



Account-Based Marketing makes B2B Marketing data-driven

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My work on several projects in the last months has led me to this one clear conclusion. I recently issued the Vendor Selection Matrix™ report on [Customer Data Management](#) profiling the Top 25 vendors automating this process for marketers in many different types of companies, including B2B organizations. I have also done extensive surveys and practitioner interviews for [B2B marketing](#) for their Propolis community on martech, marketing operations and customer experience. And soon, I'll publish my report on Account-Based Marketing (ABM). Heh! I've been so active that [Onalytica now list me as a data analyst](#).

Technology can now “read” a marketplace and name exactly those companies that are “in market” for a certain topic (i.e., have a budget and firm intent to invest). And it can produce a profile of all decision makers in each company (account), documenting exactly that person's decision criteria and/or preferences plus, perhaps, their recent research history (what other offers are they considering, how much information do they have). That does make me shudder a little – that was exactly what I did as a field marketer personality, always in contact with vendors and users alike, working for HP Germany during the 1990s.

It now looks like data now rules the roost in B2B marketing. Success no longer depends on creative events or content, or persuasion by charismatic sales people, marketing success is now data-driven.

Here is what my ABM report will say.....

ABM has spread across all B2B sectors

ABM technologies were first adopted in the software industry but are now being deployed in financial services, healthcare and now, increasingly, in the health care and manufacturing sectors. The trend towards digital marketing, tooled by technology advances in website and general data analytics, and now accelerated by the COVID-19 business environment, has motivated all these B2B businesses to collect as much behavioral and profile data about individual buying decision makers as possible, and then to:

- Post localized contextual content marketing programs to profiled visitors
- Send personalized/specific digital marketing content to individual prospects
- Capture prospects who may have left the website unsatisfied by re-targeting
- Gather and calculate “propensity to buy” data and provide this data to sellers
- Aggregate digital behavior across a buying team to provide guidance to marketing and sales.

ABM platforms help marketing to play its role in revenue success. Leading-edge CMOs now favor an ecommerce model and focus on customer experience, all of which requires an ABM approach. Even digital advertising has become fundamental for B2B marketers, and ABM software supports ad-targeting by either providing native advertising capabilities or at least enabling integrations with partner solutions.



ABM is how B2B marketing should be

B2B sellers work at an account level and most B2B projects involve large and complex buying centers and decision processes. So mature B2B CMOs now focus on account-based work, developing and maintaining engagement with important contacts in target accounts. Account-based marketing and selling is how B2B marketing should work, mixing digital and human communication.

ABM platforms could become the new marketing backbone system

ABM continues to be the most-used promotional acronym by marketing software vendors with well over 90 software vendors claiming to provide ABM-specific functionality and it is a highly-active playing field for venture capital investors. The leading ABM platform vendors have product roadmaps to expand into a wide range of engagement channels, including direct mail and campaign personalization. Currently, most users connect ABM systems to the (older) incumbent marketing lead management (MLM) platform to cover that. But most MLMs have been slow to embrace ABM so, as martech budgets tighten, ABM urgency could drive MLM vendors out of their market.

The ABM nomenclature will fade out in the near-term.

B2B marketing will end up being 100% account-based in its digital marketing, informed and optimized by data collected about those accounts. This will remove the need for the ABM label - the new system of engagement is, essentially, the (ABM-based) B2B marketing cloud with **data as the hub**: an account-based go-to-market platform.

We plan to publish the ABM Vendor Selection Matrix™ on April 12th. I can reveal now that the global survey of 1,500 practitioners scored these vendors as Market Leaders (a score of over 4/5 on both the Strategy and Execution axis): 6SENSE, DEMANDBASE, KWANZOO, JABMO, MADISON LOGIC, MRP, TECHTARGET, and TERMINUS.

Always keeping you informed!

Peter O'Neill