

# How to Use Business Developers to Execute Account Based Marketing Tactics Successfully

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Even though the sales, marketing and business development people work together to plan and implement account-based marketing tactics, the business development reps are the first to connect with prospects. And that connection is person-to-person.

## **The Preconditions for Account-Based Marketing Success**

This human way of marketing and selling works well if you have the foundation in place, which includes:

- An accurate profile of your ideal customer
- Agreement between marketing and sales that account-based marketing is the right strategy and a readiness to march forward in lockstep

## **Select Accounts You'd Love to Land**

Before your reps can do anything, you need to select your target accounts. Start by determining the firmographics of your best accounts and those companies you would like to add to your roster of customers. You want to target companies whose firmographics match this profile.

The catch, however, is that not all of them are in the market for what you sell. So you need to add a dose of predictive marketing — analytics of online activities that can predict buyer intent. By bumping your ideal customer profile up against data that tells you who is in the market, you'll come up with a list of organizations that are worth a dogged pursuit.

## **Build Your Database**

Next, determine who you want your reps connecting with at each account. It's not one person. You need to reach out to the entire web of individuals involved in the buying process — buyers, influencers, decision makers, users and gatekeepers. To increase the chance of a favorable deal, your reps must build relationships with as many of these individuals as possible.

Build up your database with contacts at your targeted accounts who you suspect are members of the buying team. You can gather some of this information using online tools. Supplement it when you start talking with people at the company. Don't put this sleuthing task on the shoulders of your sales people. You pay them too well for such a time-consuming activity. Plus, it's not what they do best. Business developers and marketing personnel can piece together the data you need.

Also, remember that mapping the lay of the land inside a company is not a one-and-done task. You're dealing with a live organism. People move onward and upward. So update your information as necessary.

## **Reach Out and Convert Large Accounts**

When your business development reps reach out, they need to do so in a way that provides value, showing they understand the challenges facing a particular business

and industry and providing insights that help. So they should research the companies before they pick up the phone to understand their problems.

They can make initial contact using the phone, a personal email or via social media. All prospects are different, so you never know which method works best until you try it out. However, in general, you'll get best results by employing two or three channels.

Of all the channels, however, the phone is probably most important. That's because it's the most personal medium for developing a relationship. Also, it allows for a two-way conversation in which you can gather intelligence that enables you to provide greater value in your future communications. Also, you'll likely learn that each division and department within a large enterprise has different needs, budget levels, buying processes and timelines to make their decision. Gaining this information enables you to customize your approach further and stand out from your competitors.

Of course, you won't always reach the people you call. Don't give up though. Make friends with voicemail. Even though most business people will not return the call, they will listen to it. Treat it as a stepping stone. If the contact likes what a rep has to say, they may be more likely to respond later to an email or pick up the phone the next time the rep calls. For the voicemail to make such an impact, it must be positive, tailored and provide value. If the contact can quickly answer what's in it for them, he or she is more likely to respond.

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