

A HAT MEDIA GUIDE

6

Best Practices to Elevate Your Account-Based Marketing

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Account-based marketing has the power to transform the way you attract large clients to partner with you.

But that's only true if it's done right. Miss the mark, and the consequences could be serious. Focusing on a few large accounts means losing even one of them could seriously dent your revenue and growth projections. To prevent that worst case, it pays to be strategic. In this segment, we'll cover six best practices that can elevate your account-based marketing and help ensure its success in both the short and long term.

87%

of marketers say ABM delivers a higher ROI than other strategies

48%

increase in revenue per account from personalised ABM

Identify the Right Accounts and Leads

As in any other type of marketing, the best ABM strategies begin with your audience. Knowing exactly who to target is the crucial first step. Ask yourself a few core questions:

Which pain points does your solution aim to solve?

Which organisations and potential clients have actively exhibited these pain points?

What size company are you looking to attract, and how many exist at that size in your industry?

What do you know about your competitors within that space, including market share?

Can you identify individual leads within your target accounts who can serve as your entry into the organisation?

5-16

people across up to four functions typically make up a B2B buying group

You can probably answer some of these questions without help. That last piece, though, usually takes real research: there's rarely just one person to find.

That's where tools like LinkedIn Sales Navigator come in. Advanced Lead Search helps you find not just target accounts, but the right contacts within those accounts, and its AI-assisted account and lead recommendations make that search sharper than it used to be.

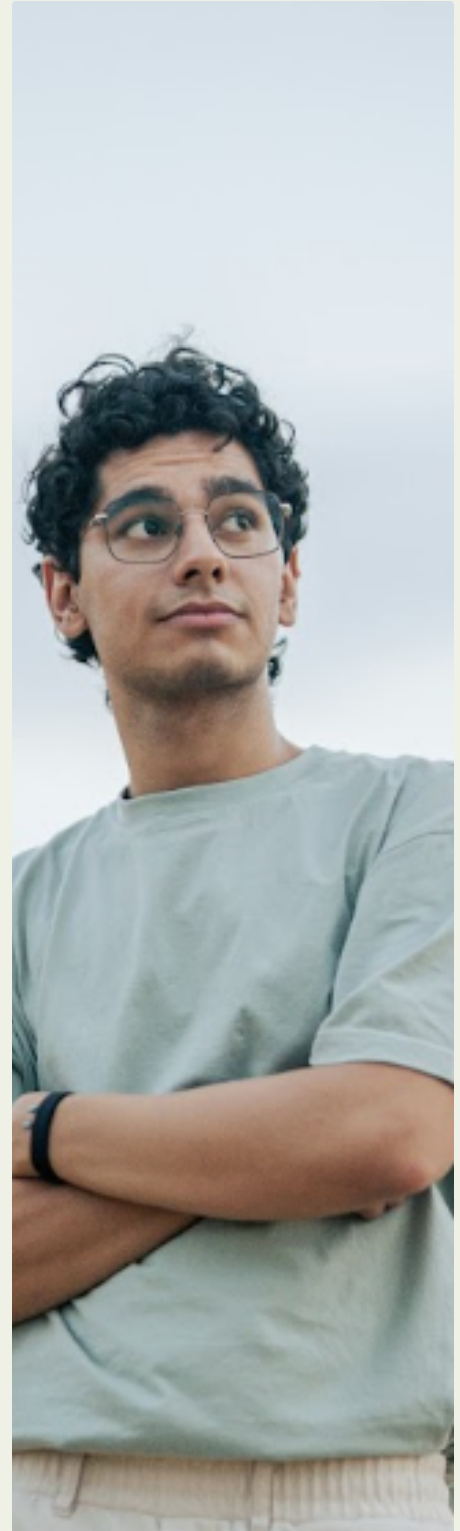
Customised lead suggestions give you a clearer picture, CRM integrations let you record contact data for follow-up, and a live feed of activity from these contacts helps you stay current and make your outreach genuinely relevant.

Nurture Leads Through Personal Messages

Lead nurturing has become a core part of almost any type of digital marketing campaign, but it takes centre stage when the individual account becomes the focus. The sales cycle will be significantly shorter if the lead is nurtured correctly.

The emails need to be tailored to each lead's needs and pain points, avoiding direct selling messages and instead focusing on building value. AI tools can now help draft that first pass at scale, but the message still needs a real edit from someone who actually knows the account, not a template with a name mail-merged in.

Above all, the emails should seem like they're coming directly from you, not a random no-reply email address.



The messages should reach your contacts where they spend their time — in most B2B scenarios, a mix of email and social media. Two tools remain especially helpful:

1. HUBSPOT EMAILS

Helps you build automated email flows without losing that much-needed personal touch. Through HubSpot, increasingly with its own AI drafting and send-time tools built in, you can build visual email templates designed to generate high open and reply rates, and track which nurturing emails your prospects actually respond to.

2. LINKEDIN INMAIL

More customised but also more personal. LinkedIn's internal messaging platform includes sponsored InMails that stay near the top of your prospect's inbox for an extended window. Even organically, InMail benefits from a less crowded environment, since it doesn't compete with the 100+ emails the average business person receives.

Leverage Hyper-Personalised Content



Within and beyond your lead nurturing efforts, it's crucial to follow one key to account-based marketing: the true personalisation of talking to a single lead, a single contact, and a single account at a time. This does not mean writing a blog post about general best practices but instead building hyper-personalised content specifically designed for that one account you're trying to win.

That starts with the pain points already mentioned, narrowed to the specific situation where your prospect would benefit from your software — from individual nurturing messages to entire case studies and whitepapers.

48% increase in revenue per account — ITSMA research on highly personalised ABM programs

It's not just about inserting some dynamic content or substituting in a prospect's first name in an email. Hyper personalisation is:

Data Driven

Based on visitor and account data to deliver content specifically designed for that audience.

Predictive

Based on data points that suggest and predict intent in order to stay relevant.

Interactive

Allowing the recipient to customise their experience to their liking.

It's not easy to hit on all three of these points, but it's far from impossible. Put simply, it requires a unique marketing strategy for every account, and potentially even every lead you're trying to target. That starts with data. Learn as much as possible about every lead in your database, from their professional background to the nuances of their current position and how they would be involved in a potential partnership with your company.

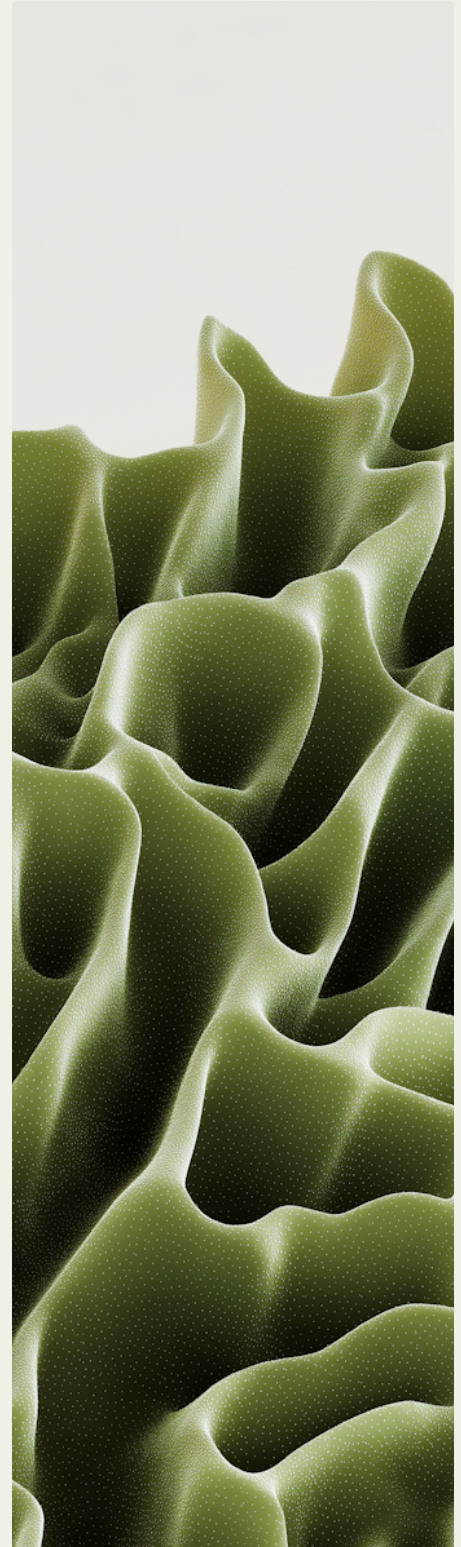
Connect that lead data back to the larger account data to build context and begin to find the bigger picture. From there, the process is similar to building buyer personas, except in this case you are building profiles of actual human beings.

These profiles then become your content guides: a foundation for brainstorming topics and a resource throughout the content build. Once created, distribute these hyper-personalised pieces via your lead nurturing channels.

Listen to Key Stakeholders Within Individual Accounts

Part of building that lead and prospect profile includes knowing what your audience does and wants to talk about. The old version of this was social listening: tracking conversations around your brand and industry. Account-based marketing has since pushed that idea further: today it's less about listening in after the fact and more about detecting buying intent before a prospect ever mentions you at all.

Website visitor identification, research and technographic signals, and job-change alerts now do a lot of what social listening used to, and do it earlier.



More specifically, you're monitoring for a few key kinds of signal:

Website Visits

Identifying which companies, and increasingly which individuals, are on your site and what they're looking at, even before they ever fill out a form.

Intent and Research Signals

Third-party data showing when a company starts actively researching your category, not just your brand.

Job Changes and Org Alerts

Changes in role or company for your contacts, which flag new budget, new priorities, or a fresh way into a conversation.

A number of tools can help you track this kind of activity. Website visitor identification platforms like Warmly de-anonymise who's on your site in real time. Intent data providers like Bombora show when an account is actively researching your category. Enrichment and research tools like Clay pull the two together with firmographic and contact data, so you're not just seeing a signal, you're seeing the whole account.

Tracking signals is not the same as acting on them. It means taking the information and making it actionable, responding with the hyper-personalised content we outlined above. A single signal on its own is just noise. It's the combination — several signals pointing the same direction — that tells you it's worth a move.

Integrate Storytelling into Your Messaging



You might think that account-based marketing, being that it mostly lives in a B2B environment, is strictly rational. But studies have repeatedly found that B2B buyers are just as, if not even more, emotionally invested than their consumer counterparts. That opens the door to significant storytelling opportunities.

The key to account-based marketing is building and nurturing relationships with your individual prospects. That's especially powerful when you can weave facts and data into a larger narrative that's easy for your audience to follow. Case studies are the most obvious example — but far from your only opportunity.

As you personalise your content, consider how you can give it the traditional story arc:

THE PROBLEM

The moment the audience realises they have a problem and try to find a solution.

THE STRUGGLE

The time the audience tries to solve its problem but faces significant adversity to overcome.

THE RESOLUTION

The climax in which the audience finds the crucial thing that makes the story come to a happy end.

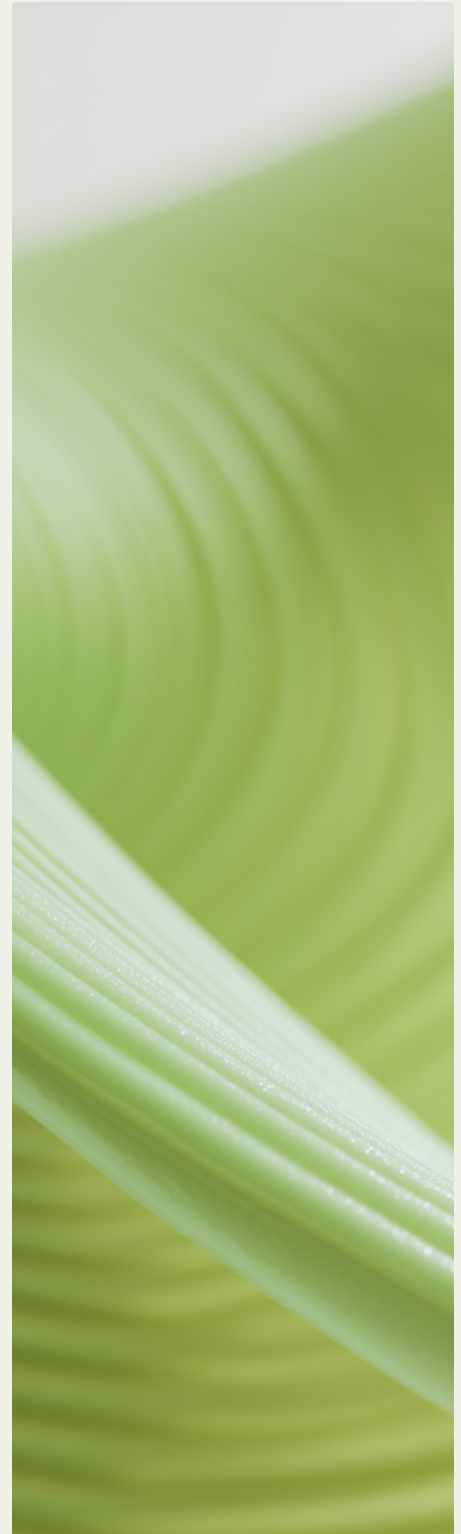
Through this structure, you can capture your audience's attention, and keep it through the final resolution, which is, of course, your company.

Case studies can follow that concept, but so can anything from an email to a single post on LinkedIn. Building a story means engaging your prospects' emotions, making them more likely to pay attention and ultimately become your customers.

Consider the Power of Multi-Origin Messaging

That you should build multi-channel ABM campaigns is obvious to any experienced marketer. But you might not be aware that the sender of these individual messages can be just as powerful. The ability to switch senders can send a powerful message to your prospects.

If ABM is true one-to-one marketing, chances are your prospects won't react nearly as well to a message coming from a faceless corporate account. But the same is true if their only point of contact is a salesperson.



Instead, try spreading the wealth. The nature of account-based marketing provides an opportunity to vary the sender and build a genuinely layered nurturing stream. In the course of that stream, your prospects may receive messages from the sales team, a customer success specialist, and a member of the leadership team relevant to them. That increases trust, but it also builds a feeling of being wanted on your contacts' side.

It's worth being upfront that an AI-drafted message signed by "the CEO" that no one at the company actually reviewed does more damage than good; the variety only works if every sender is real and genuinely in the loop.

You'll need to answer a few core questions:

Who would your prospects most like to hear from?

What types of messages might be relevant from those specific senders?

Can you guarantee that sender would be both responsive and consistent in messaging?

The answers can make a multi-sender campaign extremely powerful, while keeping it within reason — incorporating only people at your company who are actually relevant to your prospects.

Building Account-Based Marketing Strategies With Best Practices in Mind

Account-based marketing has the potential to be immensely powerful, if you can get it right. It requires nuances and tactics that are different from typical marketing efforts, especially as it relates to hyper-personalisation, signal-based targeting, and listening to your key stakeholders. With these best practices, you can build and execute an account-based marketing strategy that is poised for success. Your messages will be more nuanced, more complex, and more relevant, maximising their chances of getting through to your audience and converting more prospects into long-term clients.