

# IS ABM TRULY RIGHT FOR YOUR COMPANY?

Unless you've been on a boat without Internet for the last several years, you've probably already heard that smart B2B marketers are using account-based strategies to drive higher and more efficient revenue results. But what does that really mean? We've combined our own ABM knowledge with the research from ABM thought leaders such as SiriusDecisions, Demandbase, TOPO, Engagio, and others. The result is this ABM Guide, developed to answer your pressing questions and lay out a framework for real world success with ABM. Keep reading to get the insights...

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# FIRST THINGS FIRST. WHAT IS ABM?

Account based marketing (ABM) is an approach that focuses your resources on the accounts most likely to drive your revenue. ABM is about the power and ROI of focus, collaboration, personalization, and orchestration.

## HERE ARE TWO DEFINITIONS THAT WE REALLY LIKE:



**“ABM coordinates interactions with every contact at an account, rather than treating each lead independently; and, ABM chooses which accounts to pursue rather than chasing whatever accounts marketing can attract. ABM is also more likely to extend beyond acquiring new customers to include marketing to existing customers for upsell, cross sell, and retention.”**

*David Raab's ABM Guide*

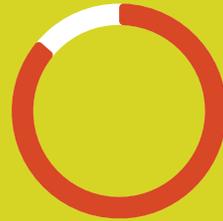


**“ABM is a strategic approach that aligns demand creation, customer relationship programs and messaging against a set of defined accounts and goals in a way that is relevant and valuable to those accounts and to the sales team.”**

*SiriusDecisions*

# IS ABM JUST HYPE OR DOES IT REALLY WORK?

Short answer: ABM absolutely works — if it's a fit for your use case. Here is some research about how effective ABM can be:



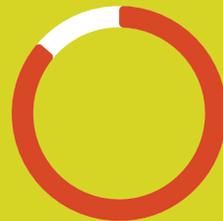
**84%** of marketers said that ABM had significant benefits to retaining and expanding existing client relationships.

*Alterra Group*



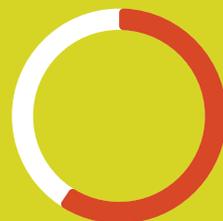
More than **80%** said that ABM outperforms other marketing initiatives.

*ITSMA*



**86%** of marketing and sales professionals from B2B companies have begun using targeted account strategies.

*LeanData*



More than **60%** of B2B marketers surveyed said they plan to implement an ABM program within the next year.

*SiriusDecisions*

# HOW DO YOU KNOW IF ABM COULD TRULY WORK AT YOUR COMPANY?

If you market and sell to organizations (i.e. B2B or B2B2C) AND you answer yes to three or more of the following questions, it's likely that some form of ABM should be happening at your company:

- Do we have marketing automation and a CRM implemented at our company?
- Is there a group of prospect accounts in our market that rise above the others in terms of potential revenue, strategic importance, fit for our value proposition, profitability, or other key considerations?
- Do we have customer accounts that rise above the others in terms of potential revenue, strategic importance, value proposition, profitability, or other key considerations?
- Does our marketing team (including partners) have the ability and skill to create integrated campaigns?
- Do we have an inside sales, lead development, or telesales team who can spare a portion of one full-time employee to our ABM program?
- Are sales and marketing at least minimally aligned and able to collaborate effectively toward the shared goal of targeted revenue growth at our company?
- Can we reallocate a portion of our general marketing, advertising, content, event, and/or demand generation resources toward an ABM pilot?

**If you answered YES to three or more questions, then your company would benefit from some flavor of ABM.**

# IS THERE ONLY ONE WAY TO DO ABM?

Absolutely not! ABM isn't a single thing. In fact, ABM is better understood as a continuum that matches your degree of focus, personalization, and resource investment with your market opportunity for ABM.



**The trick is matching the right ABM approach with the right ABM use case – while being realistic about your company's capabilities.**

Once you've analyzed your unique business situation and identified which ABM approach is the best fit, it's time to launch an ABM pilot. This is your opportunity to learn how your selected approach works in the real world. When your system is dialed, you're ready to scale the program to see even greater results.

# THREE PRIMARY APPROACHES TO ABM



## ONE-TO-MANY ABM

A “one-to-many” ABM approach looks a lot like very targeted, very aligned, integrated demand generation. This approach makes sense when you’re pursuing thousands of target accounts with a value of low to medium.

### TECHNOLOGY NEEDS:

Technology is especially important for automating and operating this higher volume program at scale.

### ALIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS:

Alignment with sales development, sales, and/or account management is very important for this type of ABM, but not as utterly crucial as it is in the other two approaches. If you have an established demand generation program in place, you’re probably already working on increasing alignment between marketing and sales.



## ONE-TO-FEW ABM

This approach makes sense when you’re pursuing hundreds of accounts with a value of medium to high. This requires that you know your target accounts and contacts at an even more granular level. And with that information, you can hone your attention on greater levels of personalization, and greater levels of collaboration with your stakeholders.

### TECHNOLOGY NEEDS:

Technology and data are very important within this ABM approach for target account definition, targeted content distribution, program efficiency and scaling, and of course, reporting and attribution. All that technology and data allows you to deliver a more refined message, have more detailed reports, and be able to demonstrate ROMI better.

### ALIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS:

Alignment with sales development, sales, and/or account management is essential for this type of ABM. The old days of “throwing MQLs over the wall to the sales team” will absolutely not cut it.



## ONE-TO-ONE ABM

This approach is the right fit when you are pursuing tens (or fewer) of hugely significant accounts. It requires the most focus, the most collaboration and alignment, and the most resource (per account). This approach means you are literally developing campaigns for a single company. You’re not communicating with archetypical personas; you’re communicating with named human beings within your target account.

### TECHNOLOGY NEEDS:

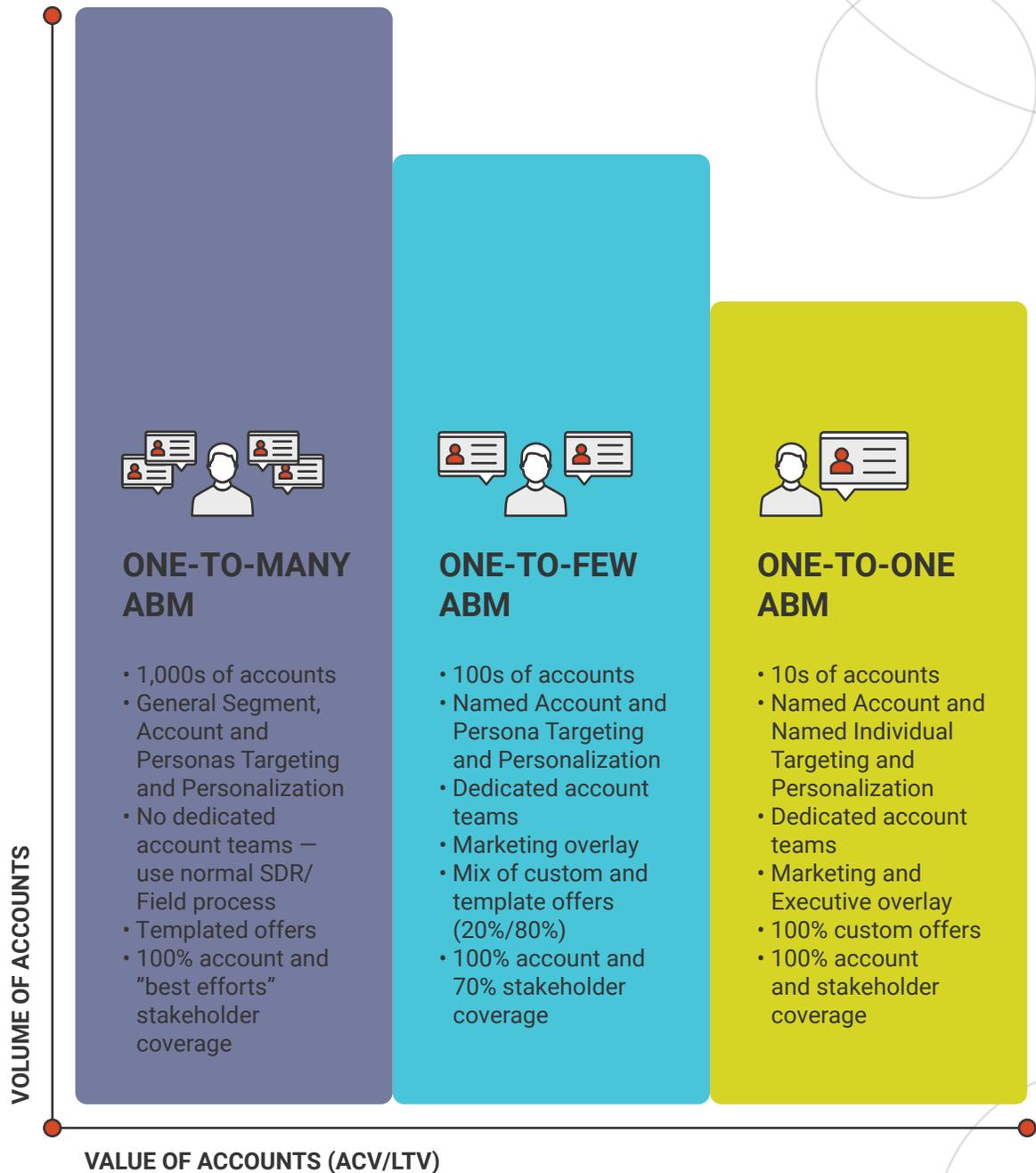
Technology and data are still very important, but you’ll be leveraging that technology and data in very human ways.

### ALIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS:

Continuous, always-on alignment and collaboration with sales development, sales, and/or account management is mandatory for this type of ABM.

# CAN YOU IMPLEMENT MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF ABM?

Absolutely! We see many companies using a One-to-Many ABM approach as their “broad net” for generating awareness, engagement, and conversion of new prospects. We see many of the same organizations using One-to-Few ABM for market opportunities where they need to focus and accelerate growth. And we see many organizations piloting and becoming adept at One-to-One ABM with their most important, key accounts. The graphic to the right shows how all three approaches can/do co-exist within a single revenue process while leveraging a shared set of terminology, revenue stages, and underlying foundation and infrastructure.



# WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO SUCCEED WITH ABM?

So let's assume you're at least interested, if not outright sold on ABM as something worthy of your attention. Time for some hard truth: ABM results don't happen automatically. Sorry.

Succeeding with ABM takes targeting, collaboration, personalization, and measurement. It's going to take real work to unlock ABM's promise at your company.

Moving from the early stages of ABM to the most sophisticated version requires clean data and stakeholder alignment.

Clean and reliable data is a requirement for accurate measurement, automation, and adaptation. And the greater the genuine stakeholder alignment within an organization, the more likely you are to see remarkable results from an ABM approach.

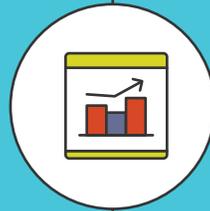


**“An integrated approach is key. Many people start with just marketing and sales, and that’s a good place to start. That initial alignment is important, but then you have to expand. One person can be a leader or a champion, but you need collaboration and active participation from various teams.”**

*Tony Yang, VP of Marketing, Conversion Logic*

# WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO IMPLEMENT ABM AT YOUR COMPANY?

There are many ABM frameworks out there. We like SiriusDecisions, ITSMA, TOPO, Engagio, Demandbase, to name a few. But at Intelligent Demand, it's our job to know, analyze, and test those various approaches and make them successful in the real world. This is our recommended ABM framework, at a high level:



## STEP 1: EVALUATE YOUR NEED FOR ABM

This step is where you analyze your use case for ABM and ask questions such as: Would we truly benefit from ABM? If so, where should we use ABM (acquisition vs. retention/expansion, geo/region, business unit/division, etc)? What type of ABM makes the most sense for us (1:Many, 1:Few, 1:1)? This is also the step where you begin educating your executive team and internal stakeholders about ABM: what it is, how it's different than lead-centric demand gen, what it requires, how it delivers benefits, etc.

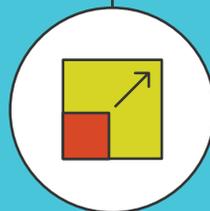
## STEP 2: ASSESS YOUR READINESS FOR ABM

This step uses ID's ABM Process & Checklist to assess your readiness for ABM. It identifies strengths, assets, as well as gaps that need to be filled for success with what we call account based revenue, or ABR (because marketing isn't the only stakeholder in success). This ABR Readiness Assessment is an ID Service. Let us know if you need help in this area.



**“It’s important to measure and optimize based on pipeline and revenue numbers instead of CTRs and booth visits. Get marketing to take ownership over conversion rates, deal sizes, and funnel velocity. Those should be the ultimate measures, and seeing those is when people really start making different decisions about how they spend their time and money.”**

*Jessica Fewless,  
VP of ABM Strategy and  
Field and Partner Marketing,  
DemandBase*



### STEP 3: PREPARE FOR ABM

Based on what you learned in your readiness assessment, you’re going to need to get to “Basic Readiness for ABM.” This step is where you fill in those gaps, address those needs, and make sure you have at least the minimal strategy, planning, systems, process, data, alignment, content, etc. in place to have a successful pilot. The goal of this isn’t to become perfect (that will probably never happen). Instead, it’s about making sure you have the minimum things in place for succeeding with your ABM pilot.

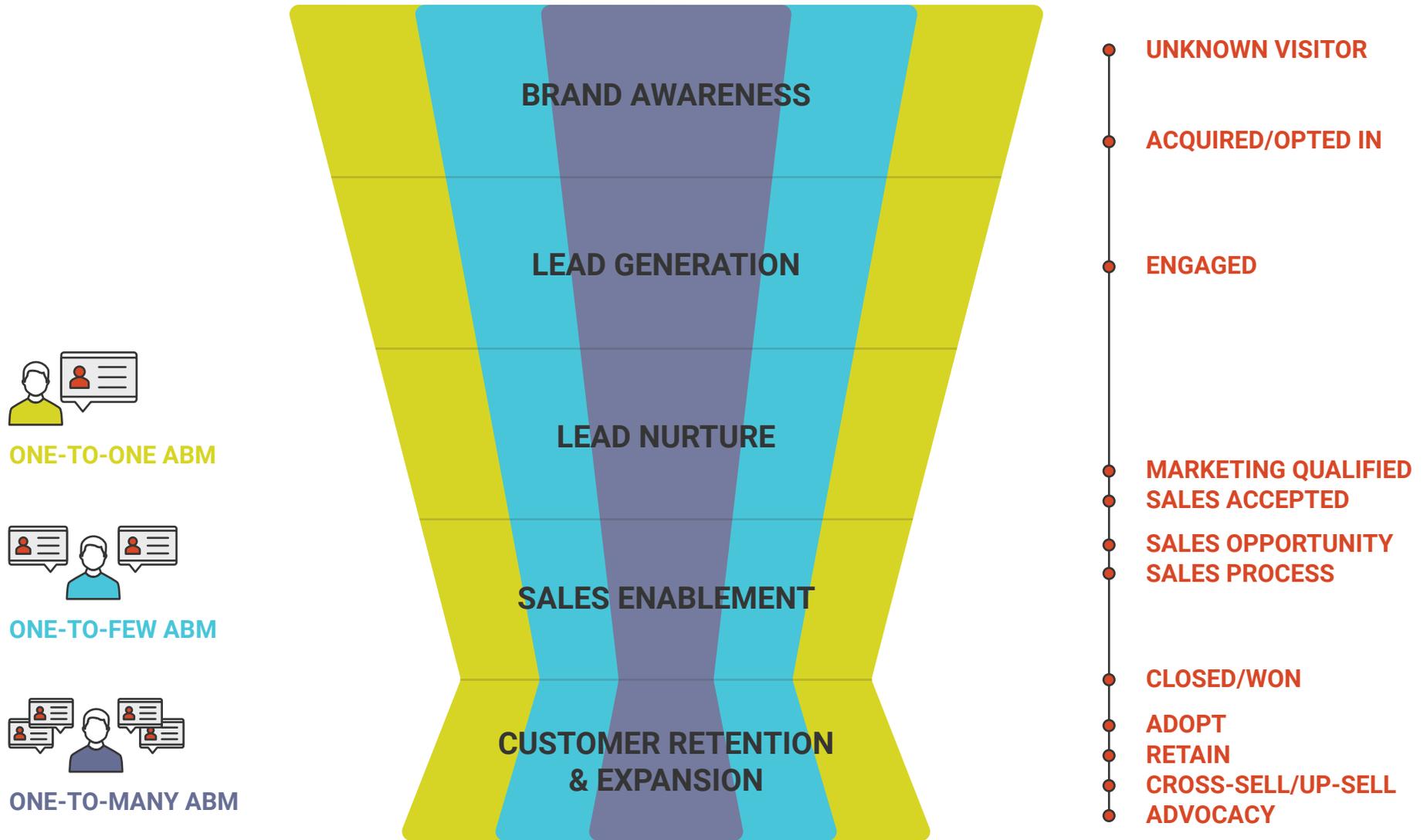
### STEP 4: PILOT ABM

You’re ready for your pilot! This is where you actually start to do ABM. You will start small. You will manage expectations. You will likely stumble a little bit and learn. But because you were prepared, you will succeed! This is another great place to leverage ID’s ABM Process & Checklist. Reach out to us if you’d like a copy and a discussion about how you can use it within your organization.

### STEP 5: SCALE ABM

This is where you scale. This step is actually many steps – i.e. the milestones in your ABM roadmap. Where are you going to take the success and lessons learned from your pilot? More accounts to drive acquisition? Customer retention? Customer upsell? Depends on the needs of your business and your roadmap. You will also evolve all of the elements of your ABM program – again, using your ABM Process & Checklist.

# ABM FUNNEL STAGES + ACCOUNT TIERS





More and more B2B marketers are using account based marketing strategies to not only attract new customers, but to expand and retain customer relationships. They're doing this because when implemented properly, **ABM unlocks significantly better revenue performance.**

However, a lot of ABM programs get stuck in the starting blocks because ABM can be challenging — especially in the early stages. Consider working with an expert partner who will guide you through every step of the journey: evaluating your ABM readiness, advising on technology platforms and data, implementing a pilot, and scaling program operations. **Intelligent Demand's experience in every aspect of account based revenue allows us to be that expert partner.**

**Ready to talk to Intelligent Demand's ABM experts? We can help you, no matter where you are on your ABM journey. Contact us any way you'd like: web, phone, email, social, or drop by.**

**CONTACT US**

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