

# Tackling the tough questions in B2B

There are some conundrums in business-to-business marketing that never seem to be solved. We asked our team to dig into the problems one by one and share advice on how to overcome them.



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## Why is it so hard to scale ABM without losing effectiveness?

**H**ow often have you heard a busy person say, 'I wish I could be in two places at once'? That's the conundrum facing B2B marketers who want to scale their 1:1 or 1:few ABM programmes. Scaling 1:many ABM is an easier prospect – particularly where it crosses the murky line into personalised demand generation – because you can lean heavily on technology to help. But at the upper end of the ABM triangle, effective scaling relies on people, skills and experience.

To maximise your chances of scaling successfully, you need to weigh up whether or not you're ready before agreeing to expand. If you're the one pushing to grow the programme, do you have enough evidence of success

to justify your organisation dedicating more budget, staff or resources? Increases in those areas will lead to increased scrutiny of your programme.

It is possible to scale 1:1 and 1:few ABM effectively, as long as you're aware of the potential pitfalls and how to avoid them.

### The path of least resistance

Your ABM pilot is showing excellent results. Where do you take it next? Look for your strengths and build on them rather than jumping to a brand new area. If your pilot was 1:1 ABM into five financial services accounts, roll it out to 1:few in the same sector and geography. If you started with 1:few in a sector like manufacturing, you might be

able to expand to a different geography – whereas if you started with local government, that would be harder to transpose to a new region.

### The danger of ‘shadow’ ABM

Where I see organisations struggling to replicate success is where there’s not enough central control. The central ABM team should onboard and train others; setting out playbooks to follow and governance to keep teams on track. There will, naturally, be cultural differences: you might allow for 10% local flexibility while 90% of the programme follows the central blueprint. If there’s no consistency, not only will you waste the learnings from your pilot, but other teams will lose faith in the programme. If the central team runs three-hour workshops but the local sessions are only an hour, salespeople will compare notes and question the value they’re getting.

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### Don’t go it alone

Who’s your ABM champion in the local region or business unit? Find someone

who’s passionate about the programme: give them the same training you’ve had, expose them to your approach and show them what good looks like.

Beyond the marketing department, create the right mix of talents and skills by integrating and collaborating with key business units like customer success, business value, partners, and innovation teams. These are what I like to call ‘high-potential integrations’, making the most of additional expertise and resources that you simply don’t have access to when just acting as an ABM team, allowing you to improve, innovate and scale your programme.

### What’s holding you back?

A common misconception is that specialist ABM technology is the silver bullet to achieving scale. If you analyse what the real stumbling blocks are, there’s often a different solution. Are

can help localise effectively. Do you have gaps on the data side? You might need to invest in more data building and management capability. Is the issue project management? It could be time to look at the team you have in place.

### Shouting about your success

When it comes to making the case for scaling a programme, you’ll need a mixture of qualitative and quantitative evidence of business value. A single story of success could be a powerful motivator if you’re demonstrating that deals are closing quicker or you broke into new areas of a key account. Being able to compare your ABM accounts with lookalike accounts can provide you with compelling evidence to expand the programme. And no matter which industries or regions you expand into, you’ll need to take a unified approach to reporting on success, so you’re always comparing apples with apples. Think about which KPIs can be used across the board so you produce consistent core metrics.

When it comes to how you share the reports, it’s worth thinking about that 10% flex I mentioned earlier. You’ll find that different executives in different regions are more accessible than others and have different preferences for reporting, so build that into your approach. ▾

For an example of how an award-winning ABM programme scaled globally, watch this webinar with ServiceNow

