

White paper



ABM and Intent Benchmarking Study 2022

As ABM adoption spreads, marketers find new value in data-driven insights

Perhaps no trend better exemplifies the evolution of marketing into a data-driven discipline **than the growth of account-based marketing (ABM).**

Conceived in the early 2000s as a way to bring marketing and sales organizations together around a team-based approach to nurturing their most important accounts, ABM is now used by 70% of marketers, up from just 15% a year ago, according to HubSpot.

Technology marketers have taken a particular interest in ABM, given the complex factors that influence IT purchases. Foundry's second global survey of 500 B2B technology marketers found that satisfaction with ABM continues to be high, particularly at the largest companies. While most organizations are still early in their adoption journey, the results to date indicate that ABM is on track to not only become a mainstream marketing discipline but even displace more traditional methods.

About 60% of respondents to the survey are based in North America, with an equal 20% share being from the Europe/Middle East/Africa (EMEA) and Asia/Pacific (APAC) regions. The distribution was relatively even between small and large companies. More than 90% of respondents

classified themselves as client-side marketers and 8% work at agencies.

Positive reviews

Another year of experience has done little to dampen enthusiasm for ABM. This year's study found that 94% of marketers rate ABM as extremely or very important to their objectives with 53% rating it as extremely important. That's on par with the 97% positive reviews and 61% "extremely important" ratings in last year's survey. On a geographic basis, APAC respondents were somewhat more enthusiastic about the potential of ABM, with 63% rating it as extremely important compared to 51% of North Americans and 48% of those in the EMEA region.



94%

**of marketers rate ABM as
extremely or very important
to their business objectives**

84%

feel their ABM efforts
have been very/
extremely successful
over the past 12 months

Most ABM practitioners are still relatively inexperienced, but confidence is growing. One-quarter of marketers said they've been using the principles for less than 12 months, down from 56% last year. By company size, only 20% of enterprises (1,000+ employees) have been running ABM

programs for less than a year compared to 29% of SMBs (<1,000 employees). Just 14% of respondents have used ABM for more than three years, while the majority of tech marketers (61%) have been running ABM programs for 1-3 years. North

American marketers are somewhat more grounded in ABM, with 15% reporting more than three years of experience, compared to 10% in EMEA.

Enterprise organizations also reported the highest satisfaction levels with 38% rating their programs as extremely successful compared to 30% of those at smaller firms. Overall, 84% of respondents feel their ABM efforts have been very/extremely successful (34% extremely vs. 50% very).

Marketers in the APAC region were the most satisfied; 45% rated their ABM programs as extremely successful compared to 35% of North Americans and 20% of EMEA

respondents. This shouldn't be interpreted as a negative, though, as the share of marketers that rated their programs as either extremely or very successful was about the same across all regions.

Respondents at the largest companies with more than 5,000 employees rated their programs as very or extremely successful by an 88% to 72% margin over companies with less than 500 employees. This probably is a function of big companies' ability to bring more resources to bear on the project. An overwhelming 90% of respondents said ABM programs have lived up to expectations; in APAC the figure was 94%. Just 8% said their programs have underperformed. Asked if they get a lot of value from their ABM programs, 45% strongly agreed and 47% agreed.

The organizational discipline that marketers are bringing to their ABM implementations is evident in the 96% of respondents who said they have a documented ABM strategy. The existence of a strategy correlated strongly with overall satisfaction—only 65% of those without a documented ABM strategy feel their ABM efforts were successful, compared to 85% who have a documented strategy.

When asked how their organization measures the success of their ABM efforts, the key metrics are deal size (60%), content engagement length (59%), deal

close rate (56%), influenced pipeline (51%), and pipeline velocity (46%). Enterprise organizations are slightly more focused on influenced pipeline (56% vs. 47% SMBs).

How do tech marketers measure the success of their ABM efforts?

- 1. Deal size
- 2. Content engagement length
- 3. Deal close rate

Just over half of companies apply ABM to between 500 and 1,000 accounts while 38% use it with more than 1,000 accounts and 7% with more than 5,000. Just 12% use ABM on fewer than 500 accounts. These numbers are almost unchanged from 2021. Not surprisingly, enterprises are more likely to apply ABM across a larger number of target customers.

ABM goals and tactics

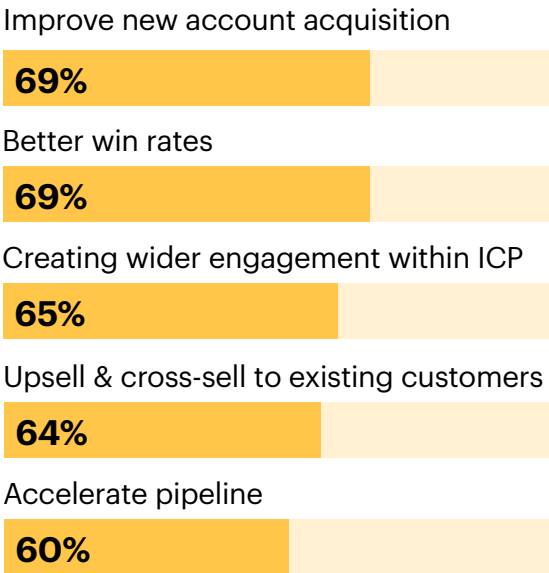
A variety of objectives are driving the use of ABM, topped by new account acquisition and better win rates, both of which were cited by 69% of respondents. Those were followed closely by the goal of creating wider engagement with an ideal customer profile (ICP), which was noted by 65%, and the 64% who use the tactics to upsell and cross-sell to existing

customers. A substantial 60% also see value in accelerating the pipeline. The number of marketers who cited win rates and partner development as objectives are both up ten percentage points from last year’s study.

Marketers are using multiple aspects of ABM to meet their goals. The primary components of ABM they utilize are IP address intelligence (65%), personalization (61%), account-based advertising (58%), sales activation/account analytics (56%).

To assist in identifying and analyzing prospects and support their ABM efforts, a variety of technologies are used, with more than 70% reporting that they use web analytics and marketing automation tools, followed closely by predictive analytics

Business goals driving ABM investments:



and social media monitoring. Usage was consistent across companies of all sizes.

APAC marketers appear to be somewhat more technologically inclined, as respondents from that region use predictive analytics tools and social media marketing to a greater degree than others.

Their enthusiasm is also evident in spending, with 53% of marketing budgets now allocated to ABM compared to 47% to traditional marketing.

The reason budgets are growing is clear from the results B2B marketers are seeing. Between 54% and 59% reported that ABM campaigns performed better than traditional marketing tactics in the areas of ROI, sales velocity, win rate, upsell/cross-sell, new business acquisition and deal size. Just 10% to 12% rated ABM's performance as worse.

A significant 87% of respondents said their investment in ABM increased over the past 12 months, the majority saying their budget increased by 26-50% (38%). Thinking about the next 12 months, 90% of tech marketers expect their investment in ABM to increase and only 6% expect a decrease.

APAC marketers reported the boldest spending growth with 41% saying expect to boost spending by more than 50% compared to the 28% of North American and 29% of EMEA marketers who said that.

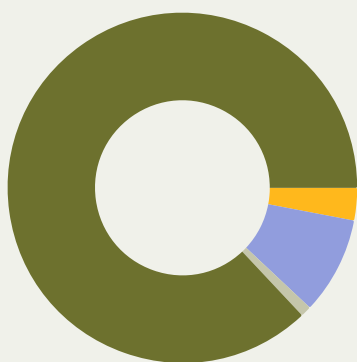
ABM challenges and support

ABM can be a time-consuming discipline because of the need for up-front strategizing and collaboration, but the demands don't appear to be a hindrance. Just 19% of respondents said they spend more than 10 hours a week on program optimization with a plurality of 46% investing five to 10 hours and 31% devoting less than five hours to the effort.

Investment growth in ABM

Past 12 months

87%
Increased



3%
Remained the same

9%
Decreased

1%
New area of investment

Next 12 months

90%
Increase



3%
Remain the same

6%
Decrease

1%
New area of investment

ABM challenges:

- Prioritizing accounts **46%**
- Gaining C-level involvement **34%**
- Engaging target accounts **32%**
- Acquiring opt-in contacts **31%**
- Creating a target account list **30%**

Measurement is a challenge in many aspects of marketing and ABM is no exception. Just over four in five marketers said quantifying ABM program results is one of their biggest challenges. The greatest ABM challenge marketers expect to face in the next 12 months include prioritizing which accounts should get the greatest attention, a difficulty that was cited by 46% of respondents, up from 36% last year. That was well ahead of the 34% who said gaining C-level involvement is a problem.

Other challenges cited by 32% of respondents include engaging target accounts, acquiring opted-in contacts (31%), and creating a target account list (30%). Interestingly, just 7% said they don't have enough budget for ABM, well below the 14% recorded last year. This probably reflects the impact of the significant investments noted earlier.

To support their ABM efforts, marketers use a variety of tactics, led by content marketing (63% of respondents and 67% at enterprises compared to 60%

SMBs), paid digital advertising (61%), organic social media (57%), and SEO (46%). 90% of marketers agree that as their ABM efforts mature, they are adding more tactics to their programs.

Hoping to ease the challenge of creating a target account list, ABM marketers report to derive information about target accounts from a wide variety of sources, including internal databases, intent data sources, IT publishers, social media platforms, third-party list providers, and business development teams. Each was mentioned by at least half of the respondents. Contact centers and search engines followed close behind. The use of social media platforms dropped sharply in this survey from 65% of mentions in 2021 to 53% this year. Mentions of search engines as useful sources also fell from 60% in 2021 to 46% of mentions this year, perhaps as a consequence of the impending end of third-party cookies.

Where do ABM marketers get their information on target accounts?

1. Internal databases
2. Intent data sources
3. IT publishers
4. Social media platforms
5. Third-party list providers
6. Business development teams

Asked which was their single best source of information, 20% of marketers named IT publishers, well ahead of the 15% who identified internal databases and 14% who pointed to social media platforms. These findings were consistent with last year's research.

Sales-marketing partnership

Marketers and salespeople haven't always had the warmest relationship, but ABM's focus on collaboration may be changing that dynamic. Just over three-quarters of marketers said they believe sales and

marketing alignment at their company is strong, a figure that was consistent with last year's research.

The importance of teamwork is evident in the 63% of respondents that have three or more

people working together on their ABM programs compared to 21% with teams of two or fewer people. One out of eight share responsibilities across the entire team. EMEA is a standout in this area, with 77% of respondents reporting team sizes of at least three people compared to 46% in APAC. Enterprise organizations are more likely to report that ABM

Marketers rank **IT publishers as the proven best provider** for account/contact information

70%

of marketers say their alignment is strong with their sales team

responsibilities are shared throughout their entire team (16% vs. 10% SMBs).

Marketing leaders are somewhat more involved in all aspects of ABM than sales leaders, but sales participation is still extensive. Across all ABM stages—building target account lists, defining messaging, selecting intent data sources, choosing intent data vendors, developing lead-scoring models, and determining implementation strategies for intent data—marketing leads the effort in between 36% and 43% of all cases. However, sales leaders are the initiators in more than 30% of all cases. About one-quarter of companies manage ABM activities collaboratively.


Intent data usage is mainstream

This year's survey was the first to ask about the use of intent data, which is information collected about web content consumption that provides insight into buyers' interests. More than 90% of marketers said they use intent data scoring

to prioritize accounts, identify content to be served and build target account lists.

One of the major attractions of intent-based marketing is its measurability since outcomes can be tied directly to observed behavior. An overwhelming 95% of marketers said they are able to track the ROI specific to their intent-based programs. Nearly as many said they use it across more than one channel and 92% said they're confident in the validity of their data sources. Nine in 10 also said the number of intent data sources they use is increasing.

When it comes to sources, marketers spread the wealth; 95% use more than one intent data source, and 41% use four or more. The top criteria that increases their trust in a potential data provider are peer recommendations (61%), the comfort level of workload owners/users (53%), evidence/demonstration of capabilities (52%), the availability of independently verifiable sample data (50%), and evidence of past projects with similar requirements to theirs (49%).



95%

**of marketers use more than
one intent data source**

What factors increase marketers' trust in a data provider?

1. Peer recommendations/validation
2. Preference or comfort level of workload owners/users
3. Evidence/demonstration of the providers' capabilities
4. Sample data that can be independently validated
5. Evidence of past projects with similar requirements to theirs

It's worth noting that 46% said access to a free trial of the platform influences their decisions, indicating that intent data providers that don't provide a trial option should consider doing so.

Intent data has numerous value points. Nearly 60% of marketers use it to better align their department's plans with sales priorities. Other uses such as prospecting, identifying new accounts to target, monitoring potential customer churn, and tailoring messages based on intent topics were also frequently cited.

However, intent data doesn't come without its challenges, the principal one being the difficulty of efficiently converting data to insights and verifying the validity of intent insights. Both were mentioned by

just over 60% of respondents. More than half of marketers also reported problems measuring the impact of programs and creating strategies based on collected data.

The results were similar across companies of all sizes but there were some regional variations. In APAC, 71% of respondents said they are challenged to verify the validity of intent signals compared to 60% in North America and 54% in EMEA. Marketers in the APAC region also noted challenges in converting data to insights efficiently to a greater degree than their peers elsewhere.

Conclusion

B2B marketing and sales organizations have long sparred with each other over what they saw as conflicting priorities. Salespeople complained that marketers were too focused on delivering a large number of leads without paying sufficient attention to lead quality. Marketers grumbled that salespeople didn't try hard enough to act on the leads they got.

With the advent of ABM, these two organizations now have a powerful incentive to work together. The goal of building a comprehensive view of sales prospects requires everyone to

What are marketers' primary goals in using intent data?

Align sales and marketing

58%

Prioritize accounts for prospecting

54%

Identify new accounts to target

53%

Monitoring potential customer churn

51%

Tailoring messages based on intent topics

47%

pull together and share their knowledge and contacts. This new, collaborative paradigm has paid significant dividends judging by the glowing reviews that emerged from this and other studies.

ABM's success has also highlighted the value of automated tools to collect and derive insights from customer characteristics and behavior. As such, it has accelerated the evolution of marketing from a discipline based on educated guesses to one that is driven by data. It's a shift that will make marketing a dynamic and exciting profession long into the future.

Key global differences

North America

North American marketers are somewhat more grounded in ABM, with 15% reporting more than three years of experience, compared to 10% in EMEA. 51% of North Americans reported their ABM campaigns as extremely important to their overall marketing objectives.

74% of NA marketers believe their sales and marketing team alignment is strong at their organizations

North American marketers are closely aligned with the global average of marketers that believe their sales and marketing alignment is strong at their company (74% compared to 76%).

When asked about ABM technologies in use, 72% of NA marketers reported web analytics tools and 69% reported use of predictive analytics tools (compared to 59% of EMEA marketers).

Intent data use is growing in North America, as 93% are using intent data to identify/

build target account lists and 93% are using intent data to identify what content should be served within ABM campaigns.

The biggest intent data challenge for NA respondents, however, is converting data to insights efficiently.

EMEA

Compared to the other two regions, EMEA is slower to adopt account-based marketing, as only 10% have been running ABM programs for more than 3 years. But adoption has picked up, as 33% have been running campaigns in the last 6-12 months.

When asked how important ABM is to their overall marketing objectives only 48% of EMEA respondents rated it as extremely

EMEA organizations are investing in ABM focused teams

70%

have a dedicated ABM team of 3 or more people, compared to **63%** globally



important, compared to 63% of APAC. Although, 44% rated it as very important.

When asked which technologies were in use for their ABM efforts, 76% of EMEA respondents reported marketing automation and 74% said web analytics.

In terms of marketing team structure, 77% of EMEA marketers have a dedicated ABM team of 3 or more people compared to 46% of APAC and 64% of NA. The majority of EMEA marketers believe their sales and marketing alignment is strong as 74% agreed to this statement.

In EMEA, 80% of marketers are using intent data to identify/build target account lists.

APAC

APAC respondents were enthusiastic about the potential of ABM, with 63% rating it as extremely important to their marketing objectives. And once they adopted their ABM programs, they were satisfied. The majority (94%) of marketers in APAC said their ABM programs have lived up to their expectations.

What's more, APAC respondents plan to grow ABM investments by more than 50%

Intent data practices are front and center in APAC

- **92%** of APAC marketers say they are using intent data/scoring within ABM to prioritize their accounts
- **93%** are using intent data to identify what content should be served within ABM campaigns
- **96%** are using intent data to identify/build target accounts lists

over the next year. They also reported the boldest spending growth among the 3 regions, with 40% saying they expect to boost spending by more than 50%. When it comes to sales and marketing alignment, 86% of APAC marketers believe it's strong at their company. This is 10 percentage points higher than the overall global average of 76%.

In APAC, 71% of respondents said they are challenged to verify the validity of intent signals compared to 60% in North America and 54% in EMEA. Marketers in the APAC region also noted challenges in converting data to insights efficiently to a greater degree than their peers elsewhere.

About the survey

The 2022 Foundry Account-Based Marketing (ABM) & Intent Benchmarking Study was conducted via online questionnaire in September of 2022. 500 total respondents with marketing titles were collected from NA (60%), EMEA (20%) and APAC (20%) regions. 25% of respondents are from the high-tech industry. Others include ecommerce, software/computer services, manufacturing, and internet service providers. Foundry conducted the study to understand the workings of ABM and its evolution and adoption compared to traditional marketing approaches.

Examining the marketplace

Research is an invaluable way for marketers to better understand customers and prospects, with the goal of building quality connections. At Foundry this is one way we are focused on building bridges between tech buyers and sellers. Our first-party relationships with the most important tech buyers and influencers around the world, allows us to apply value across our customers marketing stack. Our research portfolio explores our audiences' perspectives and challenges around specific technologies—from analytics and cloud, to IoT and security—and examines the changing roles within the IT purchase process, arming tech marketers with the information they need to identify opportunities.

To see what research is available, visit FoundryCo.com/tools-for-marketers.

For a presentation of full results from any of these studies, contact your Foundry sales executive or go to FoundryCo.com/contact-us.

Buying process

Each year we take a deep dive into the enterprise IT purchase process to learn more about who is involved and who influences decision-making, what sources purchasers rely on to keep up to date with technology—and throughout the purchase process—and how they want to engage with the vendors they are working with. Visit FoundryCo.com/customerjourney for more information.

Buying process studies

- Role and Influence of the Technology Decision-Maker
- Customer Engagement

Technology insights

Each year we explore the technologies that are top of mind among our audiences to understand the business challenges, drivers, and adoption within the enterprise. These research studies are designed to help IT marketers understand what their customers are focused on and where the market is moving.

Role and priority studies

- CIO Tech Poll: Tech Priorities
- State of the CIO

Technology-specific studies

- Data & Analytics
- Cloud Computing
- Digital Business
- Security Priorities

Stay in touch with us

Email: Sign up for Foundry's newsletters and receive media and marketing trends as well as our proprietary research, product and event information direct to your inbox. Go to [FoundryCo.com/newsletter](https://foundryco.com/newsletter).

Twitter: To get results from Foundry research when it's released, or any other news, follow us on Twitter: [@FoundryIDG](https://twitter.com/FoundryIDG)

LinkedIn: For research, services and events announcements, visit us on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/foundryidg/>

Find it all on [FoundryCo.com](https://foundryco.com)

About Foundry

Foundry's vision is to make the world a better place by enabling the right use of technology, because we believe that the right use of technology can be a powerful force for good.

Foundry (an IDG, Inc. company) is a trusted and dependable editorial voice, creating quality content to generate knowledge, engagement and deep relationships with our community of the most influential technology and security decision-makers. Our premium media brands including CIO®, Computerworld®, CSO®, InfoWorld®, Macworld®, Network World®, PCWorld® and Tech Hive®, engage a quality audience of the most powerful technology buyers with essential guidance on the evolving technology landscape.

Our trusted brands inform our global data intelligence platform to identify and activate purchasing intent, powering our clients' success. Our marketing services create custom content with marketing impact across video, mobile, social and digital. We simplify complex campaigns that fulfill marketers' global ambitions seamlessly, with consistency that delivers quality results and wins awards. Additional information about Foundry is available at [FoundryCo.com](https://foundryco.com).