

ACTIVATING ABM:

How to Design a Successful Content Strategy

Account-based marketing (ABM) is a key way for B2B organizations to develop more valuable and long-term relationships with buyers. The promise of ABM is to create more tailored and immersive campaign experiences.

But these experiences—and in turn, your campaigns—will fall flat if the content is anything but relevant, impactful and well executed. No amount of budget spent on fancy direct mail campaigns or branded swag will compensate for poorly thought-out strategy or “meh” content that fails to engage, empower and support buyers at each stage of the decision-making process.

Based on our time working with brands on their ABM strategies, we’ve distilled

5 best practices

that will help your content team see success.



BEST PRACTICE 1:

Know Your Audience

You've selected your target accounts carefully, based on their potential value to your organization. You know what you want them to do. But what do *they* want?

That may depend on who they are. If your targets belong to a complex buying

committee, consider each member's role and what they care about. Influencers, gatekeepers and final decision-makers have boxes to check in their role in the purchase journey. Your content needs to alleviate their pains and answer the questions they'll likely have at each stage of the journey.

BEST PRACTICE 2:

Determine How You'll Customize Content



Your chosen ABM approach offers a high-level map that you'll need to zoom in on to determine the most efficient and effective content customization plan. Is your approach strategic (one-to-one), scaled (one-to-few) or programmatic (one-to-many)?

Strategic ABM demands highly tailored pieces built around specific account needs. A scaled or programmatic ABM approach allows you to identify priorities and connect them to key points of personalization—for example, by industry, role, pain point or

account challenge. Notice which parts of the content might be universal across either your entire list or multiple segments. Then, you can use that foundation as your base content and focus your energy on tailoring individual components like landing pages, ads and emails.

If you're just testing ABM, focusing on one specific account may be the right approach. This focus will allow you to create highly tailored content and experiences that can be revisited and adjusted for additional accounts over time.

BEST PRACTICE 3:

Develop Content Messaging and Ideation

With a list of your target buyers and key members of the buying group in hand, you can develop targeted messaging that aligns to the audiences' thought processes and intent signals throughout the buyer's journey. Break down the challenges, pain points and success metrics in each step, taking care to incorporate them into the corresponding messaging. Be sure to craft messaging for the entire "loyalty loop" to support post-purchase enablement, renewal and cross-selling strategies.

Develop a campaign theme (or themes) to connect all campaign content and promotional components. The theme

helps you create narrative continuity and supports campaign recall as buyers venture across channels.

Consider your final theme and messaging to develop content concepts. Tap different formats that will resonate best with your target audience and will best meet their needs at each stage of the journey. During critical junctures in the ABM campaign journey, such as right before hand-off to sales development reps (SDRs), you may want to incorporate more innovative formats like personalized videos, custom interactive experiences or tailored solution-building tools.



BEST PRACTICE 4:

Create the Content: Net-New & Strategically Repurposed

Now you can begin the content creation process, armed with all the relevant data—what to say, when to say it and who to say it to. Build on your theme to make everything as relevant and engaging as you can for your target accounts.

Your messaging map is also invaluable as you reversion net-new content for

different personas, target accounts and industry segments.

If budget and resources are limited (and aren't they always?), identify existing content you can refresh to address your defined audience. A content audit can help you pinpoint low-effort, high-impact content to update and reuse for ABM campaigns.

BEST PRACTICE 5:

Empower Sales

It's always important to empower sales with content, and this is especially true for ABM campaigns. With key accounts on the line, you want to support sales conversations at every turn, providing content and context to guide buyers across the finish line.

Prioritize buyer enablement and post-purchase content to keep those hard-earned accounts engaged and

satisfied with their investments—and ready to scale up with more.

Can the content scale as sales' needs change or as they engage with new accounts? Is the content easy to share? Do they need more? Marketing and sales need to communicate clearly and openly before, during and after an ABM campaign to ensure buyers' needs are continuously met.



CONSIDER ONBOARDING A TRUSTED PARTNER

If your ABM experience is limited or you have a lean team, onboarding a partner can give you the tools and confidence you need to win. A knowledgeable partner can help guide strategy, planning and content creation so that your team can focus on big-picture progress and performance. Content4Demand has partnered with B2B organizations to develop content assets, craft overall ABM strategy and design creative/campaign themes that resonate with target buyers.

How can we help you? Register for a complimentary, no-commitment ABM strategy session to discuss your individual needs and plans, and we can recommend a path forward.

Let's Talk ABM

More ABM Resources



WEBINAR

ABM Without the WTF: 8 Lessons from Top-Performing Brands



E-BOOK

Maximizing ABM Success: 7 Experts Reveal Lessons for Creating Compelling Content at Scale

BLOG

“ABM Success Is All About the Content”

