

THE RISE OF ABX:

HOW TO ACHIEVE
TRUE ABM IN 2023

— *By Mukesh Rajpurohit*

SUMMARY

- Introduction** 3
- How to achieve true ABM** 3
 - #1 Create organization-wide structure and alignment 4
 - #2 Determine what is an account and the business’s revenue readiness 5
- The Rise of ABX** 6
 - #1 Plan the buyer’s journey with UX and CX in mind 7
 - #2 Meet buyers where they are with thought leadership content 7
 - #3 Curate services to meet the needs of buyers 8
 - #4 Build the tech stack to scale ABX 8
- ABM vs True ABM vs ABX** 9
- The ABM mindset shift: focusing on opportunities** 10
- Beyond the platform: the need for an ABM activator** 11
- Key takeaways** 12
- About the author** 13

Introduction

Account Based Marketing (ABM) has long been a popular strategy for driving engagement with key buyers, however a DemandMetric and Integrate survey reveals that [53% of B2B marketers will spend less in ABM](#) in 2023. While this statistic may discourage marketers from investing in ABM, this means the opportunity for businesses that leverage True ABM in the year to come is enormous.

There is a gap in the market for high-quality ABM campaigns—buyers at accounts require account intelligence solutions, but are not always engaged effectively and do not find the custom-tailored programs they require. In other words, the forecasted decrease in spending results from businesses conducting ABM incorrectly or not to its full potential. This has led to campaigns not meeting expected outcomes.

This article explores how marketers can achieve true ABM and make the leap to ABX, a client-centric buying experience that resonates with buyers and keeps brands top of mind when they are ready to engage.

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How to achieve true ABM

With constrained budgets, companies will shift from ABM targeting and utilizing account lists to a data-driven and organization-wide approach to engage accounts known as true ABM.





#1 Create organization-wide structure and alignment



According to a [LinkedIn ABM report](#), 41% of marketers have difficulty proving the impact of campaigns on the sales pipeline. Also, 42% comment that creating personalized content at scale for target accounts is a challenge.

The origin of these challenges derives from most B2B organizations siloing ABM to a single department or professional, who then is responsible for launching and monitoring complex campaigns on their own.

ABM is a strategy that only works efficiently if it is cross-departmental—multidisciplinary teams must be formed with stakeholders across business functions to achieve its intended outcomes.

True ABM is, therefore, organization-wide and must be orchestrated by multiple leaders rather than a sole marketer with a handful of creatives and salespeople. Creating an organization-wide structure depends on not only having a cross-departmental ABM budget, but also a reasonably sized ABM team with professionals able to pool their expertise and efforts to launch and track campaigns.

Holding multiple leaders accountable not only streamlines tracking efforts, it also enables the organization-wide alignment required for true ABM to be a success and engage accounts effectively—after all, personalization is paramount for ABM and the amount of data and work hours required to act upon an account's unique challenges and deliver resonating marketing campaigns is exponential.

In 2023, businesses will realize the sheer manpower ABM requires to truly deliver results and capitalize on true ABM because of the high returns it promises by adding high-caliber accounts to the business portfolio. At a time when all marketing must be benchmarked for results, true ABM will be one of the most effective approaches.





#2 Determine what is an account and the business's revenue readiness

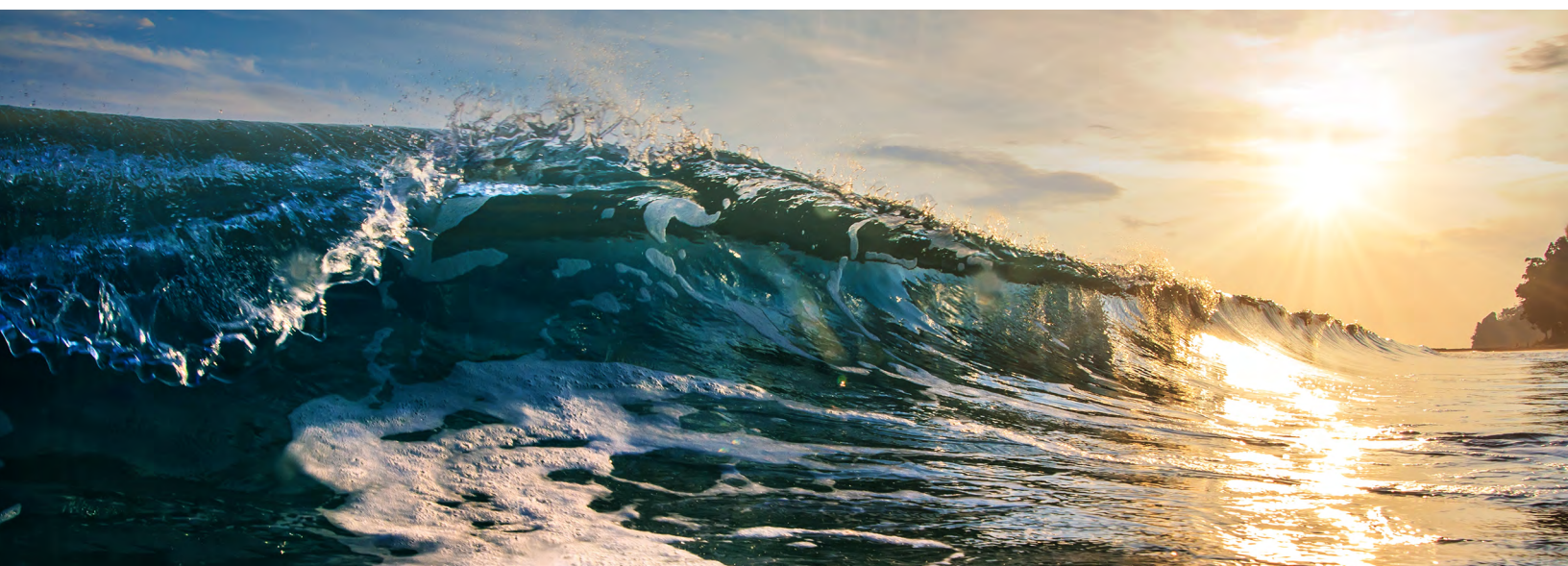
With an organization-wide ABM organization in place, it is easier for stakeholders to collaborate and decide in unison what determines an account as fit for the business.

In the aforementioned [LinkedIn study](#), 43% of marketers cite that identifying the right targets is a challenge due to unreliable data, which demonstrates that many businesses are struggling to identify ideal buyers with ABM.

A clear definition of an account means prioritizing targets is effortless, as the criteria will be crystal clear of what businesses to target first and foremost.

How to determine what is an account:

- **Define a required list of Ideal Client Profile (ICP) factors:** Defining must-have ICP criteria allows marketers and salespeople to quickly identify worthwhile accounts. This can also be informed by [marketing segmentation data](#), along with factors such as buyer intent, install, and contract renewals.
- **Engage the buying committee to assess if the solution is an ideal fit:** By establishing contact with the buying committee ([as well as conducting surveys](#)), marketers and salespeople can determine if a [buying committee](#) views the promoted solution as an ideal fit for their challenges. Even if solutions can be custom-tailored, gauging compatibility at the start is better than investing in accounts that will most likely not convert.
- **Determine if the business has enough revenue to secure the account:** Enterprise and global accounts require a higher investment than a local start-up. Therefore, the company should determine if there is enough budget to launch an ABM campaign of the necessary scope to engage the account effectively.



The Rise of ABX

Account Based Experience (ABX) is an approach that incorporates Client Experience (CX) and User Experience (UX) best practices into ABM strategies and campaigns. It is a “step above” true ABM, as it leverages insights from users at target accounts to inform the marketing process and generate an overall engaging and relevant experience.



According to B2B Buying Journey research by [Gartner \(2019\)](#), when considering a purchase, buyers will spend as little as 17% of their time meeting with suppliers. This time becomes shorter when comparing options, with buyers spending only 5 - 6% percent of their consideration time talking with a sales representative. Even if the rise of remote work during the pandemic has affected how buying committees schedule their time to consider solutions, it is most likely that buyers today and in the future will spend little time actually talking with a salesperson.

Therefore, ABX must be designed to generate meaningful experiences for buyers when they are actively researching and considering solutions. After all, that is how 83% of buyers spend their time considering a purchase, which means the interaction with a salesperson only comes after a meaningful brand experience during their research.

C-suites spend less than 2% of their time with vendors ([B2B Marketing](#)), which demonstrates the importance of developing [nurturing experiences](#) with ABX to pique their interest in the promoted brand for a meaningful sales conversation later on.



How to implement ABX

Discover a 4-step process to structure ABX at your business and engage target accounts throughout the buyer's journey:



#1 Plan the buyer's journey with UX and CX in mind

Incorporate UX and CX best practices into the buyer's journey for target accounts. This will provide insights on user behavior, preferences, and points of friction where buyers "give up" the most.

By planning a buyer's journey that prioritizes interactivity and enables buyers to make decisions and inform themselves on their own terms, the brand will stay "top of mind" with a journey that is meaningful and comfortable for buyers.



#2 Meet buyers where they are with thought leadership content

Instead of prioritizing promotion via LinkedIn inMail and cold emails, promote the brand where buyers are naturally consuming professional content.

[Content syndication](#) on popular business publishers and blogs is an example of promoting brand awareness with meaningful content in a manner that is not invasive. Buyers that appreciate the content might then follow the brand on social media, providing a more natural experience of consuming content marketing.

Mapping buying committee members and leveraging [psychographics](#) is crucial for crafting campaigns at an account-level that will actively engage buyers, incentivize content sharing between them, and result in a brand and its solution being a top choice when it is time to buy.

An [omnichannel approach](#) is also paramount to ensure a seamless buyer experience across the channels that buyers access. It is imperative that you avoid repetition of content, as well as make sure that content is relevant to buyers every time.



#3 Curate services to meet the needs of buyers

ABX requires solutions to be custom tailored to best meet the needs of buyers. These solutions must be easily configured by marketers and salespeople and buyers must be able to get a quote timely.

By having adjustable solutions, with features that can be added or removed seamlessly, not only will the buyer find the solution that best resolves their problems, but brands will also be empowered to offer the best experience possible.

Curation adds relevancy to what would otherwise be a generic offer, which will be paramount in 2023 as tighter budgets put pressure on buyers to make the best choices to enable growth with technology and partners.



#4 Build the tech stack to scale ABX

When building the ABX buyer journey, bottlenecks will most likely emerge that hinder a seamless experience for users at target accounts. This is why developing a tech stack comes as the last and final step after problems have been identified and the requisite tools can be integrated.

After all, ABX requires a lean tech stack to make sure that marketing, ops, and sales teams can glean insights quickly and make adjustments to maintain a smooth experience. Integrations are paramount to guarantee that the data is at one point of access.

In 2023, ABX will be sustained by knowledgeable and agile professionals, who can build out a holistic brand experience guided by real-time data from buyers at target accounts.

Content, paid promotion, websites, and applications will be updated as needed at a rapid pace—expect B2B companies to further their [A/B testing](#), proactively making changes to the layout, messaging of assets, and platforms similarly to how Meta and Alphabet manage their product roadmaps (for example, [Whatsapp is updated every two to three months](#)).

Outlook 2023

Discover the implications of the tech slowdown on B2B marketers in [The Readjustment of the Tech Market](#) →



By **David Verwey**,
VP of EMEA



ABM vs True ABM vs ABX

A breakdown of the differences between each account marketing approach:



	ABM	True ABM	ABX
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	<p>Siloed structure: one stakeholder or part of the marketing team's tasks.</p>	<p>Organization-wide and cross-departmental: multiple stakeholders and professionals.</p>	<p>Organization-wide and cross-departmental, powered by UX and CX insights.</p>
STRATEGY	<p>Account list: marketers and salespeople engage ICP accounts.</p>	<p>Data-driven and personalized marketing to ICP accounts.</p>	<p>Buyer journey-driven with feedback from target accounts to improve UX.</p>
OUTCOMES	<p>High-risk, low gain with buyers at target accounts frustrated with generic offers and messaging.</p>	<p>Engaged buyers and verifiable results with multiple stakeholders accountable for success.</p>	<p>Engaged and happy buyers with their needs continuously met with an ever-evolving buyer journey experience.</p>

The ABM mindset shift: focusing on opportunities

As know-how on true ABM and ABX evolves, companies will realize that focusing on opportunities within buying committees rather than accounts will be more beneficial to sales teams.

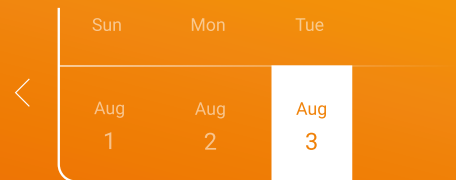


This means an optics shift from the account level to the opportunity level within buying committees.

This will guide marketing and sales approaches to identify signs of an opportunity within buyers and capitalize on it when the time is right.

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ABX is essential for this mindset shift as a deep understanding of the buyer journey is required to identify an opportunity at buying committees. Layering [buyer intent data](#) can also guide analysis as an additional criteria of what defines an opportunity for an organization.

Focusing on opportunities also ties in with the agility ABX requires to resonate with buyers and promote solutions in a memorable way. By personalizing follow-up touchpoints after an opportunity is identified, businesses will find greater success with their marketing efforts.

Outlook 2023

Read **The Evolution of the Marketer for an analysis of the changing expectations on marketers in 2023** →



By **Victoria Albert**,
VP of Marketing



Beyond the platform: the need for an ABM activator

Most companies currently conduct ABM with a Client Relationship Management (CRM) or dedicated ABM platform and assign a marketer or small team to be “in charge” of launching and measuring campaigns.



This approach is—understandably—not delivering results as the complexities of ABM go beyond the scope of a single or handful of professionals. Also, companies often overestimate the capacity of platforms to run campaigns on “autopilot” rather than taking them at face value for what they really are: tools.

While useful, tools require an activator to reach intended outcomes, which is what most companies frustrated with underperforming ABM campaigns will be looking for in 2023.

As a result of this demand, consultants and ABM providers will gain a footing on the management of ABM platforms and orchestration of campaigns that generate results. An activator will prove how results are being achieved with ABM and interpret the data on the platform into actionable tasks for the business.

When selecting an activator, it is also essential to consider their ability to launch campaigns with an [omnichannel approach](#), to not only meet buyers where they are in their journey, but also actively adjust messaging and promotion to work best on each channel.

Capabilities of an ABM platform vs activator

ABM platforms are hubs that aggregate data, whereas activators are partners or professionals who can drive the account generation process, prove results, and make adequate changes when needed to pivot ABM campaigns for success.

Recently, marketing automation platforms and ABM tools are evolving to include ABX best-practices, such as Artificial Intelligence to recommend the best accounts. It is likely that in the future, legacy ABM tools will cease to exist as marketers achieve better results with sophisticated ABX platforms guided by insights from experienced activators.



Key takeaways

These are the top three considerations from this guide to keep in mind when updating ABM strategies in 2023:

Eliminate silos and leverage data to create memorable ABM experiences for buyers

ABM must be an organization-wide strategy where multiple professionals are accountable for the ABM outcomes. Empower them with integrated data on accounts and their users to inform the ABX strategy.

Experiences will be the expectation from buyers in 2023 for purchasing a solution, which means eliminating friction points and addressing concerns effectively (and in a non-invasive manner) will be crucial for B2B marketers to strike a chord.

Focus on opportunities within buying committees

Shifting the focus from accounts to opportunities within buying committees will not only humanize the marketing approach to better resonate with their current concerns, but also boost agility when planning follow-up campaigns.

This optics shift makes ABM more timely and better aligned with the best practices of true ABM and ABX, which promote one-to-one and personalized engagement.

Achieve ROI with an ABM activator

Launch campaigns and verify outcomes with a seasoned ABM partner who can activate campaigns for success in 2023.

5-step checklist to implement true ABM and ABX

- ✓ Set a true ABM foundation with a cross-departmental ABM team that includes multiple stakeholders to launch, track, and optimize campaigns
- ✓ Define the ideal target account for the business considering the ICP and available budget
- ✓ Achieve ABX by launching a buyer's journey informed by UX and CX best practices
- ✓ Focus on opportunities within buying committees at target accounts
- ✓ Leverage an ABM activator to reach the utmost potential of platforms and prove ROI



About the Author

[Mukesh Rajpurohit](#) is a seasoned B2B Demand Generation executive with over 20 years of industry experience.

As Vice President of APAC Sales, he spearheads INFUSEmedia's growth opportunities in existing and new markets in Australia, Singapore, India, and the larger APAC region.

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