

Divergent Paths,
Converging Strategies:
ABM Realities and Opportunities in
North America, the UK and Europe

With contributions from B2B marketers at:











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About MOI

O₁ Introduction

Account-based marketing (ABM) has become a pivotal strategy for driving growth, capturing the attention of marketers across many industries. Its effectiveness in delivering high ROI and increasing the average deal size has led 70% of marketers around the world to activate ABM programmes¹. Its undeniable potential means some marketers have become dedicated to perfecting their ABM strategies.

However, there is increasingly a cross-pollination of ABM and demand generation principles, especially in mature markets most notably North America—when ABM programmes are scaled to reach a broader set of accounts.

To help navigate the ABM landscape, this report looks at the evolving definition of ABM in North America, the UK and Europe. It explores the distinct challenges that marketers face, examines the different levels of ABM maturity in these regions, and features the viewpoints and forecasts of senior ABM and marketing leaders.

Going beyond typical B2B perspectives, it also examines the fundamental aspects marketers should consider when evolving their ABM processes, as they look to enhance customer experiences and ultimately improve results.



of marketers see higher ROI with ABM than any other marketing strategy².

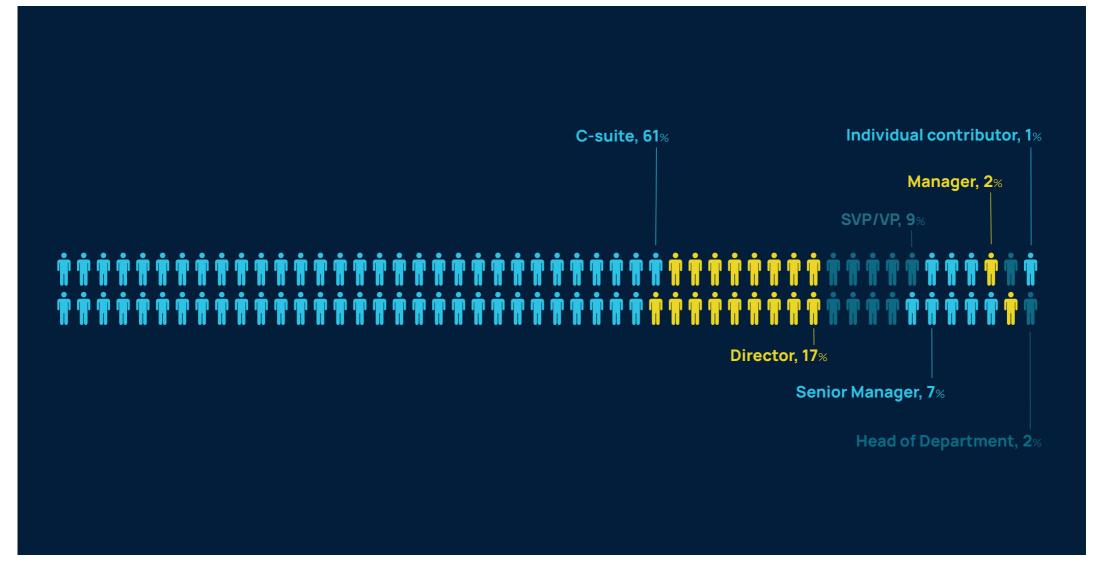
of marketers see an increase in average deal size within ABM accounts when they focus on quality over quantity of leads³.



of marketers claim the current state of alignment between demand and ABM marketing efforts is either broadly or fully aligned⁴.

02 Who we spoke to

As part of our exploration into the state of ABM across the globe, MOI surveyed more than 200 marketers from North America, the UK and Europe.



And to get deeper insights into the space, we conducted 1-1 interviews with senior marketers and ABM leaders from several high-profile B2B organisations.



Joe Schwartz VP Marketing

proofpoint.



Sarah Green VP Marketing, EMEA

zendesk



Jason Zaman Global Digital ABX Manager, North America





Elise Miller Director and Head of ABM. EMEA

servicenow



Maisa Fernandez Director of Global Partner Marketing servicenow



Dara Such VP Customer Enablement and Data Strategy



O Separated by common challenges

Younger buying committees, shifts in customer expectations, complex tech stacks, and uncertain economic conditions are all factors that affect how marketers reach, engage with, and retain business customers.

Marketing approach or orchestrated business strategy?

In the realm of marketing strategies, there's a distinction between true ABM and other approaches that touch upon its principles. Among the senior marketers we spoke to, there are differing views of the role ABM plays and the value it brings, highlighting the varying levels of ABM maturity across the three regions.

Marketers in North America—where ABM began gaining traction in the 2000s (though many companies had been practicing a form of it for years)—have developed a more progressive understanding of what ABM means and regard it more as an orchestrated business strategy than a sales and marketing approach.

In enterprises in particular, ABM is evolving beyond even a matter of 'marketing as usual.' And it's much more than sales and marketing strategically working together-it's becoming the primary business strategy to drive revenue. It's ABM, but it's moved beyond ABM as we know it.

UK and European marketers are at a different level of ABM maturity and are still exploring how best to 'use' it. It's more about personalising content and campaigns and addressing the ever-changing nature and needs of today's buyer groups, with less (but growing) focus on account intelligence and insights. It's still considered the remit of sales and marketing-not an overarching business strategy—and while it's exciting that sales has embraced the concept of it, marketers often find themselves serving specific sales requests rather than investing time and resources around a robust ABM strategy.

Emerging knowledge vs deeper understanding

ABM is the primary strategy we use, at least for our enterprise accounts. We do apply intent signals to our commercial business for prioritisation, but that's not really ABM—it's more an extension of 'old-world' lead scoring.

Joe Schwartz

The 1-1 account activity tends to be more bespoke, with an entire team that approaches it more holistically, but we connect the pieces with 1-few and 1-many through a single orchestrated strategy.

Jason Zaman

Global Digital ABX Manager, North America, Workday

North America

North America

Our marketing generalists who partner closely with sales do programmatic ABM and cluster ABM to some degree. They are also piloting 1-1 ABM in a very small number of accounts. The opportunity lies in deep account insights and intelligence, and cross-functional collaboration. That's the evolution.

Sarah Green

VP Marketing, EMEA, Zendesk

UK and **Europe**

UK and **Europe**

There's a lot of awareness of what ABM is across the business—so the demand is really high. Our challenge is meeting that demand, internally.

Director and Head of ABM. EMEA. ServiceNow

Against a backdrop of such different applications of ABM in these markets, it's becoming clear that the boundaries between ABM and traditional demand generation efforts are blurring.

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Growing ABM revenue in North America

The challenges that come with a vast, complex, and highly competitive marketing landscape, and a growing need to shift from traditional, short-term marketing goals to long-term sales growth strategies, have seen marketers in North America using ABM's targeted approach for some years.

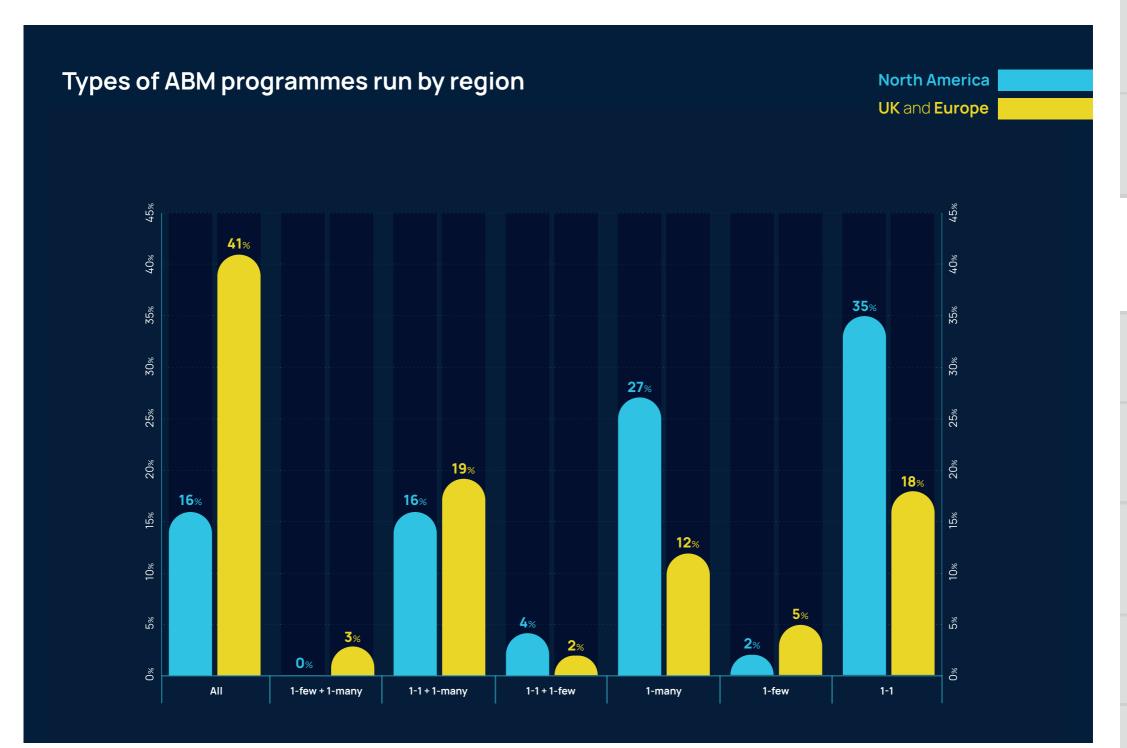
By focusing their resources on high-value accounts with greater potential for revenue generation, the ABM market in North America is expected to grow by more than 12% (CAGR) over the next five years—from \$819.79m in 2023 to \$1.45b by 2028.5

Growing ABM confidence in the **UK** and **Europe**

With the ABM market in North America being more mature, marketers in the UK and Europe look to their transatlantic counterparts for inspiration. In the UK, today's buying committees are larger and feature a more diverse set of empowered buyers—so marketers are increasingly turning to ABM to address a wider range of business challenges, responsibilities, and preferences when engaging with their target audiences.

In Europe, there's an appetite for ABM, but adoption is lower than in North America and the UK. Challenged by many different goals, laws, cultures, and go-to-market strategies across all the member states, marketers are, however, personalising more content and communications.

But to achieve significant and sustainable growth in the coming years, marketers will need to become more ABM confident. This means thinking differently about their entire go-to-market activity and adopting the most efficientapproaches—account by account.



bout MOI

Our research revealed several surprising observations:

UK and European marketers are often running all 3 types of ABM programmes simultaneously, while North America focuses primarily solely on 1-1, supporting the maturation of ABM and the blurring of lines across ABM at scale and demand generation programmes.

41% of businesses in the **UK and Europe** are running all 3 types of ABM programmes, compared to only **16%** in North America

Most marketers across all three regions said ABM should be managed by a specialist team, but 60% say so only because that's how they are currently structured.

21% of North American marketers (where ABM is primarily 1-1) believe ABM shouldn't just be the remit of a specialised team, citing that ABM principles are ubiquitous and should apply to all activities, compared to only 3% in the UK/Europe, which is on a different level of the maturity curve.

ABM teams are consistently large and growing across all regions -79% of them consisting of at least 15 people, with almost a third of teams made up of 30 or more.

Interestingly, the definition of 'team' in North America extends beyond marketing and sales, while in the UK/Europe it is still largely marketers.

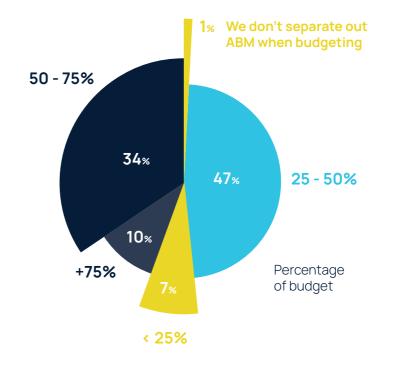
Size of ABM teams



Budget allocation for ABM activities continues to grow, with 44% of marketers allocating more than half their budget to ABM.

> There is little difference in percentage of budget between companies in North America and companies in the UK and Europe.

What percentage of your total marketing budget is assigned to ABM?



With businesses that are running ABM, confidence in resources and skills is quite high, with the UK and Europe edging out North America — 83% selecting level 5 out of 5, compared to 62%.

In the **UK** and **Europe**, respondents cite experience as the greatest contributor to their confidence.

What's giving them such confidence?

	North America	UK and Europe
Our experience	79 %	83%
Access to data	82 %	71 %
Ample resources and training	73 %	61%
Support from the executives	48%	65 %
Our relationship with Sales	55 %	62 %

What do these findings indicate?

ABM is seen largely as a separate marketing discipline in North America, the UK and Europe—with many of our survey respondents agreeing it's measured in different ways to other marketing activities. This suggests that, while there may be a higher level of ABM maturity in the North America market, it potentially reinforces the existence of silos that ABM seeks to break down. However, there is an opportunity for ABM to become core to all marketing activity and organisations in all regions are already making this shift-calling on ABM expertise from other areas of marketing when needed. This is further supported by a significant proportion of the marketing budget being taken up by ABM activity.

It makes sense that ABM teams in North America, the UK and Europe are large, as these regions are typically where global ABM programmes are running and indicates the resource-intensive nature of ABM—a view that's shared by 45% of respondents. As a result, marketers need to ensure they regularly measure the three Rs-Reputation, Relationship, and Revenue—and pivot resources when required to get the most from their investments and avoid wastage.

While confidence among marketers to deliver ABM programmes efficiently (with the resources and skills they have) is similarly high, it is more so in the UK and Europe than in North America, in part due to the differing nature and maturity of ABM and the subsequent relationships with Sales and their executives. The true test of the maturation of ABM to business strategy will be to closely watch how the sales and marketing relationship in North America continues to evolve under the 'business as usual' umbrella.

Fighting the good fight: The business case for ABM, and getting sales and marketing working in harmony (again)

The marketers we surveyed are all dealing with shrinking budgets, greater centralisation, cuts to the workforce, and increased scrutiny. And they face similar challenges in ensuring ABM programmes drive revenue and results. When asked which specific areas of ABM they find the most challenging, marketers in all regions agree that improving the quality, accuracy and availability of data is the trickiest. But when you move beyond that, a different picture emerges.

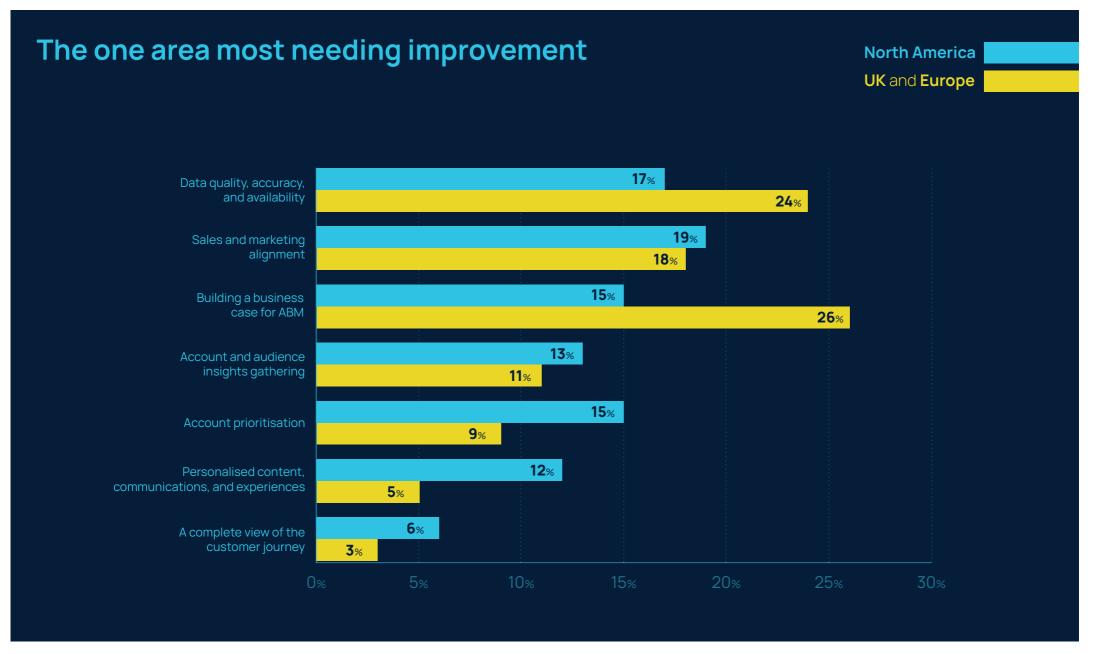
In North America, taking the second slot is the age-old issue of sales and marketing alignment. An effect of ABM becoming more of a business strategy than a marketing approach is that sales is less involved in setting that strategy. Growing numbers of CROs—more and more of whom are coming from marketing—have a richer understanding of (and respect for) what makes a great customer experience, which at the end of the day is the reason for ABM. In a region where so much work has been done to align the teams, businesses are having to find new ways to reunite the two under a more orchestrated strategy.

In the less mature but rapidly evolving markets of the UK and Europe, building a business case to support ABM comes in second. This is not surprising as ABM is still maturing to become part of a comprehensive business strategy defined at the executive level.

Although at different levels across the regions, tactical considerations like account prioritisation, insights and personalised content continue to be shared challenges, regardless of maturity.

Top 5 challenges of ABM **North America UK** and **Europe** Data quality, accuracy, Data quality, accuracy, and availability and availability Sales and Marketing Building a business alignment case for ABM Personalised content, 03 Account communications, prioritisation and experiences Personalised content. Account and audience communications. insights gathering and experiences Account and audience Account insights gathering prioritisation

Interestingly, when asked to select just one area to improve, marketers in North America say they'd prioritise their number two challenge of aligning sales and marketing. Those in the UK and Europe also saying they'd improve on their second-biggest challenge-building a business case for ABM.



The power dynamics that influence ABM



North America

Who is responsible for developing the target account list for your organisation?

With the rise of ABM as a business strategy, we see a different approach to creating one of the foundational pieces of ABM the target account list. While executive involvement in the UK/ Europe has grown, sales reps still play much more of a role in their own account selection than we see in North America.

In the UK and Europe, we're seeing relationships between Sales and Marketing form more organically when developing an ABM strategy—and therefore developing target account lists. While Sales and Marketing are in concert, we do see there are challenges with building a business case for ABM.

In North America, we are seeing more of a top-down approach where the ABM strategy and account selection are established at the executive level. This explains why building a business case is less of a challenge for marketers than in the UK and Europe.

Sage advice from the coal face

Let's have a look at how our experts suggest tackling the shared challenges, including automation in ABM-a topic that's increasingly part of the conversation.

Diving into data and using it effectively

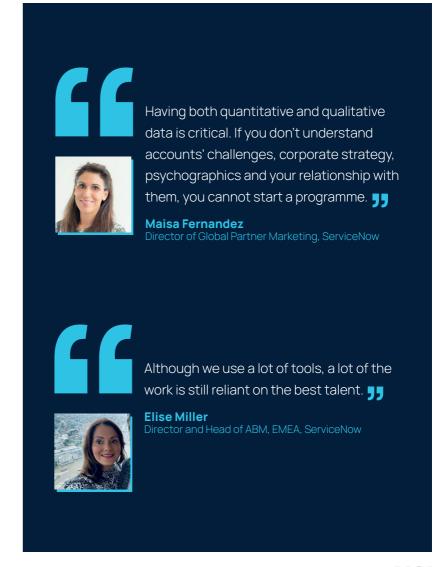
As mentioned, the top challenge marketers across regions identified is the quality and availability of the data they use for ABM programmes. It's widely understood that the success of any account-based programme relies on insight-led planning and engagement. And that with the right data, they can better understand their target accounts and more accurately measure the success of campaigns.

Tools such as intent data, marketing automation, predictive analytics, and purpose-built ABM platforms enable marketers to capture and measure behavioural data of both accounts and personas from a quantitative perspective.

But quantitative data is just one part of the equation. Building a qualitative understanding of target accounts is equally important in terms of setting the context for engagement, which isn't often captured in quantitative data.

Combining both types of data helps define and create contextually relevant content, supports influencer discovery, and informs sales enablement initiatives. It also ensures websites and email comms are efficiently personalised, customer segmentation is accurate, and value propositions and thought leadership content is tailored.

However, many marketers only use data to align their plans with the priorities laid out by their sales teams. To succeed in ABM, you need to use your data more effectively—to make better-informed decisions and tailor your overall strategies to suit your customers' needs, not just those of the people selling to them.



Some strategies and techniques for using data and technology most effectively:

- Take a process-driven approach to technology and data.

 Marketers have a complex tech stack to work with, including marketing automation, CRM, and intent data platforms. For larger organisations, integrating multiple technologies across the tech stack to ensure compliance can be a challenge. By reviewing your existing technologies and processes and having the right people in place to drive integration, you'll ensure you have the right data to form a strong foundation for your ABM programmes.
- > Leverage data throughout the customer journey. Beyond simply using it to understand more about your customers' challenges and needs. From using intent data in account planning, to web analytics to measure engagement, your data can help both Sales and Marketing build a common understanding of your whole customer journey.





Driving successful adoption and integration of a marketing tech strategy requires strong alignment between the right internal and external partners to ensure we are effectively utilising what we have today.

Jason Zaman Global Digital ABX Manager, North America, Workday

Personalising engagement at scale

Personalising your marketing at scale is a big ask. Despite being equipped with multiple data sources, getting hyper-personalisation right can be time consuming and expensive.

Marketers find themselves confronted with the difficult choice between allocating resources and efforts to personalise campaigns for individual customers and reaching a broader audience.

According to a survey by the ABM Leadership Alliance⁶, 31% of European marketers cite language and cultural barriers as a challenge when implementing ABM strategies. Striking the right balance between personalised messaging and reaching a wider market is a constant challenge, one that requires thoughtful strategies and innovative techniques to effectively engage with the range of in-region audiences.



Some strategies and techniques to help you up your ABM personalisation game:

- > Customer experience is key. Marketers in all the regions we surveyed recognise that ABM is not just about marketing campaigns. It's an orchestration of multiple teams to deliver a personalised customer experience. Instead of focusing on siloed sales and marketing activities, you need to create a consistent and unified experience for target accounts whether they're engaging with SDRs or Customer Success teams.
- A growth approach to segmentation. Prioritise accounts by the size of opportunity before segmentation, to determine the level of attention (or resources) to dedicate to personalisation. For example, consider focusing resources on developing unique account plans and offers for larger, late-stage opportunities, to ensure your campaign resonates sufficiently with them, to convert.



Unifying Sales, Marketing, and the C-suite

ABM has something of an identity crisis—the term includes the word 'marketing,' yet its success relies on alignment among an organisation's whole go-to-market team. This means Sales too (at a minimum — let alone product, customer teams, operations, etc). Aligning their goals, and the approaches to achieving them, demands a shift in mindset that will see them collaborating. As key players, Sales must recognise that ABM programmes require a true partnership with Marketing, one that goes beyond merely seeking assistance or support.

Effective alignment demands continuous collaboration, with Sales not only feeding into the programme strategy but also offering valuable inputs, based on customer and prospect interactions, to refine and optimise strategies. Apart from improving customer and cross-functional relationships, alignment with Sales can also help Marketing to better plan resources and shift the working model from deal-based or pursuit marketing, to achieve strategic, long-term growth.

And it's equally important to ensure buy-in at the C-level. Sales and Marketing leaders need to ensure that the C-suite is aware of the impact ABM is proven to have improving reputation and relationships, not to mention its potential for driving revenue.





ABM done right has the whole go-to-market team marching to one strategy, with Sales and Marketing being probably the two most key partners.

Joe Schwartz VP Marketing, Proofpoint





One of the challenges of being an ABM marketer is balancing the long-term view with the short-term. We aim to shift from a reactive approach to a more proactive one by providing sales with options to balance priorities rather than appeasing every request. This helps to gain their respect and gives you more flexibility, but also an advantage in longer-term planning of resources and budget.

Director and Head of ABM, EMEA, ServiceNow

Some strategies and techniques to encourage alignment:

- Align on shared goals and customer objectives. For ABM programmes to work, Marketing and Sales should treat ABM as a shared responsibility and orchestrate multiple teams, including Field Marketing, Customer Success, Product Marketing, and others. ABM programmes typically involve different roles and responsibilities for Sales and Marketing—and regular reviews among the core team can help maintain the momentum towards these shared goals.
- Take the lead on setting expectations of responsibility. ABM in North America, the UK and Europe is recognised as a marketing discipline that provides added value to Sales, but this demands constant education and engagement. Setting clear expectations on outcomes and resourcing can reduce friction between executives in Sales and Marketing when it comes to justifying investments in ABM





Part of our ongoing conversations are focused on continuous reinforcement and education of what our ABX strategy represents and its role in supporting the broader goals we're striving towards as a marketing org.

Jason Zaman

Powering ABM at scale with automation

The B2B buyer's journey is no longer a linear experience—and has become as fragmented as today's buyer groups. So, understanding where audiences are at any time and personalising communications that resonate with them is a huge challenge. 75% of our survey respondents say they're employing more scaled ABM approaches, like 1-many or 1-few, so the ability to scale the prioritisation of accounts and personalisation of experiences could be the difference in whether their marketing efforts resemble demand generation or ABM.

Many marketers are already leveraging some kind of automation technology to augment certain areas of ABM programmes with buyer insights, to power contextualised and personalised buyer experiences — but not to the extent of what's possible.





Be opportunistic with automation. A simple, yet effective, approach: sync your ICP & ABM lists to automatically identify and add new members of buying groups from sources like Priority Engine to flow into existing campaigns and workflows. This simple exercise expands access to active buyers and helps eliminate "silent buyer blindness" common in today's enterprise buying groups.

Dara SuchVP Customer Enablement and Data Strategy, TechTarget

Some strategies and techniques to leverage automation for powering ABM:

- Use automation for real-time insights. While ABM is a long-term strategy, buyers won't wait around for marketers to update their databases and systems—they'll be moving onto the next stage in their buying journey whether you're ready or not. With greater demands for personalisation and the need to meet buyers where they are, the real-time view of the customer that automation can provide gives marketers a sturdy foundation to succeed with ABM.
- Identify where ABM efforts can benefit most from automation. ABM isn't about generating a large quantity of inbound enquiries; it's about maximising the potential of specific target accounts. And with 1-few or 1-to-many programmes, certain tasks are a strong candidate for automation. Using chatbots or personal assistants enable you to personalise and contextualise common conversations—enhancing customer experiences while also resolving issues faster.



There are so many aspects to a buyer's journey that make it more dynamic and complex than ever before. Our ABX strategy has evolved to incorporate algorithms to track key milestones at the account level to deliver optimised digital experiences, supported by dynamic orchestrations, that effectively meet buyers where they are in their respective journeys.

Jason Zaman Global Digital ABX Manager, North America, Workday



Conversational automation is part of our business today, so we do a lot of experimentation in marketing around personal assistants and chatbots, to use them as part of our ABM strategies.

Sarah Green VP Marketing, EMEA, Zendesk

How will we shape ABM from here?

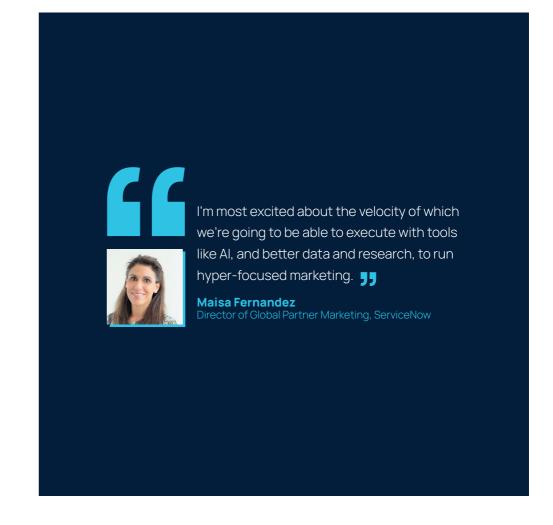
According to Gartner analysis, B2B buying is what's known as "the spaghetti bowl"8, with buyers taking detours, making revisits, and jumping beyond expected stages. In future, customer engagement will centre on personalised and meaningful interactions with everyone throughout the journey, tailored to their unique needs, preferences, and challenges at any single point in time.

We strive for this reality now, and as more businesses get on board with ABM as a business strategy, unifying all teams across the customer lifecycle, this level of relevance, resonance, and value can be realised – even at scale.

And with customer experience at centre-stage, marketers will increasingly move towards account-based experiences across all marketing, where each decision maker and influencer within any buying group is engaged through consistent, relevant, and personalised journeys.

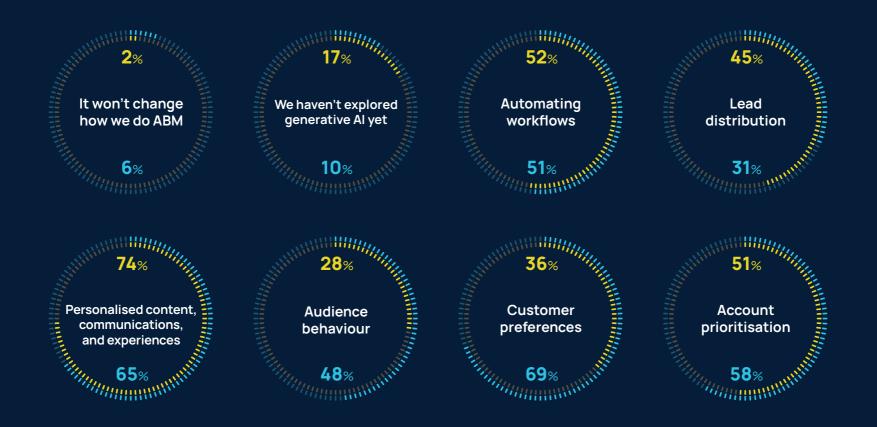
The good news is that we are seeing successful application of automation and Al for ABM programmes, cutting across areas such as prioritisation of accounts, personalisation, and localisation.

Soon, we'll see Al-driven large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT revolutionise personalisation and language translation. As these LLMs improve over time through better data training, hyper-personalisation at scale could soon become commonplace.



How will Gen Al affect your ABM programmes?





To achieve truly effective customer engagement, marketers will need to leverage both data and technology, without losing touch with the humanity required to create great experiences. Comprehensive data insights will enable a deeper understanding of customer behaviour and preferences, so that marketers can produce hyper-relevant content and deliver it at the right time — while advanced marketing technologies (think Al-driven personalisation engines and marketing automation platforms) will do the 'hard miles' in terms of delivering seamless and consistent customer experiences, across all relevant touchpoints and channels.

What our marketing leaders say excites them about the future of ABM



We have a lot of young talent whose eyes are popping at the thought of learning about ABM and applying more ABM approaches to marketing—so that is super motivating.

Sarah Green



We're looking at tools that will help us to reach the end result more quickly—potentially some efficiencies around the use of Al voice in development of videos for example.

Elise Miller

Director and Head of ABM, EMEA, ServiceNow



Al will help marketers in general be more intelligent and relevant in how we talk to people. What that looks like in practice will be a lot of smart marketers talking to each other and sharing what they've experimented with.

Joe Schwartz



We're all excited by Al—it's been stimulating to see how much marketers have been able to accomplish through the power of Al, and I think there's so much more potential that is yet to be realised in terms of how it can enhance digital experiences for audiences and streamline complex decision-making for marketers.

Jason Zaman



There are some exciting possibilities in using high-quality contact & account intent together in ABM GTM motions. With the amount of research account buying groups do outside of vendor-owned channels, visibility into what they do without you provides a far more complete picture of real prospect & customer behaviour. Using multiple kinds of intent is key to realising value from Al and enables more personalised experiences today's buying groups expect from vendor interactions.

Dara Such

VP Customer Enablement and Data Strategy, TechTarget

The organisations we surveyed and the marketing leaders we interviewed agree that the dynamic landscape of ABM in North America, the UK and Europe, combined with the increasing applications of technologies like Al and automation, present marketers with a range of challenges as well as exciting opportunities.

But to balance quick wins with long-term growth, ABM needs to move beyond the realm of sales and marketing and become core to the business strategy. Customer-centricity must be the remit of the entire business, informed by the creative use of data and orchestrated across the complete customer lifecycle.

In North America, marketers understand the growing scale of ABM, but while the UK and Europe may be behind in the ABM maturity curve, this needn't be a daunting evolution. Adopting a new mindset and identifying the small changes required to evolve go-to-market strategies will result in greater value from budgets, higher win rates, and larger deal sizes.

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MOI Global is a multi-specialist B2B agency with offices in Singapore, Sydney, London, New York, and Dubai. We turn traditional marketing on its head by putting better customer experiences at the core of growth. Instead of relying on old playbooks and recycled tactics, we're redefining what 'effective marketing' looks like in the on-demand digital economy.

We believe it's time for B2B marketing to feel a little less like B2B. Less about how you want to sell, and more about how your customers want to buy.

Our expertise in Account-Based Marketing, Account-Based Applied, and Account-Based Experiences combine with our core services—Intelligence, Creative, Content, Events, Media, and Digital—to deliver predictable growth from being a brand customers believe in.

Through our divergent thinking methodology (known as Turning Heads™), we make room to think more laterally about your customers—building brands that speak to their ambitions, delivering simplicity across their experiences with you, and capturing their demand in ways that don't feel so demanding.

Learn more about MOI's perspectives and how we help organisations improve their ABM programmes.

Connect with us here.

About MO