

ON24

**THE WEBINERD'S
GUIDE TO
ACCOUNT-BASED
MARKETING**

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FOREWORD

A message from Joe Hyland, CMO, ON24

Less is more. It's such a simple phrase, and yet it holds so much truth.

In the business world, we've all experienced how things improve if we focus on fewer things at a time. It makes us better marketers and sales people – more focused, effective, and more empathetic toward those we are selling to.

There is a lot of jargon thrown around in sales and marketing. There are even more marketing fads; it can be hard to keep up. But Account Based Marketing (ABM) is neither jargon nor a fad. It's an important trend all marketing and sales teams should take note of, and it's based, at a high level, on the premise that less truly is more.

ABM is grounded on the thought that if you focus your energies not on a 'spray and pray' strategy, but rather on being insightful and deliberate, you will go further. This includes collecting key information about the right prospects, prioritizing mindful marketing and true engagement, and aligning your sales and marketing functions. All these aspects will help you deliver more value for your prospects and clients, and more revenue for your business. ABM creates a rare win-win where both prospects and clients and vendors benefit: prospects and clients get more valuable, relevant content, while businesses see higher ROI from their marketing and sales efforts.

In this whitepaper, we'll explore:

1. Why there's a need for Account Based Marketing (ABM)
2. What the ABM Model is, and a deep-dive into how and why it works
3. What the rise of ABM means for the traditional lead generation model
4. How webinars help with ABM
5. How to set the foundation for webinar-driven ABM

Bottom line – ABM is not a fad; it's an important shift toward a quality-over-quantity marketing mindset and one that's here to stay. Are you ready?

— Joe Hyland, CMO, ON24



ABM creates a rare win-win where both prospects and clients and vendors benefit: prospects and clients get more valuable, relevant content, while businesses see higher ROI from their marketing and sales efforts.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION



Background - why the need for ABM?

Digital technology has opened up a world of opportunity for business-to-business (B2B) marketers. In contrast to the pre-digital world, technology has enabled marketers to perform better than ever before. Marketing automation has made it possible to identify and score leads easily and effectively. The number of tools available to help you learn more about your customers and what they are searching for online, as well as personalising their visits to your website has increased exponentially in recent years. Mobile continues to be a driving force, enabling you to reach customers anytime and anywhere.

Lead-based marketing is the approach of choice for many B2B companies. Lead-based marketing is ‘the process of attracting and converting strangers and prospects into someone who has indicated interest in your company’s product or service’.¹ The use of marketing activities, such as inbound marketing, to bring in as many marketing-qualified leads (MQLs) as possible has been successful. However, marketers continue to struggle with lead-based marketing. This is reinforced by the fact that 63% of marketers rate generating traffic and leads as their top challenge.²

1. Lead Generation: A Beginner’s Guide to Generating Business Leads the Inbound Way
2. The State of Inbound 2017

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Key Terms

According to HubSpot, lead-based marketing is “the process of attracting and converting strangers and prospects into someone who has indicated interest in your company’s product or service.”

Inbound marketing is the process of attracting customers through the use of content, SEO, social media and branding.

But generating more leads is not the only problem marketers must confront. Delivering an experience matching ever-rising customer expectations is a new, and complex, key challenge. Customers are more knowledgeable and do more research online compared to earlier days when businesses approached sales reps for information. For example, research by Gartner’s CEB of over 5,000 decision-makers show customers are typically 37% through the buying process before reaching the solution-definition stage. More importantly, they are, on average, 57% of the way through the process before they even contact suppliers.³

As workplaces become more collaborative, the decision-making process for many companies becomes even more complex. 78% of buyers now spend more time researching purchases in an effort to mitigate risks, with 71% spending up to three months researching vendors anonymously.⁴ This is particularly true in complex enterprise sales where multiple stakeholders are actively

engaged, and sales cycles don’t follow a linear path. The number of stakeholders involved in business decisions continues to rise as well, with an average buying group size being 6.8 individuals – an increase from 5.4 only a couple of years ago.⁵ And with each decision maker added to the process, the likelihood of purchase declines.⁶

To compound the problem, B2B customers are becoming more immune to mass messaging. Instead, they expect a personalised approach showing their potential suppliers are familiar with their pain points and objectives.

So, with this in mind, how can marketers adapt to this shift from a lead-based model to a personalised and targeted approach? Account-based marketing (ABM) has emerged as a leading solution to the challenges B2B marketers face. In 2017, 63% of companies ranked ABM as “important” to their marketing strategy, with 37% expecting their focus on ABM to increase significantly within the following 12 months.⁷ Investment in ABM has increased as well. A 2017 study found that 52% of B2B companies (up from only 16% in 2016) allocated over 30% of their marketing budget for ABM initiatives.⁸ Demandbase, for example, found that 92% of B2B companies consider ABM as a ‘must have.’ This switch is driving returns on investment, with 85% of marketers saying their ABM programmes are outperforming other marketing strategies.⁹

3. Making the Census Sale

4. 2017 B2B Buyers Survey Report

5. The New B2B Sales Imperative

6. Adamson, B et al. 2015. *The Challenger Customer*, Penguin Random House.

7. ABM Consensus 2018

8. 2017 State of ABM Study Findings

9. ABM in a Nutshell

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

What is ABM? And why is it an answer?

Account-based marketing isn't a new concept. In fact, many organisations have been doing something similar for years.

According to the Information Technology Services Marketing Association (ITSMA), ABM is "treating individual accounts as markets in their own right".¹⁰ ABM is a structured, customer-centric, and highly personalised strategy which requires marketing and sales to align in order to target high-yield accounts. ABM's success relies on sales and marketing (as well as other departments) working together to engage target accounts by delivering personalised messaging. The continued adoption of ABM is most likely due to benefits such as a higher ROI, a more customised customer experience, alignment of departments and greater efficiency.

Key Terms

Account-based marketing (ABM)

is a structured, customer-centric, highly personalised strategy which requires marketing and sales to align in order to target high-yield accounts.

Here is what ABM is not:

- Any method that isn't targeted to a list of accounts
- A 'spray and pray' marketing approach where marketing messages are released everywhere and to anyone without direction
- Any approach where sales and marketing don't align

- A setup where departments are siloed and are going after the same targets

ABM has several benefits that make it appealing to B2B marketers. As the driving force behind the success of ABM, one of the most important benefits is the alignment it brings between marketing and sales. Marketo has found that aligning sales and marketing brings about 208% more value from marketing and companies that align these departments are 67% more effective at closing deals.¹¹

Research by ITSMA also demonstrates the following benefits of ABM:¹²

- 87% of companies using ABM report it offers higher ROI than other types of marketing
- 84% experience improved brand reputation
- 74% report seeing improved relationships across accounts
- 69% see improved annual revenue per account

The end of the traditional lead gen model?

So, does the popularity and success of ABM sound the death knell for the traditional lead generation model? Is there room for both lead generation and ABM? If so, how do marketers determine which model to use?

Marketers may believe if they implement ABM they will need to scrap their lead generation programme. However, lead generation still has a very important place within most marketing departments. It is possible, if not beneficial, to continue to run lead generation campaigns along with an

10. The Three Types of ABM

11. Jumpstart Revenue Growth with Sales and Marketing Alignment

12. Driving Growth with Three Types of ABM

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

ABM programme, ultimately driving business across the wider addressable market.

Marketers need to examine their various target accounts to determine which approaches will have the greatest success. Forrester suggests marketers factor the context in which they are selling when considering which model will be most effective. For example, lead generation is best used for a simple and transactional buying process, particularly if they can buy online.

Meanwhile, ABM programmes are most effective for targets with complex, long and sometimes political buying processes. In contrast to lead-based programmes requiring engagement with thousands of companies, ABM's effective audience ranges from dozens to hundreds.

Key ABM strategies also work well to enhance certain lead-based campaigns. Campaigns such as pre-targeting, account nurturing and lead-to-account nurturing benefit from aspects such as specific targeting and personalisation used in ABM.¹³



SECTION 2: THE ABM MODEL

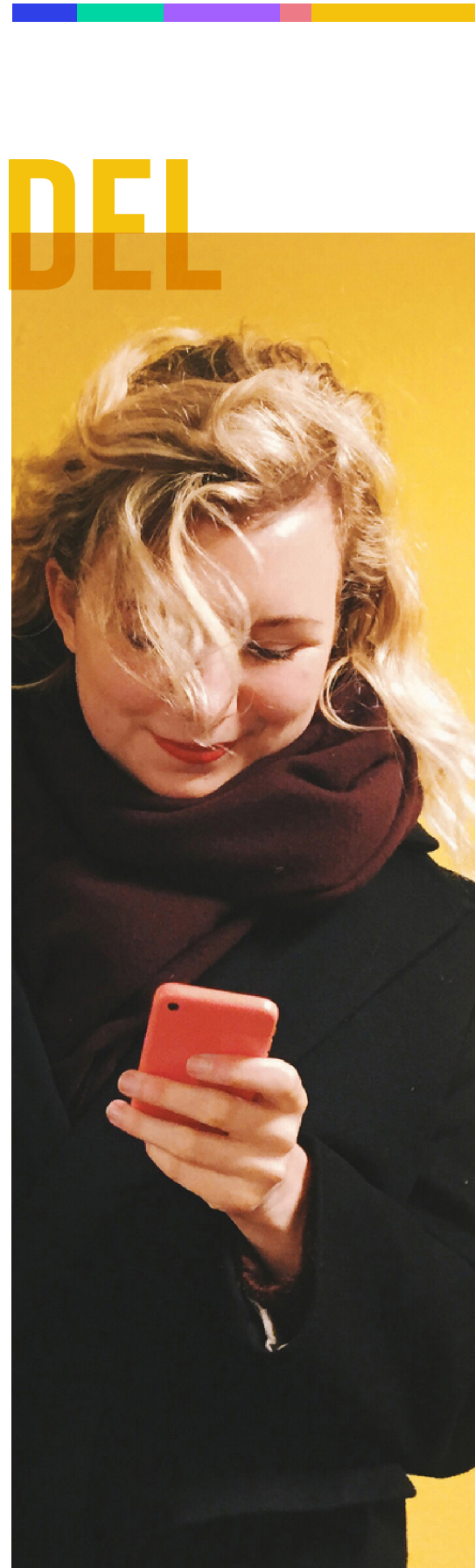
As ABM evolves, various approaches have emerged. Each approach has its merits, but we have chosen the model detailed below as it is the first formal model created.

Overview

In 1993 Don Pepper and Martha Rogers published a book titled '*The One to One Future*' which predicted a shift in marketing approaches. They theorised customers would begin to look for a more personalised buying experience not offered through mass marketing, necessitating one-to-one marketing.

Ten years later, ITSMA formally introduced ABM as a strategy, giving it a name and a formalised methodology. Demandbase, a technology company which specialises in ABM and has developed platforms for targeting and personalisation, has added to this definition by stating "ABM is used by B2B marketers to identify and target the accounts they value most".

The Pareto Principle (or 80-20 rule) states 80% of a company's revenue comes from 20% of its customers. This is particularly relevant in the context of ABM. Using this principle makes sense because it emphasises why focusing and nurturing high-yield customers is so important.¹⁴



SECTION 2: THE ABM MODEL

While ABM, in its purest form, is effective, there is a need for it to be scalable. Because of this, ITSMA developed a model featuring three types of ABM: Strategic, Lite and Programmatic.

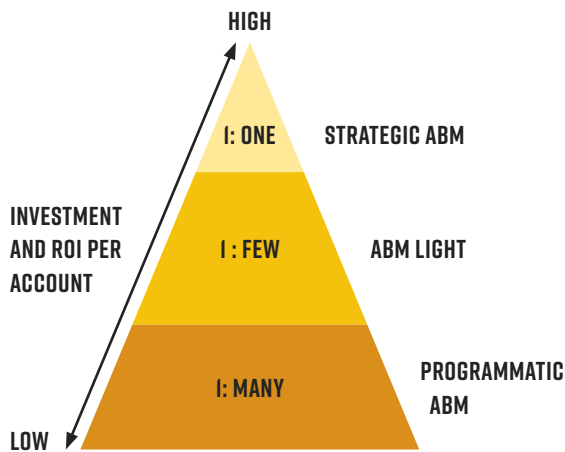


Image based on: ITSMA Types of ABM Model

Strategic ABM

Strategic ABM is ABM in its original form, with a one-to-one approach to targeting accounts. This ABM type requires a highly personalised approach. So, it is also the most resource-intensive. It also calls for strong alignment between sales and marketing as well as other departments. While Strategic ABM does require a high investment in time and resources across departments, it also tends to have the highest ROI.¹⁵

ABM Lite

With ABM Lite, marketing and sales utilise a one-to-few approach. The focus on small groups of 5-10 that share similar attributes requires less resources but returns tend to be smaller as well.¹⁶ An advantage of ABM Lite is that, while it still requires a great deal of personalisation, the content produced can

be used more than once, making the need to continually create content less critical.¹⁷ It is the middle ground between other ABM models, requiring less investment and personalisation than Strategic ABM but also yielding less ROI.

Programmatic ABM

Programmatic ABM focuses on a one-to-many approach. It is the most recent form of ABM and is aided by newly available technologies and analytics tools. These tools make it possible to achieve personalisation across a larger number of accounts. Programmatic ABM is often used to target specific segments such as vertical markets. Naturally, the investment required to implement Programmatic ABM is lower than for the other two types. However, ROI is usually lower as well.

15. Defining the Three Types of Account-Based Marketing

16. Strategic ABM and ABM Lite – What's the Difference?

17. Is it time to flip the ABM pyramid?

SECTION 3: HOW WEBINARS HELP WITH ABM



Webinars are an excellent marketing tool to attract buyers throughout all stages of the sales cycle. They are an excellent way to spread your marketing messages to a large number of prospects especially as the on demand functionality makes it possible to continue to share these messages beyond the live webinar. With their need to educate customers and peers, B2B companies tend to use webinars more than their B2C brethren.¹⁸ Naturally, webinars are a very effective way for marketers to obtain a large number of leads. The success of webinars is commonly gauged on the number of attendees or potential leads generated.

Unlike a company's website where 82% of visitors aren't potential customers and 97% ignore calls to action,¹⁹ a webinar provides a great opportunity to generate leads as attendees often need to fill out a form to register. Those completing forms become potential MQLs. In fact, 73% of B2B marketers believe that webinars are the best way to generate high-quality leads while 75% say that webinars are the best way to generate brand awareness.²⁰

Gaining further interest in a company's products or services is one benefit the immersive nature of a webinar lends itself to well, facilitating engagement at scale. Demandbase found that 40% of the individuals who register for a webinar will attend. While audiences can be in the thousands in some cases, ON24's Webinar Benchmarks Report shows the highest percentage of attendance size (46%) is still between 200-299.²¹

While webinars are a useful tool for lead-based marketing, can the same be true for ABM where gaining a large number of leads isn't the objective?

18. The 2017 Big Book of Webinar Stats

19. Six Steps to a Successful Account-Based Marketing Strategy

20. Optimal Lead Generations Methods

SECTION 3: HOW WEBINARS HELP WITH ABM

Webinars can be tailored for each ABM type

Strategic ABM

Webinars for Strategic ABM can be tailored for individual companies and packaged around content and engagement specific to that company. These webinars offer a high-value proposition for specific accounts. They provide the opportunity to facilitate a rich experience unique to the organisation in question, showcasing how a particular product or service can help solve their key challenges. At this level, webinars can be branded to match the target account, while ongoing sessions can be customised for particular decision-making units.

While not specific to Strategic ABM, it is important to remember existing customers and how webinars can continue to nurture the account, leading to an increase in lifetime value. Unlike lead-generation marketing where the account typically becomes the sole responsibility of sales on qualification, ABM considers the account from a holistic and ongoing perspective. Webinars provide multiple opportunities across all parts of the customer lifecycle, and are well suited post-sale for activities such as onboarding, client support and account management.

ABM Lite

For ABM Lite, webinars can offer an engaging experience akin to Strategic ABM. They can target small groups within an industry segment. Because the group size is still small, there is an opportunity for highly targeted content with two-way discussions.

Another point important to consider is the alignment between sales and marketing, and the importance of the sales department

participating in the webinars. Webinars aren't just a marketing activity. It's especially helpful for at least one representative from sales to either act as a presenter or at least be available to answer any questions participants may have because sales teams are often grouped around verticals and industry segments. Having such an approach allows a more seamless transition from a webinar to a sales conversation, as the person presenting can pick up the conversation directly with the customer.

Programmatic ABM

Running a webinar for Programmatic ABM may appear similar to running one for lead generation. The difference lies in the targeting and outreach, which is steered towards a particular list of accounts. For Programmatic ABM, there is not as much narrowing of prospective targets as with Strategic ABM and ABM Lite. So, like lead generation, the number of webinar attendees is typically higher than that of the other two types of ABM.

The key benefit of Programmatic is the ability to prioritise outreach and qualification at scale through measuring engagement with your content. For example, in a webinar with 300 attendees, it is possible to see who is engaging with the webinar, who is asking questions, and who is downloading resource assets. This refines which targets the company ought to engage with further to move them forward through the buying cycle, while collecting richer intelligence than standard online meeting solutions.

SECTION 3: HOW WEBINARS HELP WITH ABM

Webinars drive key ABM metrics

When it comes to setting and tracking ABM metrics, Bev Burgess and Dave Munn suggest three main categories: revenue, relationships and reputation. While there are other sets of metrics available, these provide an open-ended approach.²²

Revenue

Revenue is an obvious metric to factor in with any marketing programme. The entire marketing-generated pipeline should be considered. In the case of webinars, the metric includes how many people attend, who engages during the webinar, if they become a qualified sell and so on.

Annual Contract Value (ACV) is always a meaningful factor when thinking about revenue and this is especially true with ABM where contracts are all high value. Webinars work as a way to educate on the larger challenges or problems. By showing that these can be solved with a particular product or service, the contract value can be increased.

As mentioned earlier, it is highly valuable to have sales colleagues present directly on the webinar. Not only does this improve the experience for the customer, but as one-on-one meetings typically count as weighted opportunities, there will be both greater enthusiasm from sales and more credit to marketing in the pipeline it contributes to.

Account spend is another aspect of revenue impacting ABM success. Here, the key is to look for opportunities to increase the lifetime value of the account. In traditional, pure funnel-based approaches, typically marketing's responsibility stopped once the

lead or account was handed over to sales. With ABM, marketing's responsibility is continuous. Marketing now plays a critical role through the whole process and through the lifetime of the account, providing content and engagement from before qualification through to nurturing existing key customers.

Relationships

Relationship building is a vital part of ABM that aims to achieve broader and deeper account penetration—i.e. Increasing both the number of decision makers and influencers aware of your solution, and building deeper levels of engagement to progress the buyer's journey and increase account lifetime value. The main challenge with webinars is getting people to register and attend. In the case of ABM, a company will have a list of target accounts they will consider and the more they are able to drive registrations, the greater the account coverage will be.

One very important and useful metric for ABM is the account engagement score. Different vendors may calculate it in different ways; Marketo defines it as “depth of engagement based on behavioural activities tracked across various channels from people in specific target accounts”.²³ It's a good indicator for marketing to know if their efforts are successful and for sales to know what actions to take next. Many marketing automation suites have only recently started including account engagement scoring as part of their standard metrics, saving marketing teams from creating account-based scores from scratch.

Reputation

Reputation “may include changing or improving perception and/or educating account about your full portfolio of offerings or capabilities”.²⁴ By using surveys in the

22. Burgess, V. and Munn, D. A Practitioner's Guide to Account-Based Marketing. Kogan Page Limited. 2017.

23. Account Score

24. Burgess, V. and Munn, D. A Practitioner's Guide to Account-Based Marketing. Kogan Page Limited. 2017.

SECTION 3: HOW WEBINARS HELP WITH ABM

webinar platform (such as Net Promoter Score²⁵ or open-ended questions), both quantitative and qualitative measures of performance can be made. Webinars can help improve awareness as well as educate prospects or existing customers on the full offering or capabilities of a company. This can be particularly important if there is a new product offering prospects or clients may not know about.

Key Terms

According to Medallia, **Net Promoter Score** is ‘an index ranging from -100 to 100 that measures the willingness of customers to recommend a company’s products or services to others.’ It is calculated by asking people to rate on an 11-point scale the likelihood of recommending the company or brand to a friend or colleague. The number is the percentage of promoters (those rating a 9 or 10) from detractors (those rating 6 or less).

Other reasons why webinars are perfect for ABM

Two-way engagement

Webinars provide two-way engagement, setting them apart from other channels, such as video, where the communication is one-way. This gives prospects the ability to ask questions or take polls. The engagement is also immediate, unlike social media where comments and questions aren’t always responded to in a timely manner.

Asset downloads and engagement tools

Getting tailored content to prospects at the perfect time within their buyer’s journey is difficult. Webinar platforms can provide access to downloadable assets such as white papers, product information or case studies right within the webinar interface. Engagement tools, such as transcripts, Q&As, surveys and resource lists, are also available at the attendees’ fingertips.

Did you know?

With ON24’s **Content Gateway**, you can publish standalone, branded pages to promote your content including webinars, PDFs and podcasts that can be easily embedded in webpages, emails or published on social media sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Scalability with high-value

In-person events offer an excellent opportunity to connect with decision makers and for marketing to support their colleagues in sales. But hiring a suitable venue (often a high-end hotel) and paying for people to attend can be costly in both time and money.

Through webinars, marketing can enable salespeople and consultants to make a one-to-one connection on a digital scale in a far more efficient way. Whereas content for an in-person event will likely only be delivered once on a given day to a broad audience, webinars offer the potential for several account-specific sessions a day.

25. Net Promoter Score

26. ON24 Webinar Benchmarks Report 2017

SECTION 3: HOW WEBINARS HELP WITH ABM

While promoting a single white paper or asset several times over a few weeks might be excessive, as a high-value offer your prospects are more likely to be accepting of repeat invites to a webinar. As seen in the Webinar Benchmarks Report, people register to watch webinars across a range of times, from weeks in advance to on the day itself.²⁶

A platform to share with customers and partners

The remote nature of webinars also means that it is logistically far easier to organise partners to present with you, whereas in-person events are more difficult to arrange — especially if the partner is out of the area or country. Getting everyone in the same room for an in-person event can sometimes be impossible. Sharing a webinar with partners can be mutually beneficial since both can share information, leads and accounts.

Inviting customers to share a webinar platform is an excellent way to reward the customer for their loyalty as well. It also allows the customer to evangelise your product or service. Customer testimonials are helpful tools to move prospects further towards the end of the buying cycle.

Complex education or product demonstration

For the most complex and high-value sales, there may be aspects too difficult to communicate through static content, such as white papers, reports, case studies or data sheets. It is here webinars can be especially valuable. Blending together in-person video and screen sharing, presentations bring complex topics to life. And, during live sessions, the interactivity can tailor the session to the needs of the attendees in real-time.

Did you know?

ON24 allows you to host assets within the webinar console, making it possible for attendees to download PowerPoint decks, PDFs and have links to other useful content.

Enhanced engagement metrics

Metrics provide useful information about not only what is successful in your ABM campaign and where there is need for improvement, but also about your prospects' actions. Webinar engagement metrics show the total number of webinar registrations and attendees, how much time was spent on the webinar, what questions were asked, and surveys taken.

Advanced webinar platforms also provide algorithmic engagement scores that summarise all activity into one, easy-to-understand number. These metrics can be viewed at an individual contact level or can be aggregated for account-level views.

Did you know?

ON24's **Advanced Analytics** provides in-depth insights on audience engagement and behaviour on all content from any source, including viewing time, interactions and channel sources. This data is available in real-time on ON24's Intelligence dashboard and can be integrated with CRM and marketing automation systems.

SECTION 3: HOW WEBINARS HELP WITH ABM

Live intelligence

Webinars offer one thing no other marketing channel can – behind-the-scenes cooperation. The communication between the presenter and the back-end producers manning the live-event, whether marketing, sales or a partner, makes it possible to tailor or shift the focus on the fly.

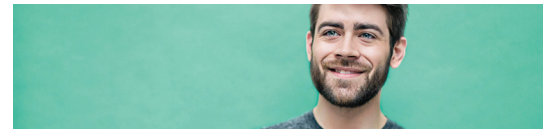
For example, if a prospect from a target account joins a webinar session, then the presenter can focus on emphasising case studies, examples and anecdotes specifically to drive engagement from that individual. Or, if those people behind the scenes notice a prospect downloading assets or who has a high engagement score, the conversation can be steered to make references particularly useful to that prospect and help push them towards a sales conversation.

Likewise, by knowing who the attendees are in a webinar, the presenter can choose which questions to answer. If there are too many questions to be addressed during one session, presenters can prioritise questions from high-value accounts and steer away from accounts whose profiles are on a lower-tier or aren't necessarily a good commercial fit for the company.

Having a member of the team in the background is much more than just offering technical support or answering FAQs - by passing information to the presenters in real-time via private chat, they can help steer the presenter to engage more deeply with target accounts on the session.

Did you know?

ON24's **Connect Integration** allows for data from ON24 to be pushed to your marketing automation platform, including Hubspot, Marketo, Pardot, etc. as well as your CRM so marketing and sales have live intelligence on how decision makers of target accounts are being contacted.



SECTION 4: SETTING THE FOUNDATION FOR WEBINAR-DRIVEN ABM



Once you decide to make ABM a focus for your webinar campaigns, there needs to be some initial planning and consideration put in place – particularly if efforts to date have been focused purely on volume, or if they have been quite separated from sales efforts.

The following steps will help you prepare for putting ABM in place and using webinars as a critical component.

1. Agree on a target list

As with any ABM programme, the first step is to develop a list of accounts you will target. How do you create this list to ensure you focus on the accounts with the highest chance of success? What steps should you follow?

First, start with your gut. You ought to already have a good idea of which accounts are a good fit for ABM and will respond positively to a webinar environment. Listen to your instincts and then continue to narrow down the list using other tools such as CRM, marketing automation and external firm demographics.

Once the list is narrowed, the next step is to speak with your sales team and get agreement from them on the viability of the list. Sales can provide personal insight on suitable targets and offer advice on refining any lists you may have.

SECTION 4: SETTING THE FOUNDATION FOR WEBINAR-DRIVEN ABM

2. Set your goals

With your account list formulated, it is time to set goals for your programme. Ask some questions: Where are you now? Where do you want to get with the target accounts? What needs to be done as a team to get to this point?

Start small – not only tactically but also as a percentage of impact. The recommended approach is to run a pilot programme or concentrate on a small segment or number of accounts to test out your methods. This gives your team the chance to see what works, what doesn't and what can be improved upon. Running a pilot prior to a full-scale ABM programme can save a lot of time and resources and have a higher probability of success.

3. Get buy-in from management and finance

Management and finance buy-in can be difficult. One aspect that should help is making sure your ABM programme goals clearly demonstrate how they contribute to revenue targets. Also, consider longer-term goals, especially for accounts with longer buying cycles which won't generate immediate revenue.

Because management and finance may not be familiar with ABM, they will need to be advised that ABM, overall, is a high-touch, high-impact programme. Spending per account will go up as the number of target accounts goes down. For example, ITSMA and Demandbase found that spending per-account for Strategic ABM (13 target accounts) is US\$58,667 while for ABM Lite (50 accounts) is US\$3,723.²⁷

4. Get buy-in from sales

To get buy-in from sales you must introduce them to the concept of using webinars for ABM. This must be done in a way illustrating why webinar-driven ABM works better than other solutions. Explain that webinars will be a team effort between sales, marketing and customer success. Let them know how live-intelligence during webinars works and why it is beneficial to the ABM programme.

This is also an opportunity to show how ABM-webinars are beneficial to sales. For example, using webinars for Strategic ABM, where one account is the focus of the webinar, counts as a direct sales opportunity resulting in a touch. Help sales understand this kind of webinar is a one-on-one sales meeting with far more benefits for everyone involved.

Webinars will also provide sales with a treasure trove of metrics and information, including engagement during the event. Information, such as which assets attendees download, what questions they ask and how they answer poll questions, provide sales with a wealth of data they wouldn't have access to if they were using a web-based meeting solution.

5. Ensure data and systems are connected

Webinars must be integrated with your other marketing and sales technology for you to make the most of an event's engagement activity. Before you go forward with your webinar-based ABM programme, ensure the webinar platform, along with channels promoting it, such as email, social and website, are connected to your technology stack (CRM, marketing automation, ABM technology). Also ensure it has correct field mapping, so that the right data flows to the right location.

6. Take gradual steps with quick wins

As mentioned earlier, running a pilot webinar-based campaign is key. Start out small to test your strategy before ramping up to a full-scale programme.

Finally, find a champion from sales or a colleague with a revenue target, such as a customer success executive, a senior partner or consultant to be part of the webinar. Having someone like this involved can take the conversation forward immediately instead of needing to refer questions on to a different time or place.

Another beneficial action to take is to schedule a learn-and-review session after you run your webinar. Review all aspects of your webinar campaign. Take note of everything that was successful and what didn't work. There will be things that don't go as planned and things that work really well. Learn from all of those successes and failures so you can adjust your programme accordingly.



SECTION 5: FOCUSING ON A HIGH-VALUE OFFER



Your approach to webinars must change if you are shifting away from a lead-centred marketing model. With lead generation, your success metrics for webinars are likely focused on registration and attendee numbers, perhaps with MQLs generated as a result. ABM, particularly Strategic ABM, needs a different approach. Instead of casting a wide net by aiming to get many different prospects from many companies, your goal is to get the decision makers from one of your target accounts to attend the webinar.

The following is a list of steps to take to help focus on the high-value offer of your Strategic ABM webinar campaign:

Identify the target audience

Once you have an account pinpointed, identify your target audience. Find out who the decision makers are within the targeted company. Consult with sales, as they will more than likely have a good idea which individuals you will need to target. Also, use your CRM data to find names and job titles.

Develop a compelling offer

Executives and decision makers from companies which would qualify as a target for your Strategic ABM programme aren't usually inclined to attend a webinar merely because they have been invited. You will need to make an offer which is compelling enough for them to want to attend. Your promotional materials should resonate strongly with your target audience. Consider the following questions from your target's point of view when developing this offer and creating your promotional materials:

SECTION 5: FOCUSING ON A HIGH-VALUE OFFER

1. Why should I attend this webinar?
2. What makes this session unique and compelling?
3. Why should I attend the live webinar and interact?

Limit barriers to conversion

To make sure your webinar-based ABM programme has a high chance of success, you need your target audience to attend the webinar. This means that you should make attending your webinar as simple as possible for your prospects. Don't give them a reason not to attend.

With ABM, you are sending out emails and invitations to a very specific group of individuals. You should already have their details in your system. Use this information to simplify the form-filling process, which is a common barrier to attendance. Simplification can be as basic as reducing the overall number of fields in a form, or as complex as auto-filling a form based on visitor's past interactions with your organisation.

Another consideration is making webinar viewing simple for viewers. This means making sure the webinar platform you are using doesn't require individuals to download software or install browser plug-ins to view the webinar. Reducing the number of steps needed to view a webinar saves time and makes attendance easy, particularly if your customers have restrictive IT policies.

Approach and target in a personalised manner

ABM is a highly personalised approach and that should inform how you approach and

target your prospect. You should personally reach out to target individuals within the account. This can be done by either having your sales or customer success manager email the individual directly, or by using your marketing automation system to email the prospect and making it appear as if it is a personal invitation from the salesperson.

Advertising your webinar through paid media can also be done for specific target accounts. As email domains act as company identifiers, these can be uploaded to advertising platforms to drive interest from those that matter. In particular, dynamic creative can also improve the effectiveness of any paid advertising you choose to run to attract attendees.

Did you know?

ON24 **Target** allows you to quickly and easily create personalised content experiences tailored for your target accounts and personas. This simple drag and drop solution makes it possible to build unique landing pages with curated multimedia content for each target persona. You can also collect engagement data to see how this content is being consumed.

Drive engagement through the session

As emphasised earlier, two-way engagement is one of the key benefits of using webinars for ABM. You need to ensure your webinar encourages this engagement. One way to achieve this is by featuring calls to action that drive engagement. Ask questions and encourage attendees to answer them in the Q&A section or ask attendees to participate in polls throughout the webinar as a

SECTION 5: FOCUSING ON A HIGH-VALUE OFFER

means to get the audience involved in the discussion.

Another engagement-driving method is to use, and refer to, supporting content. Utilise your resource list and provide studies, reports and other content in PDF form. Refer to these throughout your webinar and remind the audience they are available to download. This allows the audience to further educate themselves.

It is also wise to have a senior sales manager or leader present the webinar. This makes it possible for a highly-engaged prospect who is ready to take the next step to be helped quickly and directly by the sales manager instead of needing to be referred on. While a senior leader or influencer may not be able to close a deal, they can make it easier for a prospect to open up to them about their problems, increasing engagement.

Lastly, make allowances for webinar overrun. Plan for the possibility that the level of engagement will be high and the amount of questions asked will run past the allotted webinar time. Don't let time constraints interfere with answering questions and continuing the engagement.

Use live intelligence to guide the session

Live intelligence helps drive engagement to another level and, as stated before, is one of the unique features of webinars. It is achieved through the cooperation of the presenter and those working behind the scenes, monitoring webinar attendees and keeping an eye on who is asking questions, engaging and downloading assets. As stated earlier, these pieces of information are a great way to steer the conversation in the right direction. It's a real-time, personalised approach that, if done right, can push your target account to a closed-won opportunity.

Did you know?

Using ON24 **Intelligence** and its intuitive, easy-to-use, analytics dashboard provides you with real-time reporting on the success of your webinars and provides detailed data on the behaviour of your attendees to help you identify your best leads.

Package webinars as a wider content offering

While it is ideal to have all your target audience attend your webinar, that isn't always possible. Don't forget about the effectiveness and versatility of on demand versions of a webinar. Research has found a third of webinar attendees watch the on demand version only.²⁸ This means that even if members of your target audience cannot attend the live webinar, they still have the chance to see it on demand and should be reminded of this option through a personalised reminder email.

You can also edit your webinar to fit the individual you are targeting. For example, while a decision maker may have ample time to watch a longer version of the webinar that provides content relevant to them, an executive will probably only have time for a shorter version with highlights chosen just for them. Editing the on demand webinar to fit the individual target acts as an effective piece of content that not only educates and informs but has been personalised to focus on the points that are of biggest concern to them.

WEBINAR-DRIVEN ABM CHECKLIST



Now that you have a broad overview of how to use webinars to achieve ABM success, use the following checklist to plan your future webinar-driven ABM campaigns.

Setting the Foundation for Webinar-Driven ABM

Agree on a target list

1. What are the high-value accounts you want to target?
2. What information and data can your sales team, CRM and marketing automation give you to narrow down your targets?

Set goals

1. Where are you now?
2. Where do you want to get with target accounts?

Get buy-in from management and finance

1. Do your goals hit revenue targets?

Get buy-in from sales

1. How can you demonstrate this will benefit them?
2. Do they agree on the target account list?
3. What reps will collaborate on which ABM webinars?

Ensure data and systems are connected

1. Is your webinar platform (as well as email, social and website) connected to your technology stack?

Take gradual steps with quick wins

1. Which account would work best in a pilot programme?
2. Which things worked and which didn't during your pilot?

Focusing on a High-Value Offer

Identify your target audience

1. Who are the decision makers for your target account?
2. Which executives should be included?

Develop a compelling offer

1. What reason does the target have to attend?
2. What makes this webinar unique and compelling?
3. Why should the target attend and interact?

Limit the barriers to conversion

1. Is registration made easy by limiting or eliminating the need for form-filling?
2. Are you using a webinar platform that doesn't require prospects to download software?

Approach and target in a personalised manner

1. Are your invitation emails highly personalised for each target individual?

Drive engagement through the session

1. Do you have plenty of calls to action to help drive engagement?
2. What relevant content can you provide as a resource for further education?
3. Do you have a sales manager or senior leader/influencer to present the webinar?
4. Have you made an allowance for time overrun?

Use live intelligence to guide the session

1. Who is in attendance?
2. How is the audience engaging?
3. What questions are being asked?
4. What assets are being downloaded?

Utilise on demand functions to their fullest advantage

1. Who on your targeted audience list didn't attend?
2. How can the webinar be edited to fit the needs of a specific target individual?