

For Quick Success with Account-Based Marketing, Begin with Your Current Customers

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How to Get Up and Running with ABM Quickly

But where do you start?

Because it's risky to move all your marketing to a new methodology at once, it makes sense to start in one small area. After all, you likely cannot afford to stop generating leads while you build the foundation for ABM. It takes time to profile your ideal accounts, identify the ones you want to land, learn their pain points and identify the internal decision makers and influencers, and reach out to them with

the right message.

Most companies like to begin with a pilot program, which enables them to see the results they can achieve with ABM and work out the kinks. To make the pilot as easy as possible, you may want to dig deeper into current customers. After all, one of the guiding principles behind ABM is to land and expand. You've already landed your customers. Now it's time to expand.

How ABM Helps Mine the Potential of Customers

Salespeople are usually aware of the capacity for growth within their existing accounts. Sadly, however, in the past, they've tried to manage expansion with little help from marketing. ABM now brings the two teams together in a joint venture to increase revenues from your customers. Also, it's a venture that's likely to be successful because your organization already has relationships, so you're not starting from square one. Here are the steps to take:

- **Step 1: Target Key Accounts and Decision Makers**

You likely do not have the resources to administer your ABM program to all your customers, so first determine which accounts you want to target. A team that includes representatives from both marketing and sales should create the priorities. Once you know which customers will be part of your program, your salespeople can educate the whole team on any internal initiatives at these organizations that may influence the prospects for new business.

Listening to your salespeople, however, is not the end of the research. Business development reps can use Sales Navigator, a LinkedIn premium package, to find decision makers in departments or divisions of your target accounts to which you are not currently selling. LinkedIn designed Sales Navigator specifically to help salespeople focus on key accounts and decision makers. Once reps save these individuals as "leads," Sales Navigator will notify them of their updates even if they are not connected. Other tools provide similar functionality on the company level, such as InsideView and Hoovers from D&B.

- **Step 2: Build Tailored Content**

Customized content is an essential ingredient for successful ABM. Why is this

approach so important? The Information Technology Services Marketing Association (ITSMA) revealed in research that most executives, three out of four, will read unsolicited marketing communications that are relevant to their business.

Given that people within your organization have a better understanding of your customer than they would have of a new account, the task of creating relevant content should be comparatively easy. If you already have a white paper, you can customize it to a specific customer. Start with simple changes, such as inserting the company's name in the title and other appropriate places throughout the document. Also, customize parts of it to show your understanding of the customer's challenges. Plus, add success stories and testimonials related to the parts of the organization you're already serving.

- **Step 3: Start the Outreach**

Business development reps can keep an eye on what decision makers at target customers are saying on LinkedIn, make comments and reach out to them via *personalized* InMails to solicit an opportunity to connect via phone. The key to your outreach is to build on your existing relationships within the account. If you can name drop, do. If you have a success story to tell, share it. Supplement your InMails, emails and phone calls by sharing your customized content.

In addition to manual research and communications, you can use automated tools to reach the right people. First, you need to create ads that talk directly to decision makers at your chosen accounts. Then use Internet Protocol (IP) targeting to reach the right people wherever they surf the web. Every device with Internet access has an IP address that helps identify the company that owns it. Of course, you don't want to target everyone within an organization the size, for instance, of Walmart. Luckily, IP solutions now layer data that enables you to micro-target within a business.

So schedule a meeting between sales and marketing to determine which customers are ready for sales expansion, create content that's relevant to them, and reach out to them both manually and using IP targeting. It's an excellent way to get started with ABM while not diverting too many resources from your existing lead generation efforts.

Call us at +1 718-709-0900 (US) or +39 06 978446 60 (EMEA), or contact us online to find out how we can help you with account-based marketing.

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