Lifetime Value.

Our marketing partners can help you understand the impact of your crosschannel ABM campaigns on engagement and pipeline metrics.

Enhance your ROI reporting with LinkedIn's marketing partners









This is a small selection of our partners. Visit LinkedIn's Marketing Partners site for the full list.

"We can easily visualise all the important account engagement metrics from our Madison Logic content syndication, display and LinkedIn campaigns in one place. That is really, really helpful and it's something that we will leverage in our reports to the business, so they can have those insights and share them with the sales team."

Schneider Electric

ABM on LinkedIn



How Adobe achieved alignment Adobe and ABM success on LinkedIn

Challenges

Adobe faced a scenario that should be familiar to many matrixed organisations with multiple marketing and sales teams: siloed strategies resulting in inefficiencies.

"In order to reduce waste, we turned to LinkedIn to help us connect relationshipbased sales activity with our broader marketing efforts," says Matt Rozen, Director of Enterprise Editorial and Social Media.

Solution

A focused and cohesive account-based marketing framework on Linkedln enabled the team to harness the power of Linkedln's robust member data and advertising tools. Targeting top decision-makers and influencers enabled Adobe to reach the entire buying committee with precision.

Results

Larger deal sizes for LinkedIn-influenced deals, compared to baseline

of closed-won deals in 2018 were influenced by marketing campaigns

Get the full story

ABM on LinkedIn

GENESYS

Genesys uses ABM to break into new markets and cut through noise with LinkedIn

- Created **a foundation of data and insights** by tapping into the power of Linkedln Marketing Solutions alongside Sales Navigator.
- Refined and optimised their process by leveraging key buyer signals from LinkedIn. With these insights, Genesys could make better decisions on how to reach prospects throughout a highly targeted customer journey, using a range of creative methods.
- Involved LinkedIn's marketing partner, Terminus, for campaign management, and adopted a successful framework for identifying and engaging accounts in a unified, strategic way for each stage of the buying journey.

Results

64%

of closed revenue in 2019 was influenced by LinkedIn Sales Navigator

-30%

drop in Cost Per Lead

Get the full story

Let LinkedIn be the foundation of your ABM strategy



Proprietary data and targeting

Rich media suite of organic and paid formats

Reporting & analytics









Marketing partners in audience data



Sponsored Message



Sponsored Content



LinkedIn Events



LinkedIn Live



LinkedIn Market Pages in



Marketing partners in campaign management



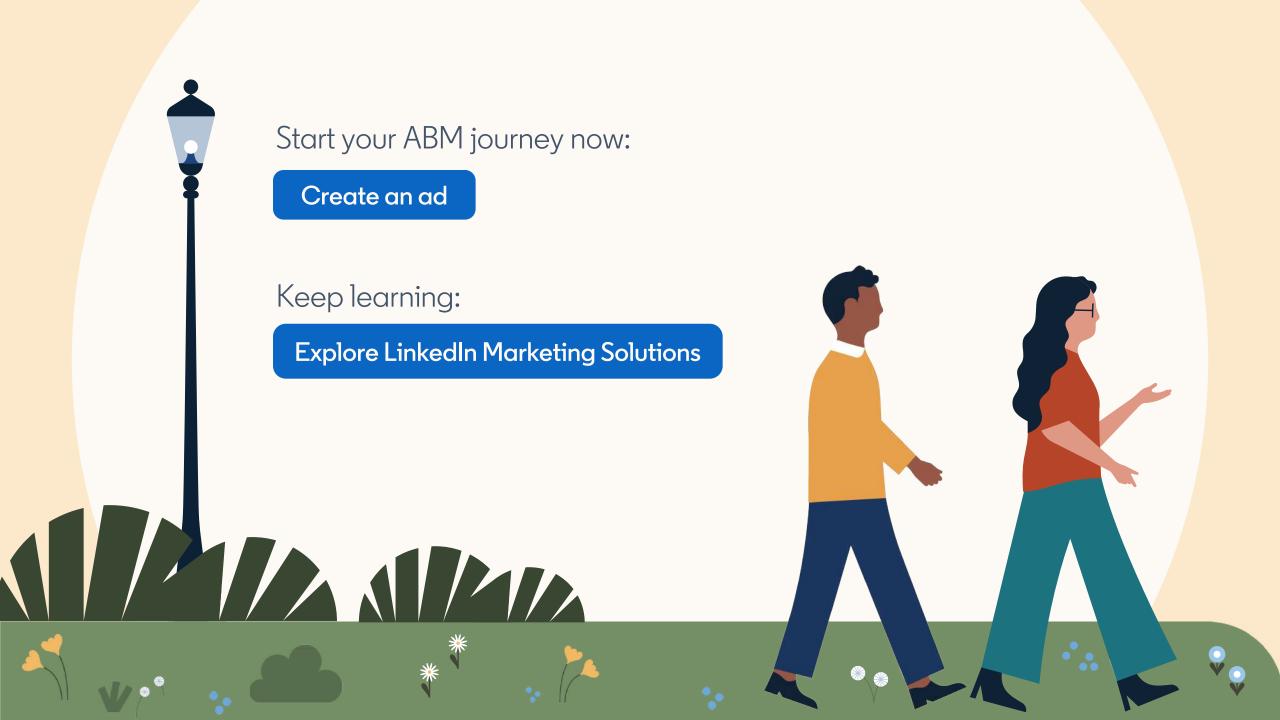
Company Engagement Report



Campaign Demographics



Marketing partners in reporting & ROI



Linked in Marketing Solutions