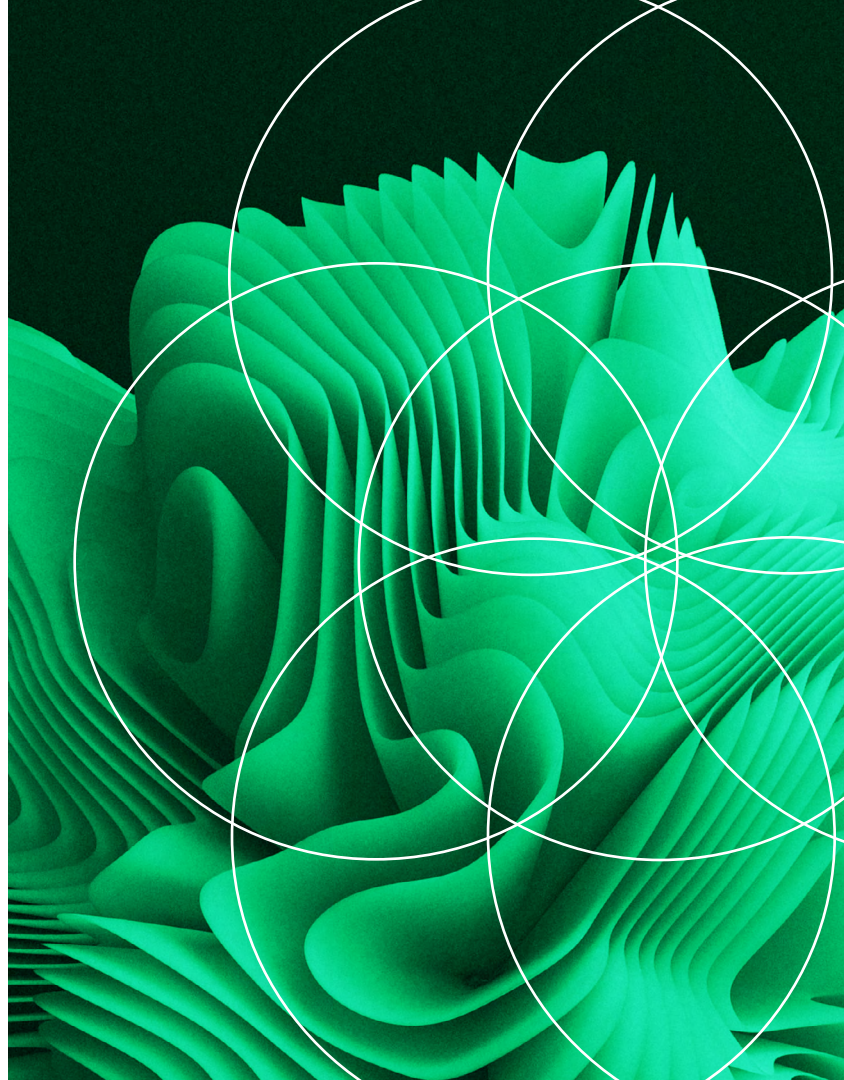


Contact-Level ABM: Focus on Individual Buyers Within Accounts

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Marketers Migrate Toward Optimization Of ABM At The Individual Level

While account-based marketing (ABM) has proven its value among B2B marketers as a more successful approach compared to traditional demand generation, organizations often stumble in its execution. To effectively influence and engage opportunities within an account, marketers need to shift their ABM focus to manage and prioritize individual buying group members. This requires a data-driven approach where marketers can identify and target specific individuals within an organization, track their actions, and personalize messages accordingly. By adopting tools that facilitate contact-level ABM, B2B marketers can enhance their ABM efforts through more precise targeting, personalized engagement, and improved sales alignment, ultimately leading to increased conversion rates, shorter sales cycles, and a higher return on investment.

Key Findings



Practitioners still struggle to execute ABM effectively or put it into action.



Practitioners say the ability to effectively target at an individual level, or the lack of tools and data to do so, is a hindrance.



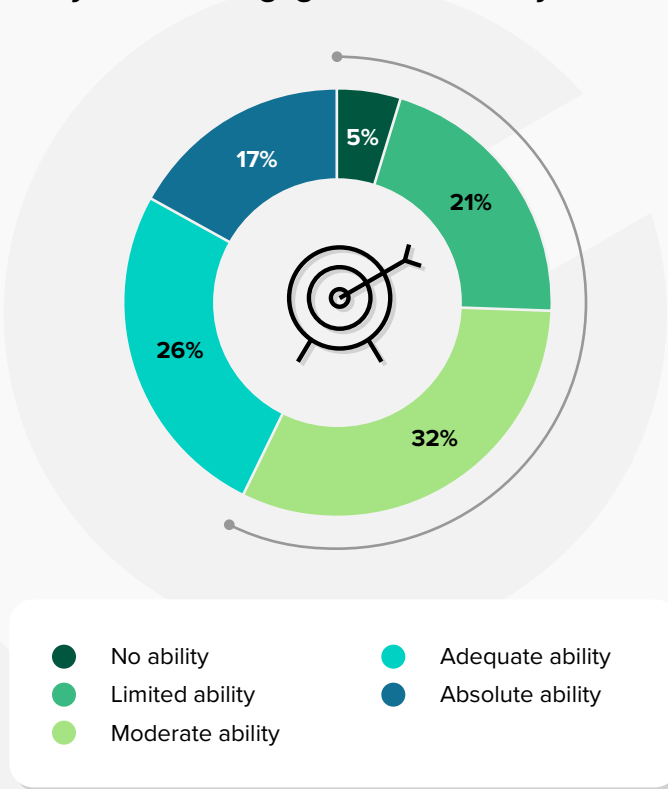
Practitioners can improve the effectiveness of their outreach by making use of contact-level data. These improvements lead to business benefits and improve marketing's standing as a trusted advisor to sales.

Marketers Are Missing The Mark With Current Buyer Marketing Methods

ABM has become a widely adopted approach in B2B enterprises. While some organizations are still somewhat undefined in their ABM approach, the majority are applying sophisticated ABM best practices, primarily at larger organizations.

While ABM is a widespread, long-accepted, effective form of B2B marketing, this does not mean that all practitioners are achieving demonstrable success. ABM marketers are struggling: 58% have moderate ability, at best, to drive engagement from key accounts. While ABM provides much-needed context around buying journeys, marketers are leaving data and money on the table by not utilizing contact-level data.

Ability To Drive Engagement From Key Accounts



Technology And Processes Must Adapt To Enable Key Buyers

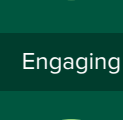
Driving engagement with key accounts is a challenge. With their current technology and processes, respondents still have trouble identifying the right buyers (42%), engaging with the right buyers at the right time (37%), and personalizing outreach at scale (31%). More than a quarter also struggle to align marketing and sales efforts, a core differentiator to successful ABM strategies.

To ensure precise targeting within key accounts, surveyed marketers typically use intent data and behavioral signals (46%), marketing automation platforms (42%), and predictive AI tools and account-based platforms (37%). Yet the number one ranked sentiment respondents hear from sales is that while the marketing-prioritized account is within sales' priorities, the sales team doesn't know whom to reach out to.

Challenges Driving Engagement From Key Accounts



42% Identifying the right buyers



Engaging the right buyer at the right time **37%**



31% Personalizing outreach at scale



Aligning marketing and sales efforts **26%**



21% Measuring success and impact



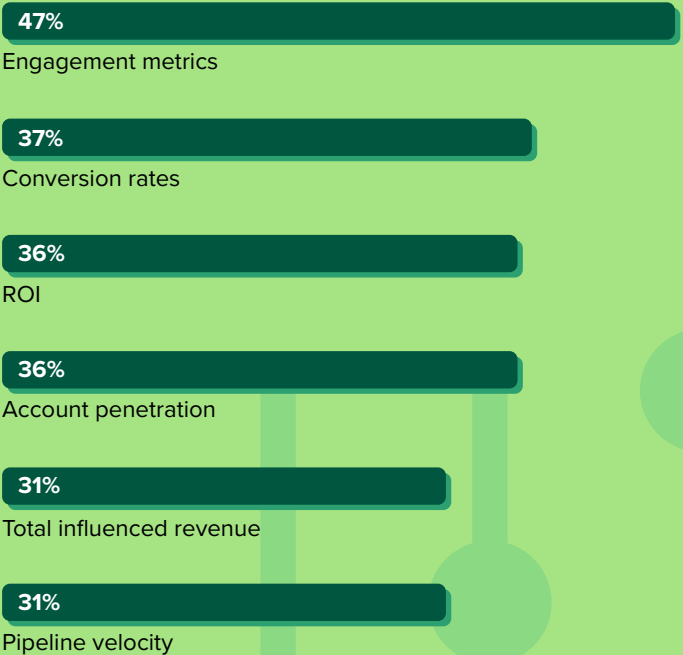
Managing budget constraints **17%**

Scattered Strategies Hamper ABM Effectiveness

One in five still struggle to define and enact a successful ABM strategy: Almost 20% of survey respondents in 2024 said that ABM was still somewhat undefined at their organization and that they didn't follow a sophisticated process. This is a modest improvement from 2022, when 25% of respondents answered similarly. Though survey respondents are focused on improving the effectiveness of their ABM outreach, they still experience barriers to ABM effectiveness at the contact level.

What's more, they lack a singularly proven way to measure that success. While 47% track engagement metrics like email opens, content downloads, and webinar attendance, no other metrics scored higher than 40%; rather, respondents measure conversion rates, ROI, account penetration, and other typical success metrics at much lower rates. They need a proven method of understanding ABM effectiveness to improve their strategic approach.

How do you measure the effectiveness of your ABM efforts in driving meaningful engagement with buyers?



Marketers Look To Revenue, AI, Data Advancements To Generate Growth

As revenue marketing platforms advance and become more deeply embedded and heavily used across frontline marketing functions, orchestration around buying group insights will underpin everything that sales and marketing do and how they work together.¹ While internal buy-in seems to be less of a challenge, marketers continue to struggle to optimize their contact-level ABM due to data access and accuracy issues, poor integration, and not having the individual-level technology to support their efforts: One in three lack the technology to target key accounts at the contact level, which impacts their ability to deliver qualified opportunities to sales. Enabling employees with the right tools, including revenue platforms and AI-driven insights for personalization, paves the way for profitability and growth.

Greatest Barriers To Increased ABM Effectiveness At The Individual Decision-Maker Level

**42%**

Limited access to accurate and actionable contact data

33%

Lack of technology to support individual-level personalization

30%

Difficulty integrating marketing and sales processes

29%

Difficulty integrating marketing and sales technology

26%

Budget constraints limiting investment in new tools

22%

Internal resistance to shifting from account-based to buyer-led thinking

Cross-Team Adoption Of The Right Tools Opens New Doors For Sales And Marketing

As buying behavior changes, businesses face consequences to not taking a targeted approach to ABM: stunted pipeline growth, lost revenue, and slowed sales conversion rates. The majority of respondents see contact-level ABM becoming an important, if not a core differentiator, for successful ABM programs (72%). But to enjoy that success, marketers must ensure adoption of ABM and revenue solutions across business units. Those with high ABM maturity will make continual investments in training and upskilling. As buying behavior continues to change and as generative AI (genAI) takes root, this commitment to training and upskilling will be essential for all customer-facing teams.²

Consequences Of Remaining Unable To Target And Engage Key Decision-Makers At Target Accounts



40% Stunted pipeline growth

Lost revenue **38%**



37% Low sales conversion rates

Impacts to brand reputation **28%**



25% Difficulties with KPIs/quota attainment

Stagnating deal velocity **25%**



Deeper Behavioral Insights To Align Revenue, Empower Marketing, Bring Benefits To The Greater Business

Organizations applying ABM best practices, such as aligning sales and marketing on key tasks, are more likely to meet or exceed their revenue and growth goals. AI and adaptive marketing practices will also support more targeted marketing in the future. Marketers understand the value of having access to deeper behavioral insights on individual buyers: improved customer retention (58%), optimized resource allocation (49%), deepened alignment and collaboration across internal teams (47%). A targeted marketing approach that prioritizes current and predictive insights at the buyer and account levels will not only provide benefits to the greater business but also position marketing as a trusted partner to sales.

CONTACT-LEVEL ABM: FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL BUYERS WITHIN ACCOUNTS

8

Benefits Of Access To Deeper Behavioral Insights For Specific Buyers

58%

Increased customer retention

49%

Optimized resource allocation

47%

Deepened alignment and collaboration between internal teams

43%

Strengthened performance of marketing efforts

42%

Improved cost efficiency in campaign and program budget spend

35%

Improved unified buyer experience across touchpoints

26%

Enhanced customer experience

Base: 163 ABM leaders at enterprise B2B companies in North America
Source: Forrester's Q2 2025 Contact-Level Marketing Survey E-62865

Conclusion

B2B marketers increasingly recognize contact-level ABM as essential to overcoming persistent ABM challenges, particularly around precise buyer identification, timely engagement, and personalized outreach. Yet one in three marketers still lack the technology to execute at an individual level, limiting their ability to deliver qualified sales opportunities.

Marketers understand the value of accessing deeper behavioral insights on individual buyers: improved customer retention, optimized resource allocation, and deepened alignment and collaboration across internal teams. They understand that by embracing tools that provide deeper behavioral insights, they can make contact-level marketing a crucial differentiator for ABM success.

Endnotes

¹ Source: [The Future Of Account-Based Marketing Isn't Scale — It's Profitable Growth](#), Forrester Research, Inc., May 20, 2024.

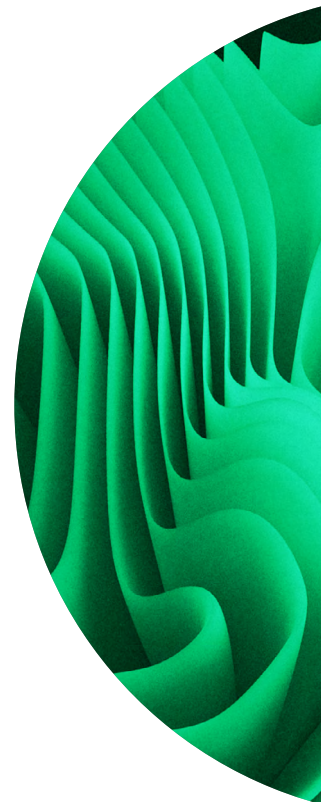
² Source: Ibid.

Project Team:

Madeline Harrell,
Senior Market Impact Consultant

Contributing Research:

Forrester's [Technology](#) research group



Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by Inflū2. To create this profile, Forrester Consulting supplemented this research with custom survey questions asked of 163 ABM decision makers at enterprises in the US. The custom survey began and was completed in May 2025.

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Demographics

GEOGRAPHY

United States	100%
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INDUSTRY

Technology and/or tech services	9%
Telecommunications	6%
Retail	6%
All others	79%

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

20,000 or more	18%
5,000 to 19,999	36%
1,000 to 4,999	46%

BUSINESS MODEL

B2B	100%
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The background is a dark green, almost black, field filled with intricate, layered, topographical-like patterns. These patterns resemble a series of concentric, wavy ridges and valleys, creating a sense of depth and movement. The ridges are more pronounced in some areas, while others are more subtle, giving the overall effect a complex, organic feel. In the center of this abstract landscape, the word "FORRESTER" is written in a clean, white, serif typeface. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is positioned to the upper right of the final letter 'R'.

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