

# **Cutting Through the Noise: How to Create Your Hyper-Personalized ABM Strategy in 2023**

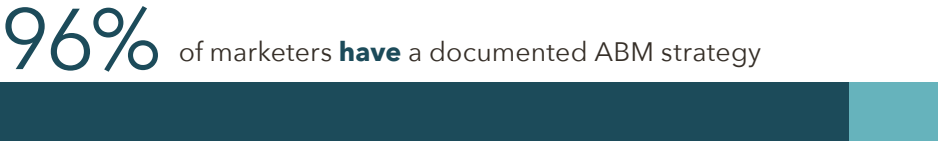
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# INTRODUCTION

Although selling to the account rather than to an individual isn't new, it seems like account-based marketing (ABM) is all the rage today. According to [Foundry](#), 96% of marketers have a documented ABM strategy, and 94% rate it as extremely important to their overall marketing success.

Even as corporate budgets are cut left and right in the current economic climate, 87% of marketers are increasing their ABM budgets, finding it a valuable strategy for acquiring new customers, upselling existing customers, and accelerating pipeline. However, one of the biggest ABM challenges is "getting to power"—as in getting executive decision-makers involved and engaging target accounts.



We sat down with [Rachael Tiow](#), B2B SaaS advisor and ABM Leader, and [Jessica Fisher](#), director of demand generation at Sendoso, to learn how to execute a solid ABM strategy in 2023 that will improve win rates, align sales and marketing departments, and ultimately drive more revenue. Whether you're brand-new to ABM and this is your first program or you're a seasoned pro, you're sure to benefit from our tips and best practices on setting your ABM programs up for success.



Rachael  
Tiow

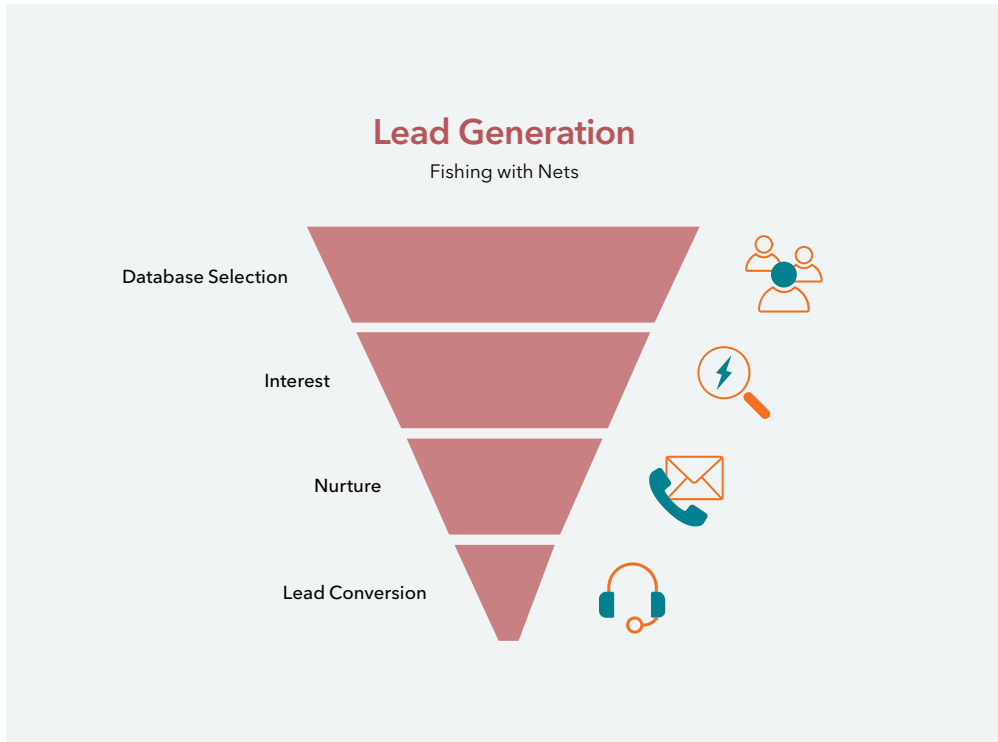


Jessica  
Fisher

# WHY ACCOUNT-BASED MARKETING, AND WHY NOW?

An ABM strategy engages high-value accounts with personalized messages and targeted content. Account-based marketing aims to target fewer, higher-value accounts than traditional marketing campaigns, making it especially beneficial during an economic downturn.

Director of Demand Generation at Sendoso, Jess Fisher, defines ABM as “the coordination of valuable, personalized experiences delivered across all functions that impact customer engagement and drive conversions on a targeted set of accounts.”



One of the main differentiators of ABM from traditional marketing is that it's primarily intelligence-driven. ABM campaigns require you to use data at every touchpoint to gain a deeper understanding of target accounts.

These data points are also crucial to understanding how the campaign is performing, whether accounts are engaging, and how quickly opportunities progress through the pipeline. ABM uses data to continuously optimize at every campaign stage to ensure a successful outcome.

Here's how different teams within an organization collaborate to deliver ABM success:

- **Marketing**—Marketing teams ultimately drive the ABM strategy and execute the tactics. They put together programs that engage target accounts and then work closely with sales and sales development reps (SDRs) to ensure the campaign performs.
- **SDRs**—Reps coordinate the outreach and follow-up for ABM programs, helping nurture target prospects through their buying journey.
- **Customer Success**—Customer success teams take over once the deal has closed and the goal becomes growing the target account. They focus on providing outstanding experiences to nurture the relationship and ensure ongoing customer loyalty.

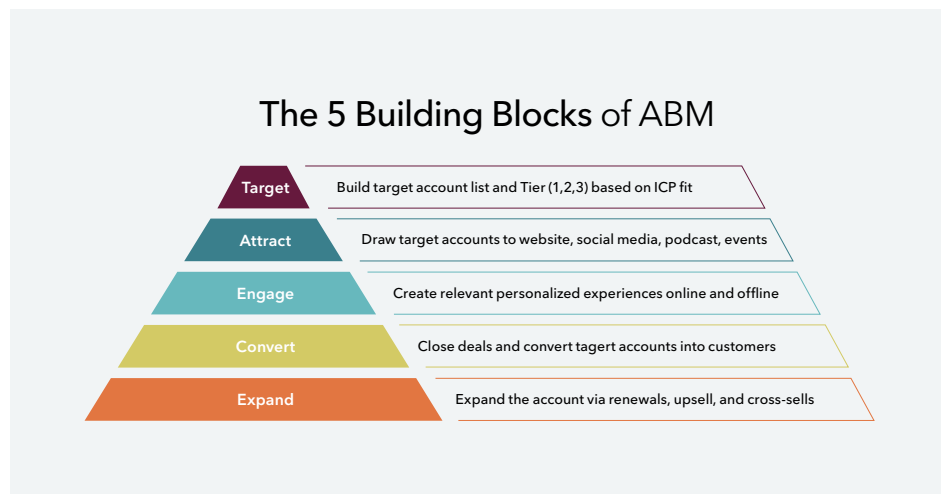


# HOW TO DEVELOP AN ABM STRATEGY

Account-based marketing aims to connect with new prospects, generate business opportunities, increase brand awareness, cultivate business relationships within specific target accounts, and close more deals. Here are the steps you can take to create a successful ABM strategy.

## Step 1: Leverage intent data to build out your target accounts

Marketing and sales should never build target account lists in siloes. Instead, building targeted account lists needs to be an orchestrated, collaborative effort. All revenue-critical teams should come together, understand who their target accounts are, and define goals within these target accounts.



## Decide what type of intent data to use for your ABM campaign

When choosing the intent data you'll use in your ABM campaign, an ideal place to start is with the buying stage. The accounts you'll want to target will ideally be in consideration or higher. You'll also likely want to target accounts in the market for your solution that are actively researching, understand what you do, and are aware of your competitors.

## Tier which accounts you want to break into most this year

Your Tier 1 accounts are those on which you'd be willing to spend the most time, budget, and resources. Next, think about the accounts that most deserve your people, attention, and effort. Remember that Tier 2 and Tier 3 accounts will receive less time and resources, but they'll still get a personalized approach.

## Determine which tactics you'll use to attract your audience

After you align with sales on target accounts and personas, you'll determine how to get in front of your target audience and capture their attention using various tactics. These can include social media, digital ads, email, podcasts, intimate events, sales outreach, and direct mail. It's important to have the right mix of channels to engage with your audience and stay relevant.

## Step 2: Research your target accounts

One of the most critical aspects of any ABM campaign is gaining a deep understanding of decision-makers so you can target them with relevant messages. Relevant messaging is critical in today's noisy digital landscape filled with marketing messages.

"Your goal should be implementing ABM tactics that allow you to cut through the noise and stand out," said Rachael. In addition, she recommends "emphasizing what makes you different and why they should take action now versus putting it off."

Rachael said she coaches SDRs to “go online and search top challenges and priorities of target accounts. For example, ‘top challenges or priorities of CMOs in the FinTech industry.’ Plus, in this day and age, everyone’s got an opinion, and they love to post it on LinkedIn. So do a bit of research and see what they care about. What do they share? What do they comment on? Be curious.”

Sendoso research confirms Rachael’s advice, revealing that [96%](#) of decision-makers felt overwhelmed by the number of salespeople trying to get their attention. Decision-makers return to work on Monday morning to find inboxes full of sales outreach and immediately start hitting “Delete.” Or maybe they log into their LinkedIn account and discover their InMail is full of outreach messages.

Rachael urges marketers to “write a message that captures their attention. That message is the puzzle you’re trying to solve. That requires you to understand their challenges and priorities, so your message is relevant in addressing them, and you can always use that verbiage.”

### Step 3: Align marketing and sales around your ABM campaigns

What makes a prospect open up to hear an SDR’s pitch and connect that seller with other decision-makers on the team? Simple: a cohesive message communicated [consistently](#). To align your sales and marketing departments on your account-based strategy, make sure your ABM plan is documented and communicated so everyone is on the same page.

[Marketing and sales coordination](#) lets you deliver cohesive, personalized messaging to target accounts. One of the most common pitfalls is when marketing sends one message to prospects, and then sales sends them a different message.





Creating and aligning on the right message is critical. When you're clear on your positioning, you can align your sales and marketing team on a streamlined message that resonates throughout every channel. As Fisher points out, "The key to an aligned ABM strategy is ensuring all of your efforts are rowing in the same direction as a unified front. Consistency is what creates a unified, seamless buying experience."

### **Siloed-no-more: alleviating sales and marketing tension**

Even though sales and marketing alignment is crucial, sales usually knows which messages will resonate best with prospects. Marketing should get feedback from SDRs to replicate relevant messages and streamline them throughout your company and brand. That way, prospects will begin the relationship with the much-needed trust that accelerates the deal cycle.

Rachael admits that "there's a big unspoken challenge to aligning marketing and sales. Sales sits in the room when marketing is talking and probably whispers, 'Why are they telling us what to do? They haven't sold anything.' Then marketing says, 'We send them all these leads and we build these programs; they're just lazy and don't follow up with the leads.' So it's this unspoken tension, and nobody says it out loud."

To combat this tension, Rachael recommends "making friends throughout the entire chain of command" and "learning and understanding their stressors." She advises that "once you understand the pain on both sides and the goals of both sides, which is ultimately revenue, then you can establish rules of engagement. For example, marketing can communicate before programs go live and ask for sales input. Also, establish clear success metrics, meet periodically, and evaluate whether those metrics were hit. All of this, over time, builds trust."





Knack Shops-Just Breathe Spa Gift

## Step 4: Reach out and engage target accounts

Traditional ABM go-to tactics such as ads, outreach, and emails will only get you so far, however. Marketers and salespeople need to get creative and leverage tactics that help us stand out and create memorable experiences for our target audience. One of the most effective ways to pattern-interrupt and leave a lasting impression is through a strategic gifting program.

Gifting leaves an impact and effectively cuts through the full inbox of cold outreach emails or the voicemail full of cold calls. In fact, [79%](#) of decision-makers surveyed by Sendoso said that receiving a gift from a vendor influenced their decision to take a meeting. And 82% of decision-makers said receiving a gift has positively affected a deal.

Sending high-value gifts to your top accounts sends the message that you're serious about doing business with them. This strategy, in turn, will prompt

the account's decision-makers to take your sales calls and engage with your marketing materials.

Although decision-makers may have different gifting policies, Rachael said her team "started sending our target accounts experiences instead of traditional gifts because experiences are rarely seen as bribes."

Explaining her themed gifting strategy, Rachael said, "we jump-started our ABM program with a summer grill kit. Then depending on who responded, we'd move those accounts to the next stage of the funnel. We also held curated barbecue events. After a long day of meetings, the last thing people want is to attend another webinar or get another set of branded headphones. I think curated experiences can shift a prospect's perspective on receiving gifts."

## Step 5: Measure and adjust your campaign

You can't measure ABM campaigns in the same way as traditional demand generation campaigns. Most marketers are accustomed to measuring campaign success with metrics like net-new leads, MQLs, and opportunities. Measuring ABM performance requires that you measure beyond volume metrics, however, and drill down to understand how tactics are performing at an account level. In ABM, you need to look at the number of decision-makers responding to marketing tactics, the quality of sales interactions, the velocity with which deals move through the pipeline, and overall account engagement.

With ABM campaigns, your prospects may already be in your database, so the goal becomes engaging them by getting them to download your content and interact with sales. Your measurements will include the number of decision-makers who engage within an account and how many respond to sales.

Without ROI, future ABM campaigns won't receive budget, so it's critical to double down on personalization. For example, [82%](#) of decision-makers said that customized gifts are best, but only 32% reported receiving gifts that felt customized. Therefore, instead of sending generic gifts or swag, find out something personal about the recipient and infuse that sentiment into the gift.

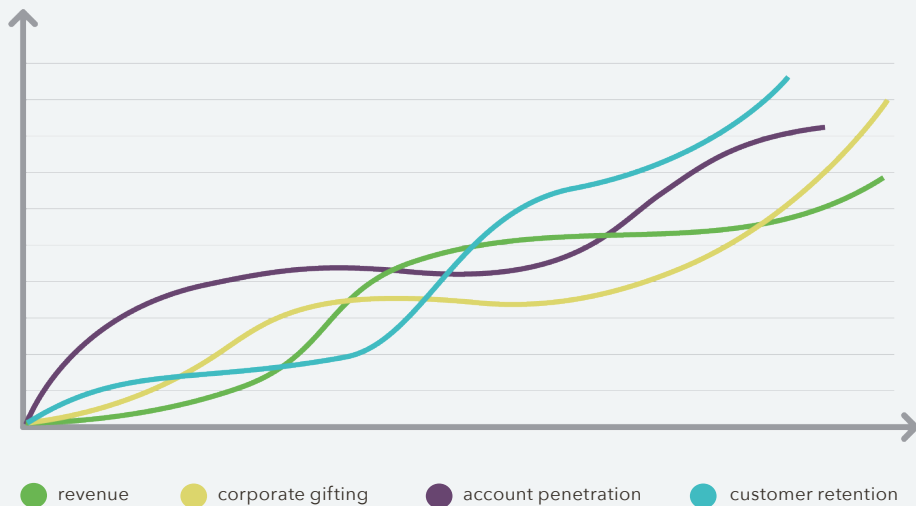
Regarding testing the performance of your ABM campaigns, Rachael recommends "keeping it small and simple, then scaling. I think sometimes people try to boil the entire ocean, and they try to do too much."

"Always start with a pilot first," said Rachael. "Don't use your Tier 1 accounts for experimentation. Your goal is to just make sure that messaging sticks or that the gift you're sending is resonating and landing, and that you see positive outcomes from it. If it does, you can scale it across accounts in different tiers."



# HOW TO MEASURE YOUR ABM CAMPAIGNS

## Account-based marketing campaigns



You can measure ABM campaigns in several ways, including revenue, corporate gifting, account penetration, and customer retention. In addition, you can use the following methods to measure the success of your efforts so you can repeat what works in future campaigns.

## Corporate gifting traction

Corporate gifting is a popular ABM tactic that involves sending gifts to key decision-makers at target accounts. The goal of corporate gifting is to build relationships and ensure your message and brand stand out. You'll measure the success of gifting by the number of responses received, the number of meetings booked, or the amount of deals booked against the number of gifts sent.

One of the most overlooked parts of implementing a gifting strategy is anticipating your decision-makers' responses. Rachael shares how her team dealt with obstacles like gifting policies and gift biases. Her team was "prospecting a group of people already groomed and trained to watch for scams. If they don't know who you are, they're not going to click a link."

After spotting patterns in how prospects responded to gifts, she said, "we changed our approach and created a landing page that didn't request a mailing address. Then, during our regular SDR motion, we'd say, 'I see you filled out the form to receive this swag pack we've built for you. What's your best address so I can send it your way? We don't store any data or personal information; this is all secure.'"

## Account penetration

Account penetration measures how many people within an account are engaged with your outreach efforts. To calculate account penetration,

simply divide the number of engaged contacts by the total number of contacts at an account.

Your level of personalization should increase the further you penetrate an account. So, for example, in the targeting stage, when you haven't yet engaged with the prospect and you're just trying to get a meeting on the books, your gifts could be more generic.

To encourage prospects to take that first step and book a meeting, a powerful tactic is for reps to send gift cards for coffee along with brief meeting reminders. This strategy keeps salespeople top of mind with their prospects but also generates a sense of goodwill and openness to hearing [your pitch](#).

As you move prospects through the funnel, you should take more time to research, understand them on a more personal level, and send more tailored gifts.

## Customer retention

Customer retention measures how long customers stay on board after doing business with your company. First impressions count for a lot, so high customer retention indicates your ABM campaigns started the relationship off on the right foot.

For your closed/won deals, create a strategy for welcoming new customers, onboarding them, and eventually expanding the account. In addition, plan to give them educational gifts throughout the relationship as well as resources for renewal conversations.

Suppose there's a turnover or staff change within an account, such as a new manager or employee. In that case, you could send them something special to celebrate their start and encourage them to adopt your product or service.





*Lula's Garden-Succulent  
with Branded Box*

## Conclusion

Account-based marketing can be particularly valuable when the economy is sagging because companies can concentrate their resources on a smaller number of high-value accounts. Developing an effective ABM strategy requires leveraging intent data to build target accounts and researching those target accounts so you can tailor your outreach. ABM campaigns must also engage accounts with a cohesive message and personalized gifts that cut through the noise and encourage prospects to interact with you.

Marketing is nothing if not an experiment, so measuring and adjusting your campaign as you go is critical. Companies need to push their cohesive messages across multiple channels—including digital and physical—to stand out in today's noisy digital landscape. Corporate gifting is a proven, measurable way to increase account penetration and customer retention.

[Request a demo today](#) to learn how an automated intelligent sending platform can help you deliver a more human marketing experience that generates more leads, lands more meetings, and ultimately drives more revenue.

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