

Intelligent ABM:

Why data is your
passport to success



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Introduction from MeritDirect



For almost 20 years, MeritDirect has been travelling with our clients towards “Higher Ground”. The notion of Higher Ground means many things to our clients and employees, and is the cornerstone of our corporate culture. MeritDirect is as proud of our heritage, as we are excited about our future.

Our solutions areas focus on specific products and services engineered to solve distinct challenges in the data, direct marketing, and analytics space. This approach means that we are constantly in flux, reacting to our customers’ needs and the insights they provide to ensure that we are delivering data-driven products and services that fuel their marketing programs and success.

Our approach is to be ‘client first’ rather than ‘product first,’ as a result we have developed a robust array of tools to serve our clients’ ABM strategies. We don’t believe in a ‘one size fits all’ approach, our talented team focus on client discovery before working to develop individual programs that will meet clients’ needs in order to fulfil their business strategies.

Our in-house data assets and tools such as OmniENGINE help to fuel those programs, but we work with an impressive network of third parties who can ameliorate and round out our offering. The fast pace of emerging data technologies means that marketers have more sophisticated tools at their disposal, intent data in particular has been a game changer for lifting response and reaching those companies already in buying mode for a particular product category. Our approach is to rigorously vet our partners, align with only the experts and create tools that optimize all services and save you the work.

From helping customers understand and monetize data assets, attract and extract value from customers and prospects, decipher and respond to the KPIs of their business or any hurdle along the way, MeritDirect walks with our clients on the road to greater ROI, stronger competitive positioning and deeper, more meaningful and actionable insights.

We hope you get some valuable insight out of our case study on page 11, which is just one example of a client that we work with to fuel their ABM strategy and there are many more, globally. We would be delighted to tell you more so please do not hesitate to contact us.

Karie Burt
VP – International
MeritDirect



An introduction to Account Based Marketing (ABM)

Although ABM is a relatively new term, the core principles of ABM are not. In fact it's been around for almost as long as modern B2B marketing has been around, it was just called something different - Key Account Marketing.

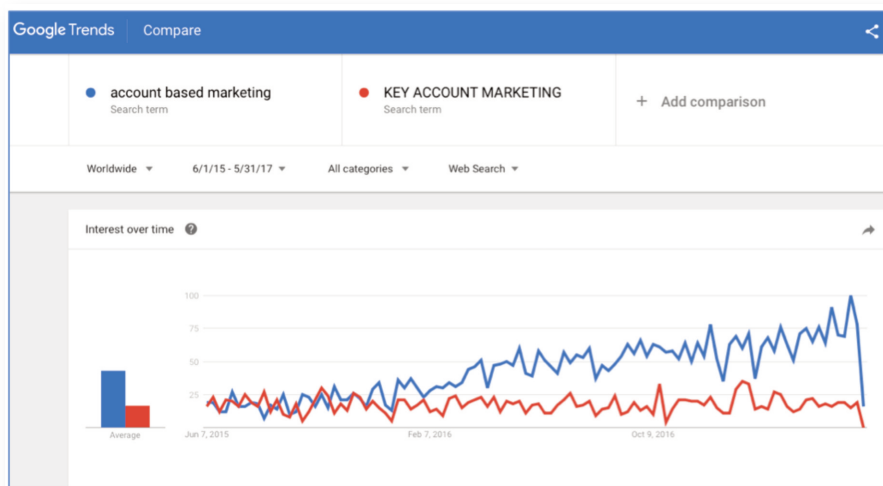
Google Trends clearly shows the move from key account marketing to account based marketing over the last few years.

Do these terms actually mean exactly the same thing? Well yes and no. On a simplistic level they do mean the same thing. However, during the time that ABM evolved as the terminology being used, so did the techniques and approaches used.

Traditionally **key account marketing** was focused on the selection of the organizations to be targeted (but then engaged in a traditional way) while today's **ABM** still includes this crucial

stage but also encompasses the execution of sales and marketing effort in order to **drive account wide awareness and advocacy**.

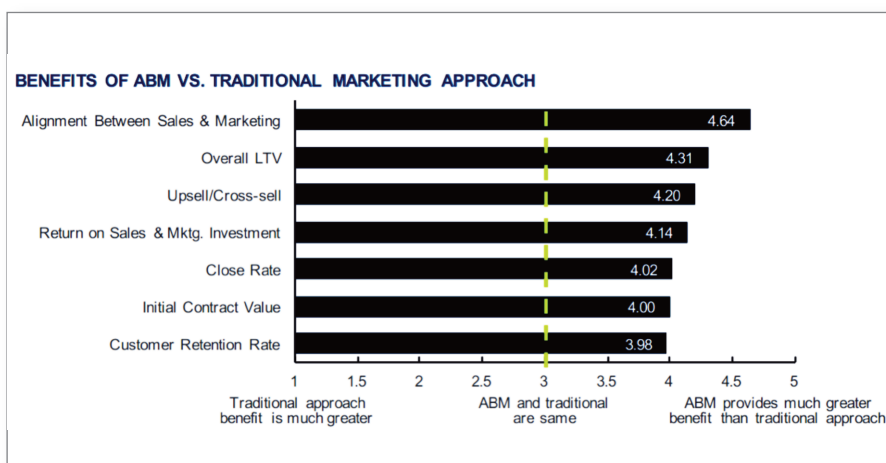
True ABM today is the blend of Marketing, Technology, Content and Processes to create a new operating model for sales and marketing engagement.



The advantages of an ABM Strategy

In the past, ABM was usually only used by large marketing teams. After all, who else would have the resources to focus large marketing efforts on a few accounts. However recent advances in technologies and services mean that ABM can now scale, while costs have been significantly reduced.

Enabled by the latest advances in mass-personalization, attribution, lead scoring, retargeting and programmatic account-based advertising, to name a few, it's now possible to treat an individual company as a market of one — targeted with personalized messages to suit their individual needs.



ABM, in its newest form, finds the right balance between inbound and outbound marketing, online and offline — to create an integrated campaign approach. All focused on the buying influencers in the complex B2B buyer journey.

An introduction to Account Based Marketing (ABM)

Our top 8 reasons for using ABM

1. A focus on a smaller number of accounts allows for the better use of marketing resources
2. More personalized, efficient marketing strategy; creating stronger engagement with prospects
3. Upsell and cross-sell your customers more effectively
4. Close bigger deals within targeted accounts as you have "organizational momentum"
5. Creating a more targeted approach to nurturing
6. The ability to increase pipeline velocity, or to close deals faster
7. Smarter targeting by utilizing a wide range of data sources, reducing wasted media spend and sales effort
8. Aligning your marketing, sales and services teams to focus on the most lucrative clients and prospects

Recent research shows ABM to be a 'must have', with the majority of companies testing or using the strategy with claims it delivers a higher ROI than any other approach.

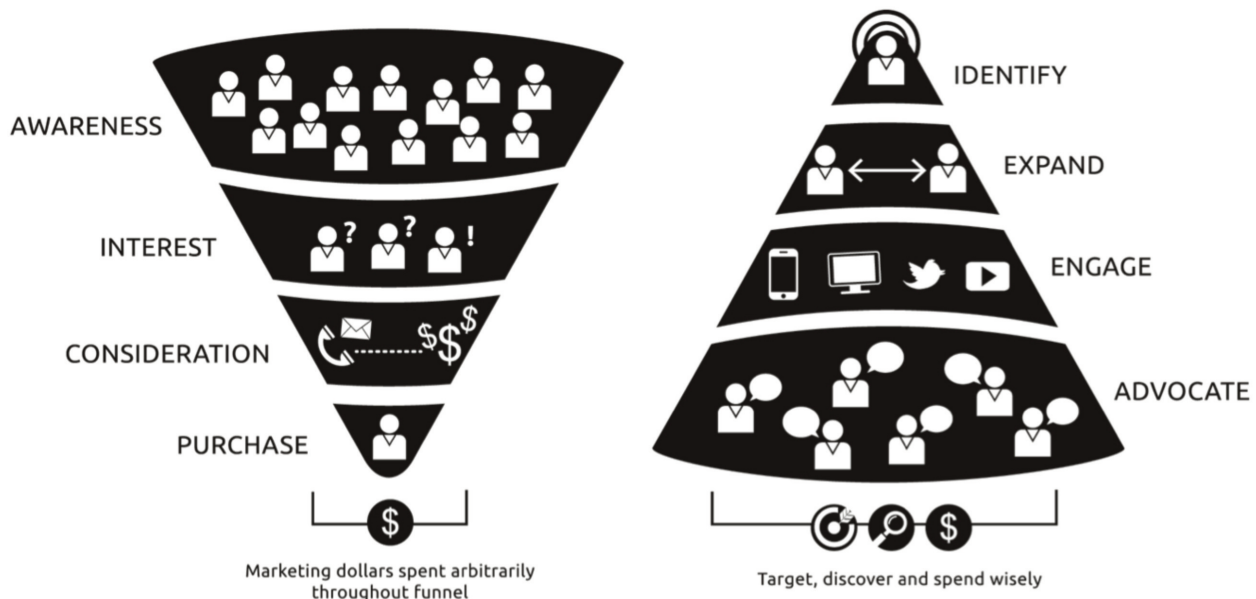
Flipping the funnel

Seth Godin first mentioned the concept of "flipping the funnel" in his free ebook back in 2006, although then it was very much in the context of the B2C market and the ability for customers to become super advocates through the use of social media and other sharing tools. What was revolutionary then is now normal best practice today.

In B2B marketing it has taken much longer to appreciate the value of advocacy and to develop proven methodologies that work in the context of enterprise sales with multiple decision makers.

ABM is based on exactly that premise - that sales to key accounts, that have the potential to be high value, should focus on identifying key organizational prospects. These prospects are then engaged across multiple marketing channels in a personalized and contextual way, using data for intelligent targeting, with the final goal to create the organizational momentum required to close high value sales.

The diagrams below show this in action. As you can see the focus has moved from "spray and pray" marketing to fill the funnel (awareness) to a focus that is on targeted communications, driven by data, to engage specific contacts within target companies and turn them into advocates for your products or services.

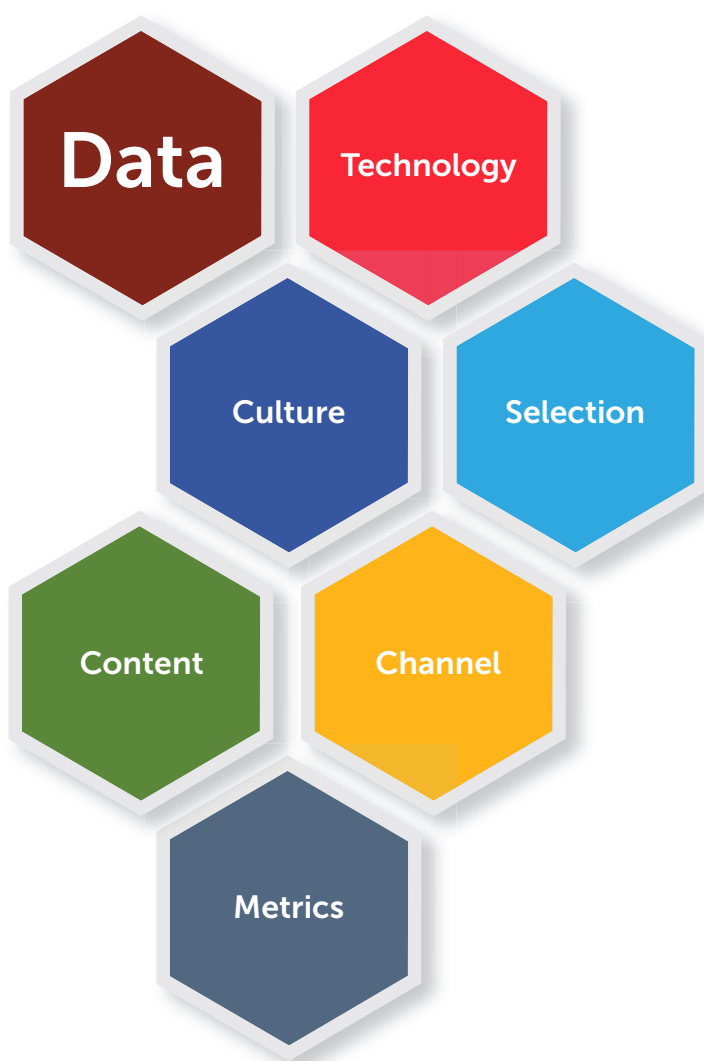


From Account-Based Marketing for Dummies by Sangram Vajre

An introduction to Account Based Marketing (ABM)

The MeritDirect ABM Success framework

We believe that to achieve ABM success you need to have full alignment across all of the following areas.



DATA – Quality in, Quality out. Making sure you have the best data sources available is key to a successful ABM program.

TECHNOLOGY – A successful ABM strategy requires a set of core technologies in order to be able to engage at all points in the funnel. Examples include a CRM platform, Marketing Automation, Content Management System, Tag Management, Data Management Platform

CULTURE – From sales and marketing alignment to leadership buy-in, it is vital that the whole company engages with your ABM strategy. This is often an area that lacks focus and can be a major point of failure in ABM planning. Culture is the unsung hero of high growth companies.

SELECTION – Selecting who to target and constantly iterating that selection based on new data is the cornerstone of all ABM programs. Selecting 20,000 accounts to target is not an ABM strategy.

CONTENT – Content for all stages in the funnel needs to be created – activation, research, compliance, conversion as well as content for known and anonymous users.

CHANNEL – Always on and targeted marketing programs that are data driven are key to raise awareness and start the activation process

METRICS – All programs need to have measurement at their core. These enable us to understand the overall success of the program but also drive A/B testing and optimization, attribution modelling and personal performance tracking.

Each of these areas in turn can have detailed frameworks and plans. Remember that each company has different challenges, goals and objectives and so there is no 'one size fits all' answer. However, it is important that you take a methodical approach to building your ABM program and not rely on existing ways of working.

As specialists in providing the data needed to help businesses around the world deliver world-class ABM programs, we will work with your technology stack, whatever it is. We simply focus on making sure you have data available to make your ABM program work.

Why data is your passport to ABM success

Effective ABM simply doesn't work effectively without high quality data being available at every stage in the process. Research carried out by Avention of over 100 enterprise B2B marketers states that **"lack of access to the right data is the number 1 roadblock to ABM success"**. A full 75% also mentioned that they couldn't find the right contacts at target companies that matched their target profile.

There is no doubt that the route to successful ABM starts with data and having the tools to deliver that data in a meaningful way. Having the best, most relevant and up-to-date data from which to make actionable decisions is also important throughout an ABM program. Data is indeed your passport to ABM success.

5 reasons why data is key

1. Effective reach

While all good ABM marketing programs start with the development of a list of target companies the story doesn't end there. ABM is about selling to companies, but marketing to people and according to Sirius Decisions there are on average 17 people involved in a new technology purchase within Enterprise companies and 6 within SMBs. Obviously this will vary depending on location, sector and product, but the fact remains that you need to have multiple contacts at each target company if you are to effectively "flip the funnel".

2. Segmentation

Not all your contacts will have the same role in the buying decision. Some might be evaluators and need more technical content, others might need to see business cases to justify expenditure and so on. Only by creating people driven segments or personas can you then develop content to match their needs.

3. Content Personalization is key

Once you have your personas you need to deliver a personalized data journey. While each persona might start with the same content their subsequent responses and interactions will take them down divergent paths. This engagement data not only decides the starting point it also needs to evolve and adapt over time.

4. Sales and marketing need to be fully aligned

ABM is effective only when sales and marketing are working together, with shared processes and shared goals. Data is the essential glue between sales and marketing. It doesn't just end at the marketing to sales

handover. Enterprise knowledge needs to circulate back into the ABM program and frontline sales teams are often best placed to gather this. Digital enablement using personal technology might be needed for larger scale programs.

5. Data drives insight

ABM becomes more powerful the more insight can be extracted from the data being created. Successful programs improve lead quality, arm sales teams with the information they need to convert and ultimately build a lead engine that can predict when a company is ready to buy.

The MeritDirect ABM Data framework

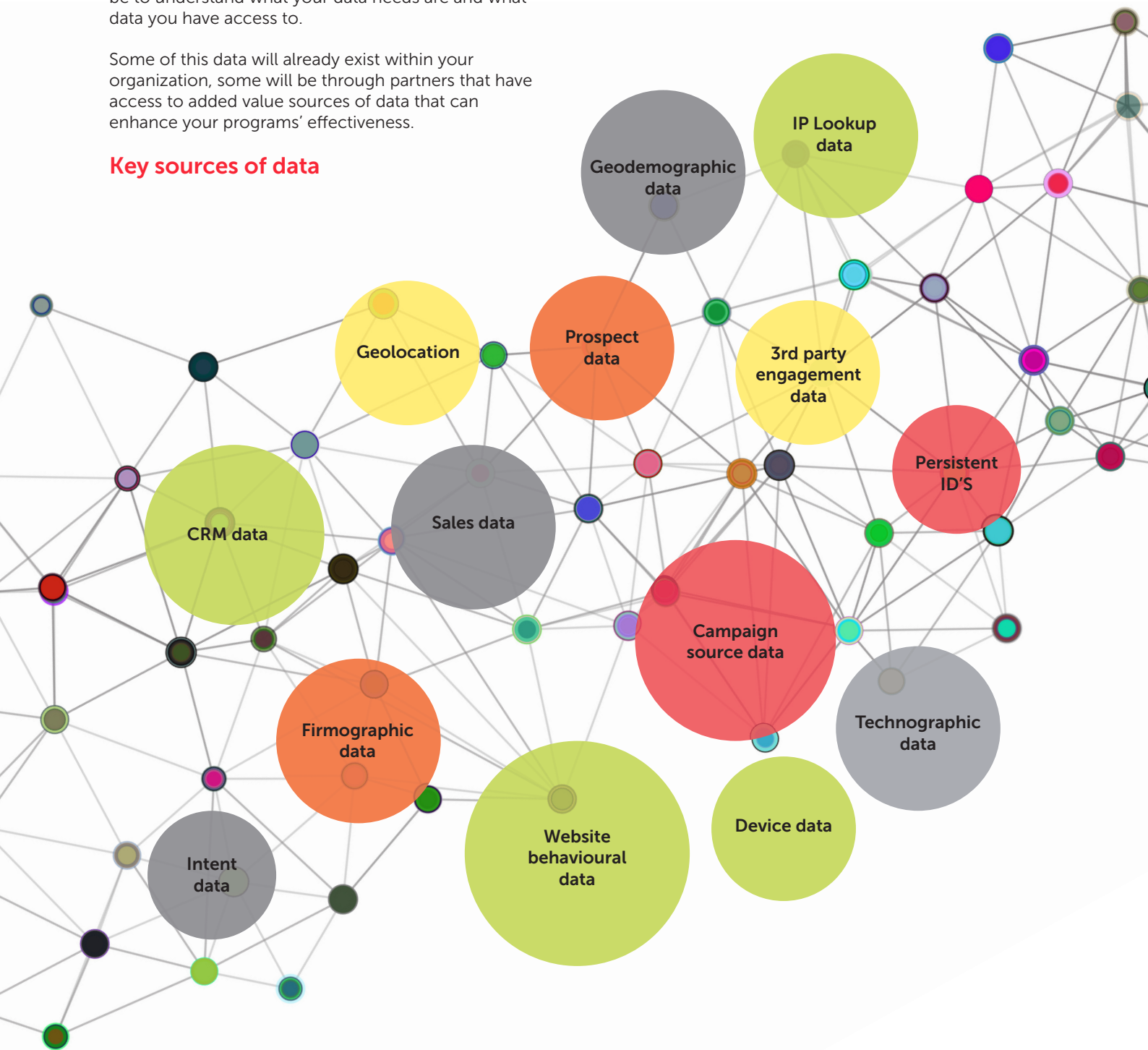
DATA REQUIREMENTS	STAGE	DESIRED OUTCOME
As well as the usual geodemographic data such as size, location and industry you will need data such as previous technology purchases or social behaviour	Account Selection	A limited selection of key accounts that fit key customer criteria and have a high potential value to your business
ABM works by targeting all decision makers in a business. Understanding who influences the purchase and then having the right data is key	Target selection	A definitive list of influencers and decision makers in an organization. It's important to look behind the obvious. Job titles are not always an indicator of influence
Grouping people around the things that matter to them. Data that allows us to find commonalities are key.	Persona Development	Persona groupings that display similar traits that we can engage with a unified approach
Key buying signals such as web visits, technographic data and changes in a company's technology stack.	Predictive Data	The ability to score leads based on their likelihood to convert and the processes to enable this to happen efficiently
Data mark-up that relates the above signals to the content available	Content Personalization	Personalized content delivery based on who the target is, their key concerns and their stage in the purchase or review process.
Different audiences need to be engaged on different platforms. The CEO and CTO aren't always found in the same place	Channel Selection and Programmatic Deployment	A contact program with manageable segments that delivers personalized content based on your defined personas

Getting data right

Not all data is created equally. Many organizations make the mistake of deploying an ABM approach without first establishing the foundation blocks. There is no one right approach to data but your first step must be to understand what your data needs are and what data you have access to.

Some of this data will already exist within your organization, some will be through partners that have access to added value sources of data that can enhance your programs' effectiveness.

Key sources of data



Predictive ABM and Intent data

Intent data is harnessing broad web-based activities, and then using that intelligence to select marketing audience. The fundamental premise is to reach in-market prospects early in their buying journey as they self-discover solutions online. And here's why:

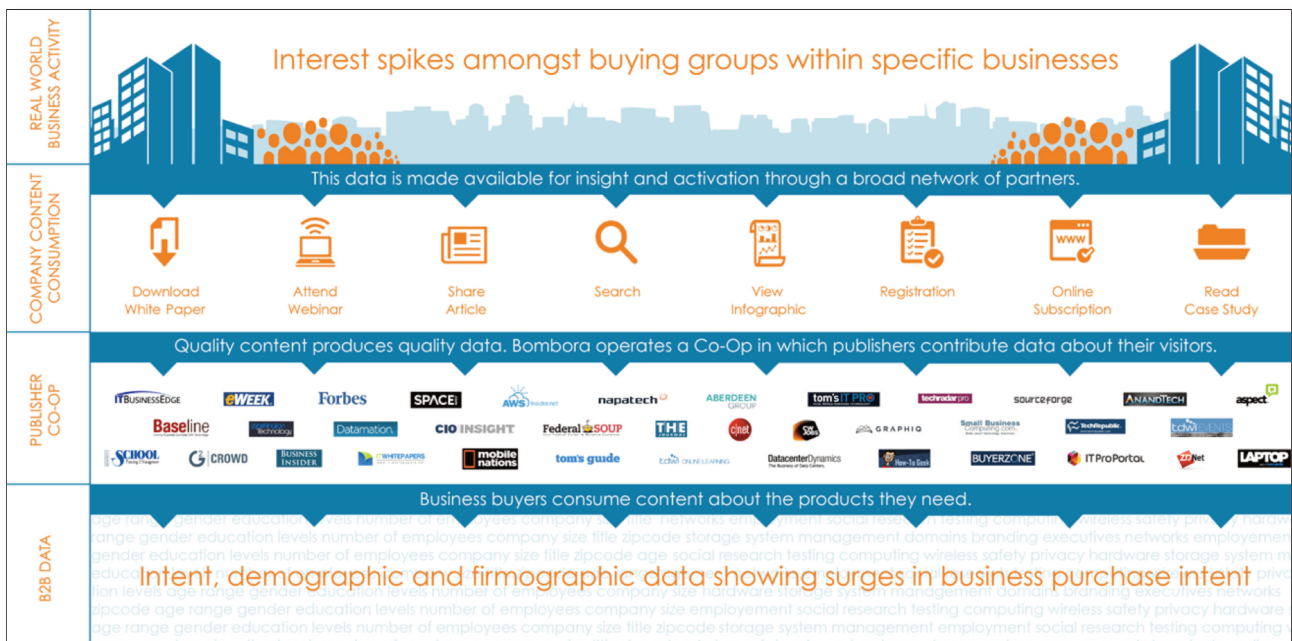
Harnessing the power of Bombora

Bombora is a co-op of online behavioural information gathered from media partners at a company level.

Bombora's Firehose Feed is a first-of-its-kind aggregated supply of company-level behavioural interactions mined from across the B2B web. Bombora monitors over 9.3 billion B2B interactions on a monthly basis. Interaction types include users reading articles, downloading white papers, performing searches, etc. Each interaction is associated with up to 10 granular B2B topics, assigned from our 2,500+ level B2B taxonomy

"...a recent survey by the Consumer Executive Board (CEB) of 1,900 corporate decision makers found that buyers are, at a minimum, 57 percent of the way through the buying process before they contact a potential supplier. Some respondents reported being as much as 70 percent complete with the decision-making process before reaching out to a vendor."

-Sales + Marketing Management Magazine, 3/16/15



Layering MeritDirect Meta Data on top of Bombora's intent data and aligning this with your existing sources of data creates the industry's most powerful, effective source of ABM data. Understanding which of your target accounts are going to buy and when, changes your sales and marketing approach forever.

Final thoughts

A successful ABM program has a lot of moving parts and it's important to approach the development of any ABM program in a planned and systematic way. The biggest barrier to success is a thinking that ABM is just an extension of previous tactics and programs are introduced without the requisite planning.

We believe that data lies at the heart of all ABM programs, and so do most marketers according to SiriusDecisions survey, which is why we created this guide. We hope you found it helpful.

MeritDirect is the data partner for hundreds of ABM programs and can provide advice **and consultancy on the setup of your ABM program as well as being your trusted data partner.**

If you have any questions just email us on sales@meritdirect.com and we'll get back to you



Case study – Intelligent ABM in action and why data is your passport to success



About LogMeIn

LogMeIn is a provider of software as a service and cloud-based remote connectivity services for collaboration, IT management and customer engagement. Their products include well known communication tools such as:

- GoToMeeting
- join.me
- GoToWebinar
- GoToTraining
- OpenVoice
- Grasshopper

Business Description:

Simplifying how people interact with each other and the world around them to drive meaningful insight, deeper relationships and better outcomes for all has helped LogMeIn grow to become one of the world's top 10 SaaS companies with a leadership position in every one of our markets.

With a platform that supports two million daily users, 200 million customer engagements and five billion voice minutes per year, LogMeIn invented and capitalized on the modern way of working – flexible, dispersed, mobile, efficient and productive.

Their easy-to-use products have been adopted by professionals and leveraged by small to medium-sized businesses the world over who are looking for increased insight into their customers' journeys, simpler internal and external collaboration, and a more empowered workforce.

Challenge:

Previous marketing efforts focused on filling the pipeline with leads that looked like existing customers based on company size, industry, titles. Those leads were reviewed, profiled as MQLs and sent on to Sales.

While they had a full pipeline, Sales was spending time on lower quality leads that had a shorter sales cycle and lower revenue opportunity. The time spent wading through this mountain of data resulted in stale leads and lost opportunity among the High Value Accounts (HVA) that require a longer sales cycle.

Legendary Sales and Marketing Conflict:

Marketing felt that they were doing their part, i.e. driving 110% of the leads that they ensured, but Sales felt like they had no HVA opportunities to work with and the sheer volume of lower revenue leads meant that 50% of the leads were stale by the time sales engaged.

Case study – Intelligent ABM in action and why data is your passport to success

Goal:

“Flip the Funnel”

Create a programmatic ABM plan that removes the diluted mile-long lead pipeline and replaces it with Higher Value, in-market leads.

Goal must be executed with these operating principles in mind:

- Do no harm to existing business
- Start small – test and learn
- Form strategic partnership with provider (MeritDirect)
- Partner must have ability to scale.

Execution:

Employ MeritDirect OmniENGINE to create a scalable demand gen program to targeted accounts using predictive technology for refinement.

To target the most appropriate leads built on a collaborative internal discussion to isolate target accounts;

- Use of intent based data that shows that the organization is in market for LogMeIn’s product or service;
- Use of technology install data to ensure that the business can use the LogMeIn products;
- Spend more time in the nurture cadence, incorporate a multi-touch cadence to ensure interest;
- Verify collection data as accurate via MeritDirect OmniID processing;

Results:

CPL Measurement:

Predictive v. Non-Predictive generated 40% lift in Avg Deal Size (ADS)

Engagement:

Predictive v. Non-Predictive generated 2-3x lift in open rates and content downloads

Channels:

Predictive Content Programs delivered 35-50% increase in ADS compared to Sponsored Webinars

Internal:

Stronger, more collaborative relationship between marketing and sales

Due to the nature of the way organizations were targeted, higher quality leads were generated and passed on to sales. The application of intelligent data yielded key decision makers and influencers in the technology area needed for this marketer.

The tele-verification process performed by MeritDirect also resulted in highly CONTACTABLE leads for the sales team. Sales was much more confident in the disposition of leads when making follow up calls.

Data is the new power currency in sales and marketing, and this is especially true if you want to succeed in an account-based marketing approach. Begin with the end in mind, use data and predictive intelligence to discover target accounts and decision makers, generate appropriate content, select channels, deliver an omni-channel experience and measure results.



More on OmniENGINE:

This customer acquisition tool creates organic demand through a scalable, managed platform that works with an organization’s marketing automation tool to identify, nurture and convert prospects to opportunities.

OmniENGINE accesses over 40 BtoB professionals and can filter on hundreds of intelligent attributes like purchasing intent, hiring intent and technology install in addition to firmographic data attributes like industry, company size, and revenue.

By filtering down to a solid audience of known interest, OmniENGINE can deliver content to this customized audience and migrate only engaged prospects to the client’s CRM; allowing sales teams to prioritize and follow up on only the best, most qualified prospects when they are poised to buy.

About MeritDirect



Our solutions areas focus on specific products and services engineered to solve distinct challenges in the data, digital, and analytics space. From helping customers understand and monetize data assets, attract and extract value from customers and prospects, decipher and respond to the KPIs of their business or any hurdle along the way, MeritDirect walks with our clients on the road to higher profitability, less cost, and deeper, more meaningful and actionable insights.



CUSTOMER ACQUISITION + RETENTION

Our Customer Acquisition + Retention division has been helping clients reach new customers, gain market share, retain current customers, and extract value for over 15 years.



CONSULTING + ANALYTICS

Analysis and assessment are the driving forces behind change, improvement and the implementation of 'best practices'. MeritDirect offers integrated services designed to enhance all your marketing plans for both short and long term gain.



DATA & MEDIA SERVICES

The Data + Media Services division is the data monetization arm of MeritDirect and focuses on generating the highest possible return on data assets.



RESEARCH + DATA MANAGEMENT

MeritDirect has developed a stack of services and linked to our OmniChannelBASE database to deploy a suite of products to solve not only the hygiene issue, but also enable strategic contact acquisition.



DATABASE PRODUCTS + SERVICES

From private prospecting environments to cooperative databases, MeritDirect has the expertise and technology to understand the challenges of the modern marketer and deliver a creative, innovative solution.



INTERNATIONAL SERVICES

MeritDirect has created a division focusing on the specific challenges and needs of the international marketer. By replicating our North American strategy and combining with experts in the international space, we offer a safe haven to tackle multi-national outreach.



DIGITAL

Our approach to the digital world mirrors engagements to other channels in that we provide customized solutions based on specific needs and outcomes of our clients. Our solutions areas include hyper-targeted display, acquisition versus retention campaigns, and re-targeting.

For more information or to discuss how MeritDirect can accelerate your ABM contact Karie Burt, Vice President - International on kburt@meritdirect.com

OUR CLIENTS

As a client-centric organization, MeritDirect is acutely focused on developing long-standing relationships.





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