



"STATE OF" SERIES

MASTERING THE TRIO:

How To Sync Sales, Marketing & Data For Account-Based Success

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Introduction

When discussing the modern buyer, it's tough not to sound like a broken record. Practitioners know that buying journeys are shifting every day, and despite their best efforts to keep up, there's still a major disconnect in how they engage with their accounts and targets. A recent [Salesforce study](#) revealed that while 65% of practitioners believe they prioritize the buyer's needs, only 23% of buyers feel that way — indicating the need to pivot.

"B2B buyers are essentially saying, 'Hey, you don't really understand me; you don't know my problems and you're not producing content that's meeting my needs,'" said Thad Kahlow, CEO of B2B digital marketing agency [BOL](#), during the [B2B Marketing Exchange](#). "These increased expectations are creating stress, and they require us to deliver a better buying experience."

To deliver those enhanced experiences, practitioners are doubling-down on their account-based efforts: [57% of marketers](#) plan to increase their investment in account-based strategies, while 45% want to test and/or deploy ABM campaigns throughout 2024.

Throughout this special report, we'll highlight the key trends and challenges practitioners are facing with their account-based strategies. Specifically, we'll discuss:

- How to improve and maintain sales and marketing alignment to ensure complete coverage of target accounts;
- The role of advanced data analytics and segmentation strategies in delivering hyper-targeted content;
- How to overcome the still-lingering hurdles of data integration, securing organization-wide buy-in and effectively measuring success; and
- Identifying the creative approaches to content creation within the account-based framework.



Uniting Teams Around Shared Initiatives

If companies had a penny for every time they were told their marketing and sales teams were unaligned, they'd have enough money to invest in resources to bring those departments into lockstep. With studies suggesting that **90% of practitioners** see misalignment across strategy, content, processes and culture, leaders need to get to the root of their alignment problems. According to Kahlow, the cause is often because companies are too comfortable in their functional siloes.

"Most organizations are aligned by skill sets: You have the media team, creative team, email team and others who all live in their own verticalized world," said Kahlow. "And yet, our job as marketers is to plan out that buyer's journey. But in a world where the buyer's journey needs to be fluid, we can't be in these operational siloes anymore."

The first step to encouraging cross-departmental cohesion, according to Kahlow, is understanding the role of each program so everyone's on the same page. He broke them down as follows:

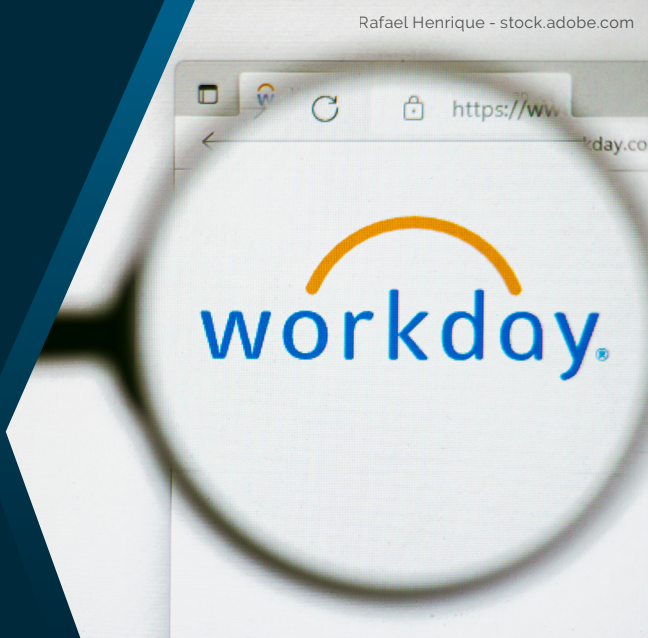
- **GTM programs** are brand-focused, and include building trust and minimizing risk;
- **Demand generation** exists to capture existing demand from in-market accounts; while
- **Account-based motions** — regardless if they're 1:1, 1:few or 1:many — are designed to bring those accounts in with a more personalized motion.

While there are several technologies to help with alignment from a data reporting perspective, Courtney Beasley, Fractional CMO and Founder of **cobe marketing**, noted on the **B2B Marketing Exchange** podcast that once teams understand each department and function's role, the next step is to build relationships.

"It comes down to that humanistic part of being a team, which includes sharing templates, resources and RACI models that help people understand what's expected of them," continued Beasley. "Most promotional alignment comes down to the relationships you can build and the small ways you can promote cohesion, such as changing 'sales and marketing alignment' meetings to 'go-to-market positioning.' Alignment requires a holistic approach of realizing that it's a mindset between the teams."



Workday Builds Successful Multichannel ABM Campaigns With Demandbase & LinkedIn



Workday provides enterprise cloud applications for finance and human resources, helping customers adapt and thrive in a changing world. Workday applications for financial management, human resources, planning, spend management and analytics are built with artificial intelligence and machine learning at the core to help organizations around the world embrace the future of work.

The company seeks to empower its customers to improve the world of work and business through their innovative solutions adopted by thousands of organizations worldwide and across industries. Workday is used by more than 10,000 organizations around the world and across industries, from medium-sized businesses to more than 50% of the Fortune 500.

The Challenge

Global ABX Principal Matthew Miller joined Workday through the company's acquisition of Adaptive Insights. Prior to the acquisition, Miller and his team primarily focused on a leads-based go-to-market (GTM) strategy. After the acquisition, they soon recognized that they would have to update their GTM approach to align with Workday and instead focus on building a pipeline and eventual customer base of large enterprise accounts.

To accomplish that goal, the team realized they needed to identify accounts — specifically enterprise accounts — they could sell to, which required the adoption of account-based marketing (ABM) platform. Miller picked Demandbase, an account-based GTM platform, because, "[it] offered a complete ABM platform to support our strategy and was the only platform with the flexibility and configurability to support an organization like ours."

The Solution

Miller and his team adopted **Demandbase One** with ABX orchestration and advertising solution alongside **LinkedIn Matched Audiences'** custom audience segments. One of Workday's first steps after partnering with Demandbase was to understand their target account list better, and Miller credited Workday's first account rep at Demandbase with helping to surface some of that data — even before Workday officially became customers.

Once Workday became customers, it used Demand One ABX and advertising to ensure its program would meet or exceed their goals, as "Demandbase helped us identify and prioritize high-value target accounts so it was easier to focus our marketing efforts where they were more likely to yield results," said Miller. With the solution implemented, the Workday team felt it was a natural next step to use the Demandbase integration for LinkedIn to push their program even further.

"Using the two platforms together, we're able to target specific companies with precision and increase the relevance of our ads, and we've increased our conversion rates by focusing on high-value accounts," said Thao Tran, Global Integrated Marketing Manager for Workday.

The Results

The Workday Adaptive Planning team uses the Demandbase integration with LinkedIn to grow their ABM program, and one highlight includes using both tools to run Workday's successful free trial campaign. For that campaign, the team focused on net new and current customers with specific engagement minutes in Demandbase. Then, they narrowed the list to accounts not using a particular product to augment its audience touchpoints and expand its reach to new individuals within their target accounts. From there, the company activated sub-segments based on various factors, such as the account's value and level of engagement.

The company described the Demandbase integration as an excellent channel to deliver more scaled touchpoints while efficiently managing its budget. As a result, Workday boosted its conversion rate compared to its initial list.

"Using the Demandbase integration with LinkedIn, we can enhance our ad campaigns by targeting specific companies with precision and increasing the relevance of ads to the target audience," said Miller. "By focusing on high-value accounts, we increased our conversion rates."

The Workday team focuses on the end goal when running multichannel campaigns and considers the strengths of each channel, and start the initial engagement with the accounts they know are a good fit for their solutions based on insights provided by Demandbase. Once they have those insights, they deploy Demandbase and LinkedIn Ads to advertise to those accounts.

"Our sales leaders have told us that their most successful salespeople are the ones using Demandbase daily," which includes acting based on signals they gain from using Demandbase and LinkedIn together, Miller explained.

Tran added that the success of the free trial and similar campaigns underscores how the Demandbase integration with LinkedIn optimizes Workday's targeting efforts and contributes to its GTM success.





Leveraging Keyword Marketing & SEO

The benefits of collaboration go far beyond merely creating stronger interdepartmental relationships — aligned teams also have more success with content strategies. Historically, **60% to 80%** of the content created for sales teams isn't leveraged due to a lack of communication and misunderstanding of needs. To help create better content that's valuable to both sales and marketing, Kahlow noted that's not enough to create assets that resonate with accounts; instead, it should also resonate with search engines.

"Keywords are the OGs of intent — when people go to Google, that's the real sign they're interested in something and they're starting to show you what's important to them," said Kahlow. "SEO-optimized campaigns are a huge opportunity that are underutilized. We're in the world of self-service buyers, and there's a tremendous sea of content out there, so buyers need filters to help them understand what the best content is."

To cook up what he calls "ABSEO," Kahlow said marketers need to have their SEO house in order, which includes ranking some of the larger, "fat-tailed" keyword terms before getting into the unique nuances of and personas of target accounts. To prime campaigns for SEO, he suggested understanding the questions buyers are going to ask themselves across their journeys by auditing existing content and campaigns. This audit should include:

1. Looking at the channels and content they consumed to determine what brought them in and engaged them;
2. Determining how much they're engaging with a campaign;
3. Understanding what specific roles within the buying committee were interacted with; and
4. Identifying what that means to the bottom line.

Naturally, whipping up a campaign asset that touches on all those factors requires a strong handle on account data. According to **51% of marketers**, the most popular residence is (naturally) the customer relationship management (CRM) platform.

"If your CRM is a disaster and you don't have strong domain-level information, it's going to be impossible to activate ABM campaigns," said Steve Armenti, VP of Revenue Marketing for cloud infrastructure provider **DigitalOcean** at the *B2B Marketing Exchange*. "We also need agility in our content — the content production process can be cumbersome, and it doesn't serve as a true account-based framework. Instead, we need to react to signals in real time to deliver those personalized messages."



Leveraging Tech & Analytics To Unify Teams & Data

On the topic of disastrous CRMs, [Gartner research](#) found that 30% of B2B customer data is inaccurate on average — and for 64% of practitioners, the [No. 1 data challenge](#) in maintaining database quality is old or outdated data. Further, a study from [WhatTheyThink](#) indicated that while 85% of marketers consider their data strategy to be strong, only 32% leverage that data effectively to deliver a cohesive customer experience. According to Armenti, this is because marketers are only good at *asking* for data — not actioning it.

“Marketers are good at peppering data scientists with questions like, ‘I need this data because I want to do XYZ,’” said Armenti. “Then they follow it up with another question, embark on this perpetual cycle of questioning and never interpret the data themselves. Sure, asking for data is important, but we need to interpret it, make sense of it and drive action from it.”

With that in mind, there's a need for a deeper understanding and storytelling approach to data analysis. Kahlow noted that by taking a hard look and really digging into data, marketers can effectively communicate the value of their account-based strategies.

“Reporting ABM success goes beyond a dashboard or KPI that outlines the pipeline and revenue contribution, as well as marketing’s influence,” said Kahlow. “All that does it pass the sniff test; instead, you need to peel back the layers of the onion to tell a story about your data so when they give you that next dollar, they know exactly what you’ll do with it.”

From there, Kahlow walked attendees through his recommended framework to tell a data story, which includes leveraging an ABM platform in tandem with a CRM. He explained that the ABM platform will allow marketers to understand where their intent and data signals are coming from, while the data warehouse will help create connectors and orchestrate cadences.



Conclusion

Navigating the complexities of the modern buying landscape presents a continual challenge for practitioners, as evidenced by the significant gap between perceived and actual prioritization of buyer needs. As practitioners strive to enhance the buying experience, account-based strategies emerge as a focal point, with a substantial portion of marketers intending to ramp up investments in this area.

Looking ahead, it's imperative businesses prioritize sales and marketing alignment, leverage advanced data analytics for targeted content delivery and explore innovative content creation within the account-based framework.



Demandbase is all about AI-driven GTM. We help B2B companies hit their revenue goals using fewer resources. Want to know how?

We do it by aligning your sales and marketing teams around a combination of your data, our data, and artificial intelligence. It's what we call Account Intelligence and it helps you identify, engage, and focus your time and money on accounts that are most likely to buy. That's the power of AI.

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Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multichannel demand generation efforts.

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