



Your guide to account-based experience

Find out how account-based experience (ABX) can help you stand out from the crowd and carry you directly to the hearts of your prospects and customers.

Deliver moments that matter

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Whether you work in marketing, ABM, or sales, you're probably always thinking about how to stand out; from the crowd, from the competition, even from your own personal best.

After all, you know you're great at what you do, but how can you convey that in a concrete sense to the people you're reaching out to? Just as customer service has morphed into prioritizing customer experience, the next necessary evolution of account-based marketing is to consider account-based experience (ABX).

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From ABM to ABX



The best way to think of ABX in action is to look at how B2C companies use experience to strengthen their brands. Everyday brands teach us how to interact with them. As consumers, we know what to expect from brands like Apple, Google, and Netflix. Every step of the way, these companies anticipate our needs and provide us with exactly what we want, when we want it. And if we're not sure? They'll give us recommendations for things that could turn into our next great love.

The world of direct-to-customer has always led the way when it comes to delivering the best experience possible for customers. As B2B sales and marketing professionals, we dream of doing what companies like Apple do every single day. We've been trying for years to come up with an innovation that will allow our customers to have the most enjoyable experience.

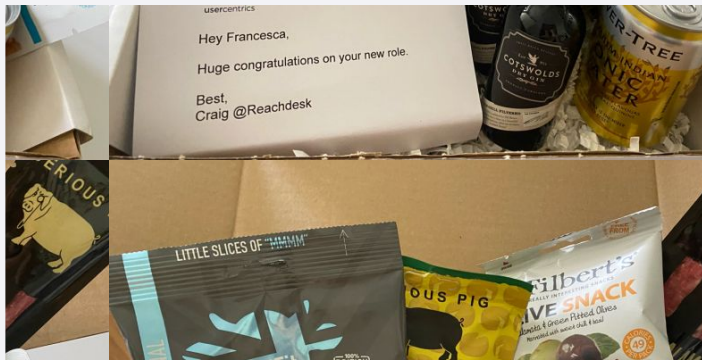
Welcome to ABX. The ultimate way for sales and marketing teams to collaborate on delivering exceptional data-driven experiences, anywhere in the world.

What do we mean by ABX?



Francesca Fossati
Senior Marketing Manager

Ok, Reachdesk, you have my full attention!
[#ABM](#) on point



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You might have heard the old chestnut: “B2C marketing is focused on emotion and B2B is focused on logic”. But [science](#) says that all decisions—even [B2B buying decisions](#)—have an emotional basis. Even though businesses spend more time carefully considering options and even have decision-making committees, these committees are still made up of individuals who view things through a human lens.

So when it comes to standing out, competing solely on being the cheapest is a zero-sum game for all concerned. Innovation is excellent, but the truth is that not all products are reinventing the wheel (and they don’t necessarily need to).

While ABM is a well-understood strategy in the arsenal of many a modern marketer or salesperson, ABX is a relatively new name for a familiar concept: we’re talking about a fully integrative and consistent brand experience at every step of the customer journey.

Some people talk about ABX as a replacement for ABM, but we prefer to think of it as the methodology for delivering outstanding ABM. ABX is the methodology you need to create an ecosystem of teams with the shared responsibility of delivering unique experiences to your prospects and customers.

Experience is the differentiator

B2B is a crowded, challenging market where you want to stand out for the right reasons. Whether you're a multinational corporation or a start-up, you want to be known to be the best at what you do.

How do you consistently create value for your customers and prospects, and stand out?

The experience your customer has with you, and how your business makes people feel, can carry your company from a possible service provider directly to the heart of your customer.



Why millennials matter



Born in the years 1980-1995 (ish), millennials are currently the largest consumer group, and by 2025, millennials will represent **75% of the global workforce**. According to **Merit's B2B Millennials Report**, 73% of millennials are involved in product or service purchase decision-making at their companies, and 30% of them are the sole decision-makers.

What does that mean for B2B?

Either you can learn to communicate with millennials now, or you'll find yourself scrambling to keep up.

The good news is that there is plenty of insight to be gleaned from the world of direct-to-customer that can directly apply to your B2B efforts. For example, we know that millennials prefer brands that offer unique experiences, value for their money, and great customer service.

While many brands have suggested that millennials spend less, the truth is that around two-thirds of millennials will **stay loyal to brands** if they've had positive experiences.

As millennials **prefer experiences over things**, they prioritize a brand's customer experience into their perception of a brand. Decision-makers will increasingly expect the same smooth and enjoyable customer experience from B2B brands.

How to make moments that matter

So you know you want to stand out and appeal to millennials and offer a unique experience of your brand. But how do you actually make these magic moments?



Mapping the journey

We're huge fans of making intelligent, data-driven decisions here at Reachdesk and we have the sneaking suspicion that you are too. This is great news for ABX because a lot of the best strategic calls come from understanding the journey that your ideal customer takes.

When you have an understanding of your customer journey, ABX-thinking allows you to consider where a little something extra can move the needle—warming up old

leads, or encouraging someone along the next part of your sales pipeline.

Think about it this way: While some people will drop off because the product or service isn't right for them (or isn't right for them in this current moment), you might find that some people are falling behind based on specific questions they're not getting answers to, or that in a busy world of people clamoring for their attention, they just forget.

Customer drop-off rates are sadly inevitable. But understanding why your customers drop off is vital for improving your rates. Use the data you already have at your disposal to make decisions about your specific customers, rather than thinking in monoliths, and you'll find you're already leaning into ABX best practice.



Content as a service

If you're concerned about spending the time and money to introduce gifting into your workflow, it's important to remember that you don't have to always gift things. It's just as easy to offer something of value—personalized content or support—at a critical conversion point, and enjoy the benefits.

According to Demand Gen Report's [B2B Buyer Behavior Survey](#), 70% of buyers ranked relevant content that speaks directly to their company as “very important.” And 70% of the buyer journey is [already complete](#) before the buyer comes into contact with sales, even though B2B buyers still want support.

How can you provide that even when you're not there? Content.

Rather than considering content solely as a means for boosting your SEO, why not develop a content strategy that allows you to provide insight and value for your prospects and customers for free? This might feel counterintuitive, but remember: we're talking about giving your company the best possible relationship with your customers at every step.

Find yourself answering the same questions all the time? Consider setting up a self-service FAQ or knowledge base. Want to drive home a specific point about yourself or your company's offering? Create an easy-to-follow blog post or blog series that speaks to your buyers as people.

Arming your customers with the chance to make savvy decisions will endear your brand to them – making you top of mind when the opportunity arises to invest in future products and services.





Meet your customers where they are

A crucial part of successful ABX is understanding that you need to meet your customers where they are—not where you wish they were. A quick Google search will find articles extolling the virtues of everything from chatbots to apps, depending on what someone is trying to sell you.

We're not arguing that it's vital to understand trends across the board. For example, **63% of millennials** now prefer live chat over any other channel, as they're looking for speedy solutions to the questions they have. We also live in a mobile-first world, so ensuring that your website offers an effective and efficient experience on a mobile device is critical.

However, you may find that your industry is slightly different. While you may need to appeal to mobile users, it's important to look at your own data to see how people access your site and offering to understand how best to meet their needs. User experience also extends across social platforms you may be trying to break into to reach your audience. Conventional logic has suggested that, of the big 4 social media platforms (LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook), LinkedIn is the go-to for building B2B awareness.

However, over [60% of B2B buyers](#) have stated they want more communication during the research stage available for them across social media. So if you're looking for a way to differentiate yourself, consider where you can offer more—it doesn't hurt to be known as the company who makes it easier for their customers to get involved.



Creating human experiences through physical touchpoints

Creating unique and memorable experiences is at the heart of ABX. For those who are serious about providing a next-level experience as part of your account-based marketing, gifting and direct mail can take you over the edge.

The point here is, of course, to highlight the helpfulness and lengths that your company will go to for your customers—speaking to people as people, rather than simply a means to an end. At almost every stage of the customer journey, incorporating a physical touchpoint through gifting and direct mail can set you apart.

One of our clients at Reachdesk, Similarweb, leveraged the power of gifting and their understanding of the customer journey to shorten their sales cycle and bring dormant prospects back to life.

Similarweb used their knowledge of their prospects to send hyper-personalized physical gifts to reignite conversations and encourage attendance to meetings. As a result, meeting drop-off rates dropped, reducing the average deal length and allowing Similarweb to move deals faster.

Thinking outside of the box and asking yourself “How can we truly help our customers?” is a mindset shift that will pay off in both the short and long term. (PS, if you're interested in knowing more about the world of gifting and direct mail, we've also built a [handy guide](#), complete with inspiration and tips and tricks to get you started.)



Prioritize personalization

A magic moment can be as simple as sending somebody a LinkedIn message with a link to an article you think they might like, or it can be a full direct mail and gifting campaign that catches their eye.

The secret to all of this outreach is knowing the person you're reaching out to well enough that they're constantly at the heart of what you're doing.

To make sure you're hitting the right note, there are three key questions you can ask yourself:

- 1** What physical gift will surprise and delight this person?
- 2** Why is this gift relevant right now?
- 3** Will sending a gift at this stage of the journey help me stand out and propel the conversation to the next stage?

This can be a challenging prospect. After all, there's an element of vulnerability that comes whenever you try new tactics or goals. But using these three questions as your starting points will help you to ensure that the experiences you're offering are appropriate for your audience.





See the bigger picture

According to a study conducted by McKinsey, the buying cycle has gotten even longer for B2B businesses since the pandemic. This means that you may find it takes an entire sales cycle to see the impact of an ABX way of thinking. That being said, these magic moments are about building a structure for continuing success.

Being a company that takes time to do these things for your clients, or potential clients is a way to demonstrate the values your business lives by and can have a profound effect on your bottom line.



Iterate as you go

You don't need to jump in and shake everything up in one go. In fact, iterative steps are one of the best ways to track what you're doing, see if it's working and, if necessary, pivot. Where possible, engage with your customer feedback and listen to their take on what you're doing.

Being a company that has the confidence to put your customers first and provide them what they want (rather than what you want to sell them), is at the heart of account-based experience.



Review, refine, reshape

If your contact within a company changes, consider what difference this might make to your outreach. Take the time to get to know the new contact and tailor your approach.

Try to draw connections with the person you're speaking to at every step of the journey.

ABX dos and don'ts



Dos

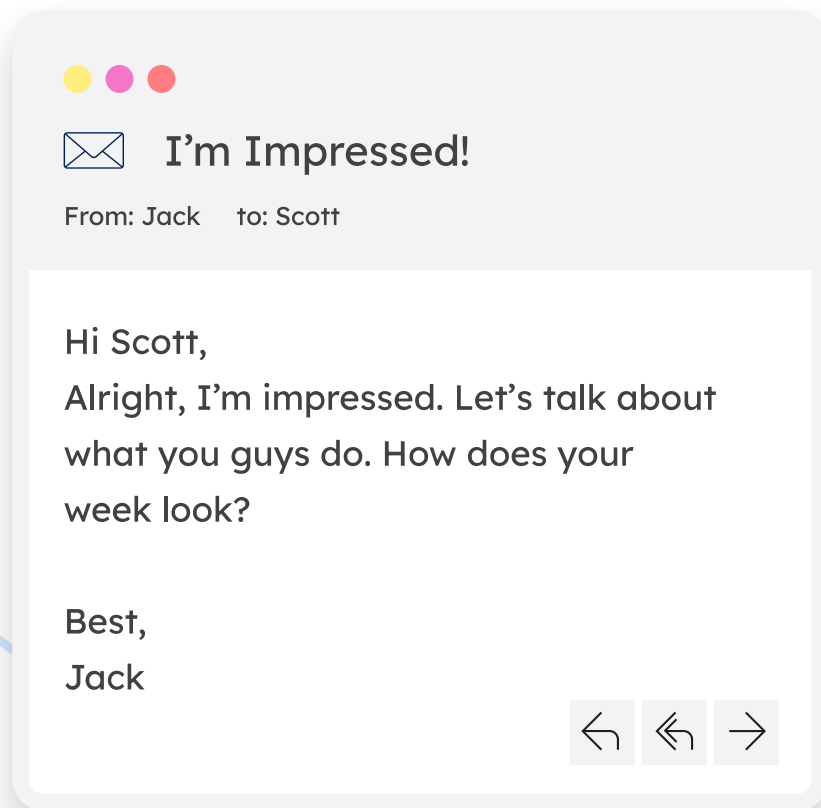
- Put customer experience at the heart of your strategy
- Learn about your prospects and customers at every step of the journey
- Leverage your understanding of your audience to create hyper personalized touchpoints
- Insert physical touchpoints at the right moments in the journey to surprise and delight
- Get creative - try new ideas and experiment
- Use data to constantly adapt and optimize your strategy



Don'ts

- Forget your business goals and how they align the goals of your prospects and customers
- Expect what works for others will work for your prospects and customers
- Send impersonal and generic communication
- Only focus on digital touchpoints
- Send physical gifts as one-off campaigns or to get something in return
- Base your strategy on assumptions

Key takeaways



We know that, according to Foleon's [2021 B2B Buyer Insights Report](#), 80% of B2B buyers now expect a B2C experience.

As the distance between business marketing and direct-to-customer marketing grows ever smaller, a key for competitive advantage is learning what's already out there and making it work for you.

One thing is clear: ABX is going to become the de-facto way of doing business, particularly as we head into the unclear territory of the "new normal".

Thinking about how to get on board now is a great way to ensure you're not left behind, and a fantastic way to improve your business processes and prepare for what comes next!

ABX + direct mail and gifting

Used alongside a great ABX strategy, direct mail and corporate gifting can help you surprise and delight your customers every step of the way.

Elevate your ABX strategy with direct mail and corporate gifting by adding relevant and highly personalized physical touchpoints throughout the customer journey.

 Reachdesk


We'd love to hear from you

For help and support, and if you have any questions, get in touch with us at hello@reachdesk.com.

[Request a demo](#) to find out how Reachdesk can help you deliver moments that matter at scale.

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