

Account based Marketing Report

How to Leverage Account Based Marketing in 2024 and beyond

Challenges, obstacles, and solutions from marketing industry leaders



Damien Seaman
Rudy Parker

Account Based Marketing Roundtable

On June 6th, 2024, demand generation executive Rudy Parker and content strategist Damien Seaman hosted a roundtable to discuss account-based marketing with eight attendees from the B2B marketing world.

Questions covered:

1. Where are you on your ABM journey?
2. What key challenges or roadblocks have you encountered or are you anticipating with implementing ABM?
3. How do you balance scalability with personalization in ABM?
4. What emerging trends, tools, or methodologies do you see in ABM? How can you leverage these to get greater ROI from your marketing budget?

Attendees:

- Speaker 1, VP of Demand Generation at an enterprise application security firm based in the United States
- Speaker 2, Director of Marketing for an insurance software company based in the United States
- Speaker 3, Co-Founder of a recruitment services platform focused on specialized IT talent based in the United Kingdom
- Speaker 4, President and CEO of an ecommerce development company based in the United States
- Speaker 5, Chief Marketing Officer at a venture capital firm that specializes in acquiring technology spin offs from existing companies based in the United States
- Speaker 6, Chief Development Officer at a private equity-backed dermatology service platform based in the United States
- Speaker 7, Global Director of Demand Generation at a network security company based in Canada
- Speaker 8, VP of Portfolio Marketing at an enterprise application security firm based in the United States

Question 1: Where are you in your ABM journey?



Summary: Most roundtable participants had limited experience of ABM, and even those with more experience had gotten mixed results. Most people on the roundtable were there to pick up tips on how to have success with account-based marketing because the marketing they had been trying up to now was no longer working for them.

Speaker 5 was looking to learn more about ABM to use it as the possible foundational launch strategy for one of her portfolio businesses. Speaker 1 had experienced mixed results with ABM in recent years and was looking for insights as to what to do differently. Meanwhile, Speaker 7 described how he was currently using one of the market-leading ABM tools to pick out potential prospects based on tracking intent signals. There was then a brief discussion of the relative merits of the leading ABM software tools 6sense, Demandbase, and ZoomInfo.

Speaker 1: As VP of demand generation, I'm in charge of the website, paid activities, analysis and so on. When it comes to ABM, we find there are many different hypotheses on how best to do ABM, many focusing on different things.

At the end of the day, it requires a lot of work, and a lot of synching with many other teams. It's not as simple as developing some marketing assets and sending them out. So I'll be happy to learn from the group here to see what's working and what's not.

“We're really interested in doing more account-based marketing, to avoid the cost and time involved in going to trade shows, which is where 90% of our marketing budget goes.”

Speaker 2: I'm the director of marketing for a software company that provides core platforms for property and casualty insurance companies. I came from the media side of that where I was providing content and lead gen for vendors against that insurance audience. I feel like we're very old school, writing content, putting out landing pages and ads, putting content out on LinkedIn for free, and writing content for the website.

We're really interested in doing more account-based marketing, to avoid the cost and time involved in going to trade shows, which is where 90% of our marketing budget goes. So looking at answering the question of when I have budget, what am I going to do with it?

Speaker 3: I'm a startup founder about to soft launch my company. Marketing is probably one of my biggest gaps, hence I'm here to learn more about account-based marketing.

My experience is totally in a different area, which is implementations on big projects in IT, so that's where my focus has been. I'm very intrigued to know how account-based marketing can help us on the soft launch going forward and getting a market base.

Speaker 4: I'm trying to understand how account-based marketing could help my ecommerce development company because the spraying the bullets technique doesn't work anymore. We need to be very strategic and really go after the accounts that we need.

Speaker 5: We have an analytical instruments company in our portfolio that we are just now getting ready to launch. And for that we're looking at a land and expand strategy where I think ABM fits in nicely. So I am on here to see if I can pick up any tips from anyone else on what to look out for as I set the strategy for our ABM approach with our new portfolio company.

"I'm currently using one of the leading ABM tools as an intent gatherer because... we lose every deal that we're not aware of."

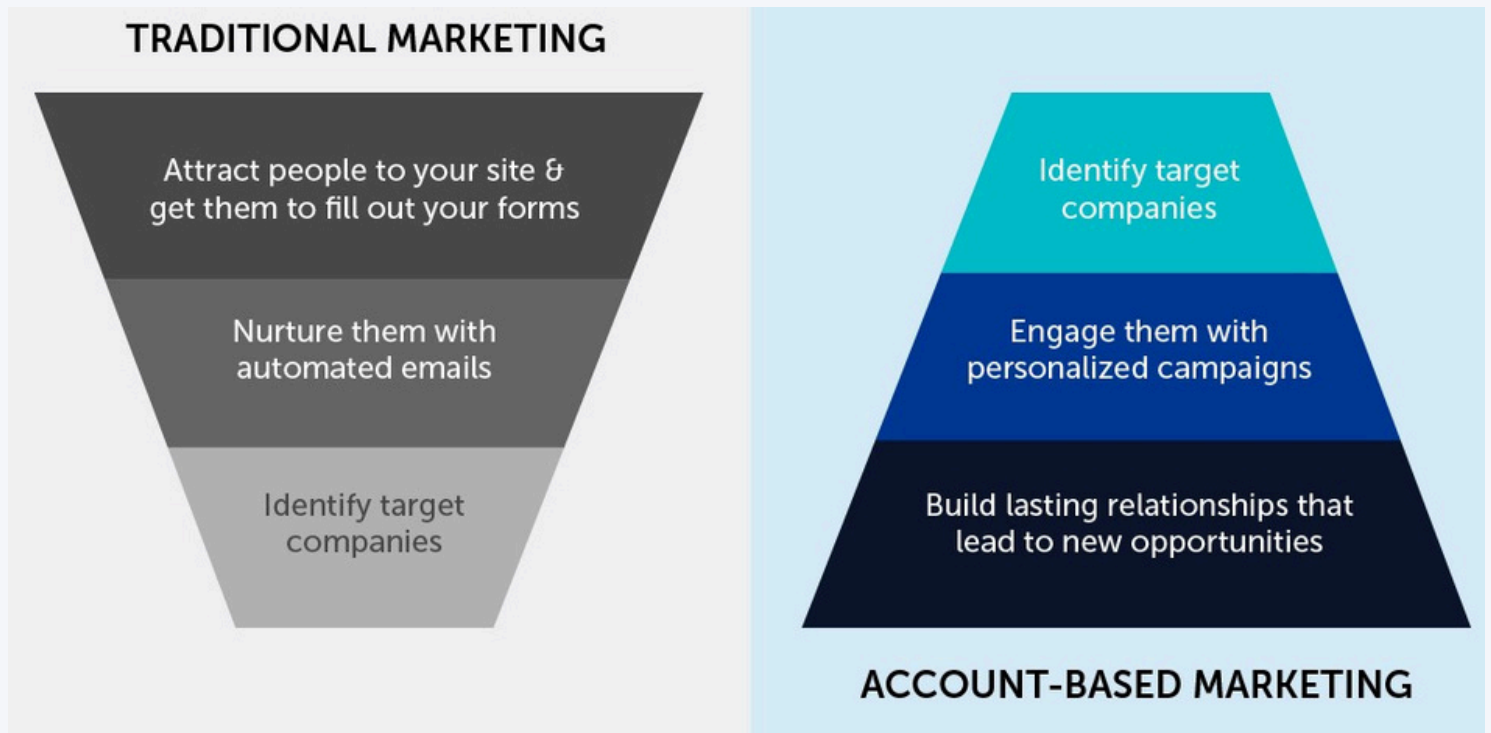
Speaker 6: I'm the Chief Development Officer at a private equity-backed dermatology service platform leading all inorganic efforts and strategy through targeting mergers and acquisitions, so it's a pure acquisition strategy of acquiring various position practices across the country. I'm here to glean whatever I can from a prospecting standpoint because our strategy of collecting names, clinic phone numbers and emails and using regular cadences to try to contact the end user, which is the physician, is not very successful these days.

Speaker 7: I head up a demand generation for a cyber security company specializing in services to the SMB market. I was hired about a year ago to drive 100% growth in demand gen. I'd used ABM tools at my previous company, a larger company, and so I saw that as a real win for us to bring in.

I'm currently using one of the leading ABM tools as an intent gatherer. I got the company interested in intent because the basic idea I had was, we lose every deal that we're not aware of. And for small companies you don't get invited to the game because nobody knows who you are, whereas bigger players like CrowdStrike or Sophos will get invited.

So I use it as kind of a listening device to find out the people who are in a potential deal. And then we've got a great BDR team, we get them engaged and get them trying to intercept. And it's been quite successful. Intent now accounts directly for roughly 25% of our ops. And then it's also impacting the potential success of other deals, increasing efficiency by about 10 – 15%.

"I'm using my knowledge of how predictive works to tune it to do the predictive work on the cheap."



Rudy Parker: That's great, because we've got quite a few people who are just thinking of taking the plunge, but it sounds like you're quite far along in the journey, and you've already got extensive success from it. Can I ask what platform you you've been using?

Speaker 7: Yeah, I'm using 6sense. I'd been using it at another company, which is like a billion dollar company. We'd tried out Demandbase and ZoomInfo and put them through a trial. And we landed with 6sense. We only have the base model, not the full predictive functionality. But because I've used it before, I'm using my knowledge of how predictive works to tune it to do the predictive work on the cheap.

Question 2: What key challenges or roadblocks have you encountered implementing ABM?

Summary: Rudy Parker discussed his view that ABM is a new term for a kind of marketing that's been going on for a long time based on targeting and seeking to penetrate specific accounts. He gave the example of a campaign he ran at Visual IQ over ten years ago, which targeted 50 specific companies and was very successful. The question then came up of how to choose target companies and how difficult it can be to get the right data and target the right individuals.

Rudy said he did it based on a combination of engagement data and Sales team feedback. Damien Seaman mentioned an example of a client he was working for that had done significant research into a new market before launching, and that this kind of research is a crucial step to success for that client in that market. Speaker 2 asked whether anyone on the call had tried using geo fencing rather than attending conferences. Speaker 7 then discussed what he felt had been the breakthrough at his current company, which was using data to determine intent and then only reaching out to companies that were showing intent around researching or buying similar services.

Speaker 7, Speaker 1, and Rudy then discussed the relative merits of integrating paid ad campaigns with Google or LinkedIn via ABM tools such as Demandbase or 6sense. Rudy said he thought there were potential pitfalls with this approach unless you have the resources to leverage it properly. Speaker 7 followed up with his insight that ABM tools in themselves are nothing special but can offer significant competitive advantage when paired with other marketing tools and tactics.

Rudy Parker: My experience is somewhat similar to Speaker 7. ABM has been going on for a long time. Even if I go back to 2013 when I worked for this marketing attribution company Visual IQ, I feel like I was doing account-based marketing back then. It's just that we didn't call it that back then, just penetrating large accounts. And it was very much that approach, basically drawing up lists of targeted accounts and penetrating them.



For example, because we were marketing attribution, we drew up a list of 50 companies that we wanted to reach, and we got these branded binoculars with our Visual IQ logo, and we sent them to various heads of marketing and heads of digital marketing. The SDRs followed up on them and tried to book meetings.

In the US it did really well. The head of ESPN Digital Marketing loved it, and we set up a meeting with them. And then, similarly, when I worked at Zscaler, our whole focus was cyber security in the cloud. And so we started with big companies. We drew up a list of 50 companies we wanted to penetrate, and we offered them a free consulting project to go in and examine their cyber security and see where the weaknesses were and provide them with a report. Now, that's quite costly. So obviously, we wanted to be very sure that those accounts that we were offering these services were good potential customers.

More recently, I worked at a different SaaS company, where they implemented Demandbase. But I didn't feel like they were really utilizing it. I used it, but it seemed like they implemented it, and then they weren't really using it.

Damien Seaman: One of the interesting things you raised there is making sure you were targeting the right people. So how did you do that? What did you do to try and make sure that you were targeting the right people?

Rudy Parker: It's an art and science. We drew up a list based on engagement. But then also a lot of it was talking with the sales team and confirming that accounts that we thought looked engaged were also accounts that the sales team agreed were worth creating an opportunity with. I love the Jeff Bezos quote that if the stories and the data don't match, trust the stories.

Damien Seaman: Is there anybody here on the call who's got any specific concerns or worries about diving into ABM?

“We are at the stage that we know the assets. We know what people like. We use 6sense or Demandbase. But how do you make this strategy really impactful?”

Speaker 1: Yes. Once you decide you're going for specific accounts or for a specific vertical, let's say finance. Then you spot the accounts, then you prepare the assets, and then you do whatever is needed. But then you come to the point that you need to gather the leads, the people you're gonna target.

What would be the best way to gather the people? I think all of us know ZoomInfo. We buy outside lists. We do whatever we can to gather these lists. But at the end of the day, you send an email with the beautiful asset that you created, you don't deliver to a lot of the right addresses, because maybe some info is wrong. Or maybe you don't have a large enough audience, so you don't have enough people, because maybe you're targeting at the C level.

After you've made a really huge effort from the design team, the product marketing team, and so on, then you just send it to 6,000 people. But not all of them open the email, or if some of them open, they don't click to download the asset.

So my concern is we are at the stage that we know the assets. We know what people like. We use 6sense or Demandbase. But how do you make this strategy really impactful?

Damien Seaman: That's a very good question. I'm working on a project with a client right now, which is moving into an adjacent market. They sell protective equipment to people who work on oil rigs and construction sites. Most of their sales come via distributors, so they need to be able to reach the distributors, and they've got relationships with these distributors for existing products.



Now they're moving into a new product line and what they really want to do with this is target the end users. I came into this, not knowing very much about the market. My approach was to talk to all the internal subject matter experts, and then it was to talk to whatever industry contacts they had.

We discovered that there's a real difference in the language and tone that would appeal to the different people depending on who you're targeting. This client knows which people to talk to in the market, who to reach out to, and how to get in front of people. So I think the key here is to do everything you can to know the market and know who to reach out to.

The interesting thing is that the value proposition to the different personas for the same product is actually very different because they really care about different aspects of the product. So I would review your assets to make sure they do really address the different pain points of your different personas, for example.

There are also different ways to reach these different individuals. it's important to remember that different personas will respond differently to different channels, and that some approaches simply won't work with some of the people you need to reach.

Speaker 2: We're doing intent scoring with ZoomInfo and have Hubspot. And we do behavioral scores. We can get them to an MQL but we don't feel like we're account-based marketing so much. And I just wondered, has anybody done geo fencing at a conference instead of going to the conference? Has anybody tried that? Or because some of you are in cyber security are people turning their privacy onto their devices so that stuff isn't even working anymore? Is retargeting working? Or isn't it working anymore, because people are turning on all privacy and we'd waste our money trying that?

“One thing that we do with intent, rather than sending to everybody, is only to communicate with people who are demonstrating some level of interest in what I’m selling.”

I don't wanna waste money if everyone's turned their devices off. It seems creepy to me, but it sure is cheaper than going to the event and putting up the booth if you can get the entire building to see your ads.

Speaker 7: When we first began, we had a team of 5 BDRs who were essentially just cold calling phone books, and it was like a nightmare for them. Our major transition was to only really reach out to people who were demonstrating intent. So again, we're not really doing ABM. All we're doing is focusing the spray and prey that some of us are all talking about doing.

One thing that we do with intent, rather than sending to everybody is only to communicate with people who are demonstrating some level of interest in what I'm selling because then they're more likely to pick up the phone and have a conversation with me. That's where we're really using the intent tool to far greater success.

When I first came to the company, we had lots of lists. I sent out bulk emails to a target like Michigan. I would say in Michigan, there were X percent or X number of cyber incidents in the last six months. So I'd try to personalize it to the place and everything. And it was like crickets. There's nothing going on with that.

But then, when we start to see with intent signals where, if somebody's searching on, say, endpoint detection response, plus they might be looking at a competitor, that means to me they're in some level of interested buying cycle. Then we insert ourselves into those conversations. So that's where we're seeing the success.

“There was a potential to run ads through 6sense but we didn’t get to that point. My concern was we didn’t have a big enough team to do all the creative side.”

Now, what we need to do is turn that around to the point you're bringing up where we say here are the people we actually want to win. And what we need to do is put signals on them to watch when they're starting to get into some level of buying cycle, and then we jump in and go after them. But we also then engage other marketing tactics.

I wanted to ask Speaker 1 how you’re using 6sense. One of the things we're going to be using shortly is 6sense has this connector from segments into adwords. I want to do preferential bidding on the segments I want, which can be my accounts.

This is something I had done at my previous company, a very big BI company where we spent millions of dollars on paid search. We created lookalike segments from our targets to go after to try to grow our audience beyond the target market. But again, it's really just trying to focus on people who are demonstrating some level intent who are more likely to answer my email or pick up the phone if I call them.

Rudy Parker: That's so interesting. When I was running demand gen at Cloud Sense, which is a billing solution that works with Salesforce, we implemented 6sense. There was a potential to run ads through 6sense but we didn't get to that point. My concern was we didn't have a big enough team to do all the creative side.

I was running all the ads mainly on LinkedIn and Google. It was going to take a lot of resources. And we also wanted to have confidence in the ads, because the ad creative and copy is very different across different ad platforms. And we weren't quite sure how that would work with 6sense. But it sounds like you're contemplating that, or you’ve done that already in terms of running ads through the platform.

“6sense on its own is nothing super. But when you take something like 6sense and pair it up with another tactic, it's a real one plus one equals three scenario.”

Speaker 7: When I was at my previous company, they spent 10 million bucks on paid search, so there I was just doing paid search. There our target was certain size companies, like 500 million and above in the US, 250 mill and above for Europe. We created lookalike segments and then I created a separate paid search campaign inside of my campaign, where we increased our bids if anybody from target accounts was searching on things that we cared about. So I had two levels of paid search using Google and Bing. I would pay a lot for anybody who is in my target.

Rudy Parker: And you were targeting through the 6sense platform?

Speaker 7: Yeah. I created a second campaign that had more than a thousand in it, so that it would, you know, pass muster. And then we created the different bidding structure for those types of accounts. So that's one thing with an ABM tool. If you do pick your target accounts, and you've got enough of them, and actually, that's what I'd say is the big win with any of these tools.

6sense on its own is nothing super. But when you take something like 6sense and pair it up with another tactic, it's a real one plus one equals three scenario. I think that's the real value for us as marketers. It's how you implement it and how you tie it together with some of the things that are your strengths. That's when I think you get a real competitive advantage from using this sort of intent or ABM tool.

Question 3: How do you balance scalability with personalization in ABM?

Summary: Damien Seaman described an example of effective targeting of accounts during a B2B direct mail campaign which achieved an 80% response rate. Rudy Parker added the example of a market survey in a relatively untapped market which generated dozens of quality leads due to clever segmentation. Speaker 3 discussed the importance of making an emotional connection with prospects by making the effort to understand them. Speaker 1 added that personalization can take a long time and still not guarantee success, adding that it was important for Sales and Marketing to be aligned. Unless Sales is prepared to leverage the leads created by Marketing, it would jeopardize lead generation efforts, she said, which Rudy and Speaker 7 agreed with. Speaker 1 added that she had not experienced great success with getting high converting leads from LinkedIn, after which there was a discussion on some of the best ways to leverage the LinkedIn platform successfully from Rudy and Damien. Speaker 7 then mentioned how he had created strong Marketing and Sales alignment at his current company and why that was so important for success.

Damien Seaman: As Speaker 7 has alluded to, it's important to target the right accounts and think about value rather than volume. For example, I was working at a B2B marketing agency several years ago. Canon was a client and they were looking to move into the shared documents space, moving away from selling printers.

The agency came up with an incredibly effective campaign which targeted C-suite executives at publicly-listed companies across six different countries in Europe. They were segmented by revenue and by industry, etc. We worked with Canon to come up with a list of 9 different challenges that Canon's digital document management solution had solved for existing clients that were also publicly-listed companies.



We then created a messaging matrix with those 9 messages on it. Then we printed off the target companies' annual reports, and found places in each annual report that mentioned challenges related to document management, from office or paper waste to productivity. We wrote out the messages by hand on post it notes and then attached those in the reports at the two or three places that mentioned the challenges Canon solved for others.

This went out to each individual executive with a cover letter from the head of Canon in each country, so the message came from a specific person at the same seniority as the recipient. It talked about the challenges using executive language that resonated, and each package seemed personalized. In that way, the agency was able to target well over 100 accounts and get an 80% response rate.

So I think the lesson there is about taking the time to target the right people and then find a memorable way to personalize the message or assets that you send them. Because if you get this right, you can get just an incredible response and the ROI goes through the roof.

Rudy Parker: That's a great example. Here's another. I was working at a video game company that was promoting advertising within video games. We were trying to generate leads and we didn't have any really good content. I was inspired by a previous experience when I worked at Visual IQ, where we published an annual state of marketing attribution survey report based on the views of 500 CMOs.

That report had created a huge amount of SEO and generated some very strong leads. I wanted to replicate that success at this video games company. So we sent out a state of video games advertising survey and got about 300 responses in what was essentially a completely new area. We segmented the recipients into three groups: video game companies, advertisers, and then advertising agencies, with specific question sets for each group.

“A customer isn't just a customer. Before you realize it, that customer's 10 different types of customer. And you've got to find that emotional connection in what you're selling to that person. So I think that's a lot of where I see targeted marketing being so important.”

That meant we were able to produce a survey report just for advertisers, just for ad agencies, or just for video game companies. Or one that combined them all together into one report reflecting the opinions of all three segments.

Because this was virgin territory, when we got that report out we got a great response from the market and generated some brilliant leads from it. And because we targeted the different segments there was a strong element of personalization which really helped boost that response.

Speaker 3: For me, not being an expert or experienced in Marketing but with a background in Sales, it's always been the idea that it's very much a numbers game. But I don't think Sales quite correlates to Marketing. They are very distinct and very different.

For me, there's this idea that the more you go out there, the better chance you've got of hitting something. But actually based on the nuances between the various services that we're looking to sell, actually, that kind of emotional contact based on telling the story – and some of the behavioral mechanisms behind that as well - could work really, really well.

A customer isn't just a customer. Before you realize it, that customer's 10 different types of customer. And you've got to find that emotional connection in what you're selling to that person. So I think that's a lot of where I see targeted marketing being so important

Rudy Parker: Yes, because before this roundtable you and I were talking about you leveraging your IT skills to put together a kind of C-suite workshop for C-level people to try and understand project management software development.

“Marketing and Sales are not always BFFs... But to make this kind of personalization work, we need to work together.”

And we were talking about what a CFO would want out of that workshop versus what a COO would want. The CFO is going to know less about technology and probably need a broader overview. A CIO probably just wants to understand more of the technical aspects of what their project managers are working on, for example.

So we were talking about even for that one event, splitting it out so you can reach a CFO with a different message from a COO from a different message from a CIO, and we're even thinking of maybe having CEOs on that event as well, right?

Speaker 3: Exactly. And that's just one area. I think what was really interesting from my perspective talking to you about that is how segmented even that is and correctly targeting or getting your message out to each person that that might resonate with. It's not just a standard idea that yeah, we do this C-level training to help you better understand how technology works within your environment, why you're putting so much money into technology, and where you're seeing its benefits. But really, for some people even that might be too deep for them.

Speaker 1: We tried some personalization in the past that we're going to test now. But Marketing and Sales are not always BFFs. They often want to take care of their own things in their own way. But to make this kind of personalization work, we need to work together.

You have the insights. You know the account. You have spoken to people, and within Marketing we leverage that data to create the personalization. Do we do a landing page? Do we send them a present? Do we do this or that? I did this over the past 7 years I've been working with ABM strategies, with Demandbase and 6sense. But at the end of the day, if Sales are not leveraging it, it's not gonna work.

“The problem in Google is that you cannot target a specific account. It's a more broad strategy. You get whoever is looking for a specific keyword.”

Rudy Parker: I had that at the midsize SaaS company where we had the full package for Demandbase, and it was just being left on the shelf.

Speaker 1: It takes a long time to personalize. We're going to try this again, but it takes a lot of effort from different teams, from the design team through to the research. Sometimes we don't know if we should just get these individual clients or go to a wider ABM strategy. Should we go for a specific vertical? Or should we go to the specific persona?

ABM has different colors and flavors. You need to choose. If you don't have a lot of time, go wide. If you have a lot of time, go personalized. It depends on the resources and time you have, as well as the power and the knowledge to do each one of these strategies.

To get back to what Speaker 7 said, I use 6sense, and it's fully connected to LinkedIn automatically. We just create the segments and the segments we create according to where people are standing. We get poor results from LinkedIn, but we use it mainly for brand awareness.

Rudy Parker: You don't get good leads from LinkedIn?

Speaker 1: In B2B we know that buying lists is not that effective and that LinkedIn is one of the platforms with the most accurate data on people and companies. You know that they are at this company, and you know many things when you work with this. So we work with segments. We used to work with the top of the funnel, bottom of the funnel, and middle of the funnel, and then all the accounts that were at awareness stages.

“I love LinkedIn... I started advertising on it very quickly, and the main reason was the level of targeting... Everyone puts so much information on there and LinkedIn has these great algorithms. So you can use matching audiences, you can target ads to groups within LinkedIn, that’s been a really effective strategy.”

We used to have a segment for them, and we used to have run only a campaign for them with top of the funnel content, blogs, this kind of thing, some gated some not gated. And then bottom of the funnel, we will give them something more that speaks about who we are, what we do, and how can we help them solve their pain points with a little more information about the product. But at some point we saw that yes, people click, they download it. But we're not converting into opportunities from these kinds of assets.

We are getting leads from there, and it works well. It's just not as successful as other campaigns are, like a Google search for example, when people are looking using specific terms.

Rudy Parker: On Google there’s a lot of intent built into the questions.

Speaker 1: Exactly. The problem in Google is that you cannot target a specific account. It's a more broad strategy. You get whoever is looking for a specific keyword.

Rudy Parker: We've had some good success with LinkedIn. I love LinkedIn. I've been on it since 2006. My wife’s a recruiter, so she got me into it very early on, and I started advertising on it very quickly, and the main reason was the level of targeting.

I built my initial career targeting enterprise accounts. LinkedIn was that perfect tool to satisfy the Sales team. Everyone puts so much information in there and LinkedIn has these great algorithms. So you can use matching audiences, you can target ads to groups within LinkedIn, that's been a really effective strategy.

“We didn't have really engaging content, so Damien interviewed HR directors, prospects, and customers. He came up with 6 reports based on what they really cared about. And then we used those reports to generate leads.”

I was at a company that does HR benefits and my CEO was actually the founder of the company. A bit unusual, but he was a marketer, so he'd run paid advertising for Amazon, Microsoft. He built the majority of his previous business through B2B Facebook ads for small to medium sized customers.

But he tried to do that multiple times at his most recent company and it wasn't working. So I adapted his strategies for LinkedIn, the matching audiences, targeting groups, and we absolutely hit it out of the park.

Our main metric was cost per sales demo, which we reduced by 700%. That was partly due to targeted LinkedIn ads, and the rest was due to the webinars we ran, the roundtables that followed, and campaigns tied to the six industry guides that Damien wrote for us.

We didn't have really engaging content, so Damien interviewed HR directors, prospects, and customers. He came up with reports based on what they really cared about. And then we used those reports not only to generate leads, but also as the themes to drive roundtables and webinars.

Damien Seaman: LinkedIn success often depends on your audience. For ads or organic outreach, it can be helpful to target professional female decision makers, who tend to be more responsive in my experience. So that's something to consider. Who are you targeting? Are they likely to be using LinkedIn?

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One of the things that worked with this particular campaign was that you're talking to HR professionals. Obviously, they're going to be using LinkedIn. They're going to be super open to being targeted that way. So one of the things I would consider if using LinkedIn is that your target audience is LinkedIn-friendly?

Anything recruitment-based on LinkedIn usually kills. So there's something to consider if you're thinking about using LinkedIn.

Doing stuff for recruitment on LinkedIn is easy by comparison to other things in my experience. I know people who've got sort of tens of thousands of LinkedIn contacts because they're in recruitment and that's why most people are on LinkedIn - is to network with these people. So find some people with a lot of followers on LinkedIn and see how you can best leverage it would be another suggestion there.

Speaker 7: Speaker 3 mentioned his sales background, and Sales and Marketing being different things. I've always been in Marketing, not Sales. But I always consider my job is to make Sales successful. That's the way we have to approach it as marketers. And I've been in companies where there's a big divide.

And I've produced thousands of leads that fall on the floor because Sales won't pick them up. I'm very lucky. I'd say one of the competitive advantages that my company has today, the one I'm with now is we have a really tight relationship between Sales and Marketing.

“ABM and intent... is a glue between Sales and Marketing. And that’s one of the untold organizational benefits of an ABM strategy.”

And part of it was needed. They were starving. They were dying. They couldn't get anything going, so they really needed us to come in. So we've created this sort of growing-up-together relationship. And the one thing I would say is that I think ABM can be a real cementer of that relationship, because for it to work, I have to deliver accounts that they want to sell to.

I have two different weekly meetings with two different sales teams where we talk about the leads that I'm delivering. Are they good? Do you like them? Who do you like to talk to?

Because I want to really know the account that represents the perfect client. That’s the type of person I need to deliver to Sales to make their job as easy as possible. And ABM and intent can do that. I think it's a glue between Sales and Marketing. And that's one of the untold organizational benefits of an ABM strategy. So it's not just an app. You're not buying 6sense. You're trying to buy a sort of collegial alignment. And the ABM tool is really the expression of that alignment.

So I meet with my sales guys and I say, here's the filters I've got. What do you think of that? And they'll look through and say, Well, I'm not selling to anybody. A company bigger than 500, they'll never pick up my call. Okay, strip that out, filter that out.

So I think that's the conversation that ABM can provoke. And it's an ongoing journey of trying to constantly hone that I think is the real untold benefit of ABM.

Question 4: What emerging trends, tools, or methodologies do you see in ABM? How can you leverage these to get greater ROI from your marketing budget?

Summary: Speaker 7 discussed his feeling that ABM now is similar to the early years of paid search on Google, where it took a few years for people to get the hang of what they were doing and achieve significant ROI. He added that because it was still early days, there is still huge potential competitive advantage for companies that can use it to align Marketing and Sales effectively, and treat ABM tools not as the killer app, but the assist that sets up the goals for other tactics to score. This is where he believes the greatest value is to be had in ABM today and in the near future.

Speaker 7: I remember the beginning days of paid search on Google back in the 2000s. We started dabbling and it was like stumbling on a gold mine. And everybody was doing it really badly. You would advertise on a keyword and drive people to an ad that had nothing to do with the keyword, and then your ad had nothing to do with the landing page. We only wanted to ever do one landing page for 50 keywords.

We used to say that adwords was a great way to pile a ton of money on a table and light it on fire. But once you figured it out and all you're doing is psychology working out what the person is looking for, and follow that trail, it became pretty easy. It became amazing.

Although I think we've moved a little beyond the burning money stage with ABM, we're still in the early days of real ABM. There are some great practitioners but for the vast majority it's shelfware.

Even at my previous company, the Marketing and Sales team all had licenses but nobody was using it. Complete waste of time. So when I brought it in here, I got it in at ground zero as we were building a Marketing and Sales team. So we're all sort of learning it together. And now these people think that this is the way all Sales and Marketing teams operate

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Because we're still at the early days, there's still massive competitive advantage for those who get this right. And I'd say that the next steps actually are what I alluded to. It's not looking at ABM or 6sense or Demandbase as the killer app, but the assist.

I'm in Canada, so hockey is our thing. ABM is the assist. It's not necessarily the goal scorer, but it sets up all your goals scorers in a great way to put the puck in the net. If you look at it as an assist mechanism, you can really find ways that it goes out and assists all your different tactics and makes every tactic a little bit better. I've calculated that it can improve the efficiency of every tactic by 10 to 20%. It's worth its weight in gold, even if it never delivers one sale for you. It's the assist that it delivers.

Speaker 3: I think that idea of assist and Sales are the ones are actually putting it in the net, is absolutely spot on. Put me in front of people, and I can talk about exactly what we do and what we're gonna do. The trick is getting in front of the right people to ensure that the right message sent to a particular audience is going to actually have traction.

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Key Takeaways

- **Many senior marketing leaders are still at the early stages of using ABM but are unsure how best to leverage it. Even some with experience of ABM are struggling to get the best results.**
- **Understanding your market and the pain points of the key individuals you're targeting remains the key to moving from engagement to conversion.**
- **Picking up on intent seems like the secret to targeting individuals who are more ready to buy and more likely to convert.**
- **ABM tools on their own are no magic bullet but can act as the assist when combined with other marketing tools and tactics.**
- **Even the best ABM tool is useless unless Sales and Marketing are aligned on overall strategy and how to use that tool; on the other hand, building teams around an ABM tool is a great way to create that alignment and will likely increase your chances of achieving ROI in any case!**

About the hosts



Rudy Parker: Graduating with a law degree from the LSE, followed by an MBA in the States, Rudy worked for ten years in one of North America's best-known and most influential tech hubs. He has developed marketing and demand generation strategies for multiple successful SaaS startups that have gone on to be bought out or go public, including the likes of Zscaler, Visual IQ-Nielsen, Hansen Technologies, CloudSense, Tricentis, Bank of America, and Bryant Park Capital.

In the last five years, Rudy has increasingly driven marketing content strategy: "If I'm investing heavily in advertising, I want to make sure that the guide my prospects download is high quality. If it isn't, then the SDRs or salespeople will struggle to establish or nurture a relationship, and I will not achieve my requisite ROI or ROAS."



Damien Seaman: A B2B content strategist, copywriter and ghost writer, Damien helps brands, companies, and professionals to discover their authentic voice and find their most receptive audience. He graduated from Oxford University and published a novel before moving into the world of B2B marketing strategy. Today he specializes in working with SaaS, Fintech, Insurtech, Martech, financial services, and recruitment firms, and has worked with several high-profile brands and industry thought leaders.