



How Ready Are You for Account-Based Marketing?

Use these 5 criteria to assess ABM readiness

ITSMA reports that 45 percent of marketers say that Account-Based Marketing (ABM) provides more than double the ROI versus traditional marketing efforts.¹ This is exactly why more and more companies are attempting to move towards account-based marketing. While the promise of ROI is alluring, ABM takes a lot of work and set up in order to see any appreciable impact. Many companies will fail at ABM before they succeed because they are not properly prepared.

This paper will help you determine just how ready your organization is when it comes to implementing ABM.

Assessing Your ABM Readiness

ABM opens tremendous opportunity for organizations that are committed to driving more revenue impact from their marketing investments. While that's a worthy aspiration for any B2B team, it's always wise to check your "equipment" before setting out. **Readiness for ABM begins with conducting an honest assessment of where you are.** As leaders of a significant undertaking, you'll want to open everyone's eyes to where you're starting from. You can do this by evaluating yourselves with reference to five simple criteria.

- 1. Complex purchase process: Is more than one person involved in purchasing your product or service?** Research from CEB shows that, on average, 6.8 people are required to sign off on a major B2B purchase.² That means there are many different perspectives collaborating to reach consensus, including some individuals your

¹ Source: <https://www.itsma.com/research/raising-the-game-with-abm-2018-abm-benchmark-study/>

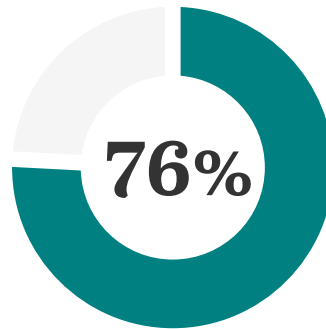
² Source: <https://hbr.org/2017/03/the-new-sales-imperative>

ABM really shines in its ability to reach your most sought-after customers, but unless your company is ready for it, you could find yourself spinning your wheels needlessly and wasting money.

Can you give the people what they want?

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Sales team probably won't have access to or who are not in your current database. **And it's not just pure influencer or decision-maker numbers that complicate the sales process.** There are people from different functions involved, different personae who are all invested to some degree in selecting a solution but who may have very different priorities. With Account-Based Marketing, addressing this complexity involves looking at both individual participants in the sales process and beyond to incorporate understanding of the company dynamics that are in play. You should work hard to align specific messages and message delivery alike to each participating function in the purchase process based on their particular priorities.



of B2B buyers prefer to receive content unique to their buying stage.

–CEB

2. Broader impact: Does your product or service address a real organizational pain?

If individual managers' pain can lead them to buy from you with little outside input, an account-based approach may not be necessary for you. However, if your product or solution addresses a significant organizational challenge, one that requires careful consideration and input from other people, **ABM will help you do the work necessary to communicate** your value to the larger buying group and to the prospect organization as a whole.

3. One and done (Not!): Does your product sell itself in a single buyer interaction? If so, we want to know your secret! For the rest of us, the harsh reality is much different. When the sales process extends for weeks or months,

not only do we have to drum up excitement in the moment, we have to understand where and when to engage a diverse group of individuals over the winding process of their buyer's journey. **Well-constructed ABM is highly effective at engaging in continuous "conversations"** over considerable time. As it matures, your program will extend across many different stakeholders and should involve a range of touchpoints.

4. Is this just another campaign? Or do you want to focus on strategic growth? Like demand generation, ABM programs make a measurable impact on revenue. But unlike

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broad-based demand, the real magic here is that this revenue is not at all random: The program designed to generate it comes from a narrowly defined target set. **ABM programs, by definition, focus your sales and marketing efforts on accounts that are aligned to your long-term growth objectives** and that you

have good reason to invest in because they have a high propensity to buy from you.

5. How adaptable is your company? Do you have good collaborators to help you sustain the effort? Account-Based Marketing programs are **most effective when cross-functional barriers are torn down**, so the whole team learns and improves together. Your ABM program will likely measure different things than you have in the past, and you will challenge many historic assumptions about the growth of the business. The more adaptable your team, the easier it will be to drive a positive business impact.

How Many of These Criteria Do You Align With?

The more of these criteria you identified with, the more likely you will see both short- and long-term benefits from committing to a real ABM program—one that focuses on strategic growth and has measurable impact on revenue. To set yourself up for optimal success, the initial step you need to take is to align the organization, and your marketing and sales processes around the strategy and goals you put in place. After that, you'll need to find the right data. And then you'll want to assemble marketing and sales execution partners to help you optimize and sustain success.

Buyer champions may understand your value proposition but may not be willing to advocate on your behalf. Influencing the full buying “committee” requires understanding perspectives beyond those of just the individuals who will speak directly to your Sales team.

True ABM readiness will be measured by your ability to commit to the program

To assess your ABM readiness, you must be able to thoroughly and honestly answer the 5 questions we have laid out in this paper. Once you are ready to get started, your long-term success will ultimately be determined by your ability to commit to the program. You can start small and scale as you go, but you will want to make sure you have dedicated staff and/or budget in place to make sure you are truly focused on achieving the goals you have set out. In fact, according to our recent research, those companies with dedicated ABM teams in place are 4x more likely to succeed.

As you set out on your ABM journey, you can learn from other companies who have started just where you have and are achieving remarkable success. Download our latest report, [Profiling ABM Success](#) to understand what elements you should consider when building and scaling your own ABM efforts.

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