



 RollWorks

The Light at The End of The Funnel:

6 Ways to Rebound
Revenue in A Downturn

The only constant? Change. The only option? Adapt.

As if the world of marketing and sales doesn't change rapidly enough, markets have thrown revenue teams yet another curveball. Downturn, deceleration, inflation, dare we go on? We know these terms aren't just being thrown around in meetings or across the news — they've become a very real part of the day-to-day problems you're now tasked to solve.

You're probably asking yourself: How do we keep up with targets? How do we adjust the plan with budget or team cuts? How do we capitalize on demand while it's hot? How do we become even more agile and adaptable?

And we get it — that can be exhausting (pat yourself on the back for getting through it, you deserve it).

But as marketers, we know a thing or two about the power of narrative — and now's the time for us to flip the script. Our outlooks (and our marketing plans) rest on us focusing on what we can control, not bemoaning what we can't. And that's why we're here — to break down a clear list of things you can get ahead of **today**, to protect your revenue **tomorrow**.

You guessed it — we're here to offer a light at the end of the funnel.



The TL;DR?

You need to hyperfocus on one thing: precision to capture the highest quality in-market opportunities for your revenue teams (and no, vanity drops of high-volume, low-quality leads will not cut it — especially now).



It's time to not just show up, but show value. Let's break down 6 ways you can light up your funnel with ABM strategies despite a downturn:

1

Get on board with a ‘one revenue team’ motion, fast

If you're not a unified marketing, sales, and customer success org (or as we like to call it, a dream GTM team) — it'll show right now, and you can't afford to be slowed down by different goals and operating models. Inefficiency and wasted time/budget needs to be nixed wherever possible, and the good news is you can get there with a little extra attention.

What is misalignment costing you?

You'll need to unite as one revenue team (same targets, same goals, SLAs, MQAs, plays to execute, etc.). If GTM teams are not seeing eye to eye, your investments will be scattered and allocated to anything but your high-fit, in-market prospects. Remember, targeting the right prospects across the entire funnel gives way to a [2.5X higher chance of closing](#) compared to the rest.

That's why ABM is the strategic approach to integrating revenue teams — and it's helped 70% of B2B marketers and sales folk align to close deals faster without having to sacrifice precious budget or inefficient effort in uncertain times. Now, it's time to take action.

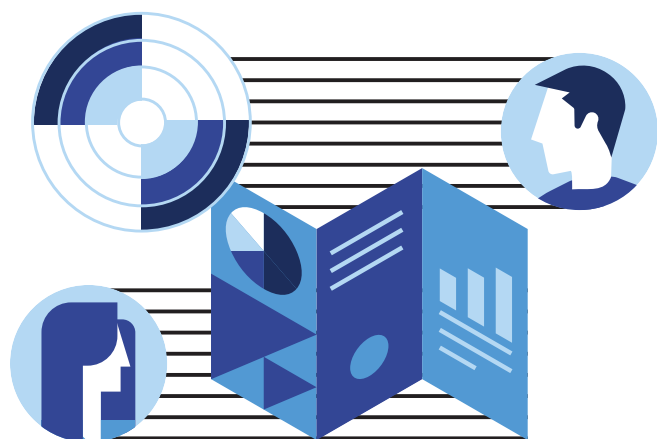
Take stock of where you are today — and create a game plan

You'll hear a lot of fluff out there about alignment resting on meetings or good communication. Don't be mistaken, that is a critical aspect, but won't be the silver bullet alone. You need shared vocabulary, KPIs, data, action plans, etc. To start, see where you rank on this chart to figure out how you can get to the next level.



	BASIC ALIGNMENT	BETTER ALIGNMENT	BEST ALIGNMENT
AUDIENCE	No ICP or TAL	ICP but no TAL	ICP and TAL co-defined and tiered
PROCESS	Teams independent	Handoff enabled (MQL, scoring, description)	Co-created programs, plays, scoring
ACCOUNTABILITY	No SLAs and ad-hoc feedback	Basic SLAs and ad-hoc feedback	Shared goals, SLAs, lots of feedback
SYSTEMS & REPORTING	Discrete tools and reporting	Shared CRM reporting on MQLs	Single source of funnel truth, shared tools
GOALS & KPIS	Marketing and sales goals live independently	Semi-unified funnel with a clear break/handoff between marketing and sales	Shared goals that are reported on as a unit, with no glaring distinction between teams
CULTURE	Two teams, finger pointing	Two teams, meet intermittently	Cooperative, friendly

Once you have a better idea of where you need to focus — you'll be able to act quickly to make changes. While this may seem like a long-term approach, there are actually a few things you can do ASAP to feel impact. The most important thing now? Focus on how you define a sales-ready lead so that your team can be as focused as possible amidst the downturn.



Mastering the hand-over with a focus on quality over volume

Marketing and sales may mistrust one another for a variety of reasons, but historically, it comes down to the handover. And that all starts with how you're defining and managing your marketing/sales funnel in unity.

For organizations where there's a culture of chasing high volumes of leads—and where marketing is accountable for those leads—the notion of quality becomes significantly less important than hitting quota.

When sales teams inherit enough of these poor-fit leads that usually go nowhere, they inevitably blame marketing for failing to deliver what they needed.

And who can blame them? Nobody wants to chase dead ends. But that's precisely what we ask of marketers when we saddle them with aggressive demand gen goals like 25K leads per month. It's even more dispiriting when chasing leads is marketing's primary goal.

Ultimately, the onus is on the organization to rethink its approach to generating new business. That includes taking meaningful steps toward preventing one team from wasting time on things that don't actually serve the other.

That might mean recalibrating goals to support a better handover. In many cases, it means releasing the "all we care about is leads" approach and instead, viewing lead acquisition as one component—and not the driving force—of your overall strategy. Hello, account-based everything.

One pro tip?

Start setting mutual agreement (using data) over definitions of each stage of your journey. This can look different for every organization, which is where custom definitions come into play. Be crystal clear on what defines a hand-off (example: 3 high-value page visits, 2 webinar views, etc.). From there, monitor every other stage of your journey and have agreed upon motions to get in front of each account.



2

Capture & accelerate in-market opportunities by only focusing on the *right* targets

If there's a shift in the market, adjust ICP if needed

There's a chance your target account pool has been disproportionately impacted by markets, and that's a bit of knowledge you should use as power. Rather than closing your eyes and hoping for the best, it's time to re-evaluate your ICP to see if you should redirect focus toward some new segments. For example, if you've been marketing toward a particular industry that now has significantly less budget/stalling deals — you may want to redirect heavier focus on a new segment with more quality opp potential.



We're not saying to pump the breaks on that simmering portion of your ICP, but should you be doubling down budget there? No. Take time to find pockets of opportunity in new segments and add more of this flavor to your TAM, as well as come up with a game plan for surfacing these in-market accounts to your sales teams to follow-up with first.

If marketing & sales is targeting your whole TAM, you're in trouble

While every marketer knows having a clear grasp on your total addressable market (TAM) is crucial to just about any strategy you implement — it can't be where you spread all of your focus. Unless you're in an industry with a hyper-specific TAM as it is, you'll need to get far more zoned in on best-fit accounts. This means not only getting clear on your ideal customer profile (ICP) and building a list of accounts that match, but prioritizing even further.

While a lot of factors can impact how you'll prioritize your marketing dollars and sales hours, tiering is how you'll get most efficient. We're talking about zoning in on which accounts deserve top tier treatment versus those who should be in catch-all programs that take less budget and effort.

No matter what size company you work for, from a single-person startup to a thousand-strong enterprise, there's always more marketing and sales work than people available to do it — especially given a market downturn and pressure on resources. That's where tiering comes in. Tiering is how you prioritize your accounts and scale your efforts. Most marketers would love to reach every single account and buyer individually with highly personalized approaches but strategically settle for scaling the level of personalization based on certain account factors. In a typical ABM environment, this scaling is usually broken down into three groups (tiers):

1:1



A one-to-one approach is the marketing holy grail—an account's buying committee who comes in contact with your brand gets a message tailored specifically to them. This takes a lot of data, a lot of collateral, a lot of ... well, everything.

But personalization isn't just "personalization"—it's not 2010, and adding a prospect's first name or company name to an email greeting isn't going to cut it on its own. In a robust ABM program, personalization means considering an account's unique challenges and tailoring your message to address those specific pain points. That means knowing the obvious firmographic information on every 1:1 account and going deeper than just surface-level detail. And it means producing material more useful to your 1:1 accounts than to any random company that matches their broad description. In essence, it's the closest thing to 1:1 conversation between two humans without actually talking.

1:FEW



The next best step. You might not be able to market individually to every account you want to do business with, but you might be able to personalize your marketing to specific segments, such as "all mid-sized fintech startups in the greater Seattle area who are struggling to find new automotive customers who haven't yet been in touch with sales."

As with 1:1 marketing, 1:few is more personalized than most marketers might assume. Outreach for these targets might not focus on a problem specific to one account, but it should focus on something narrowly defined to the accounts in this tier. If you need a shorthand for how to think about this group, it's everything you would do for 1:1 accounts minus creating a full suite of company-specific collateral. Think "curation rather than creation."


1:MANY



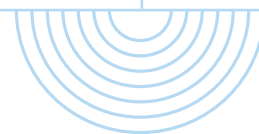
The typical modern marketing approach—you personalize when you can and when it doesn't take too much additional work, but mostly everyone gets about the same stuff and level of attention.

You should still endeavor to personalize as much as you can, usually based on funnel stage, but you may not necessarily be using limited resources to develop the full level of data you need for deep personalization. In other words, if you have the data, and you have the ability to personalize at scale, by all means do it, but don't spend extra resources on the 1:many group to make it more personal than you can.

Here's how you can start thinking about allocating resources and balancing your budget:



	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TAM
Organic (Inbound)	●	●	●	●
Search Engine Marketing	●	●	●	●
Emails (Marketo)	●	●	●	●
Retargeting	●	●	●	●
Account + contact based display	●	●	●	
Social ads	●	●	●	
Content syndication	●	●	●	
Webinars + virtual events	●	●	●	
Chat	●	●	●	
E-gifts (price scales)	●	●		
InMail	●			
Event invites	●			
Custom content + landing pages	●			



Double-down and expand your 'best' segments

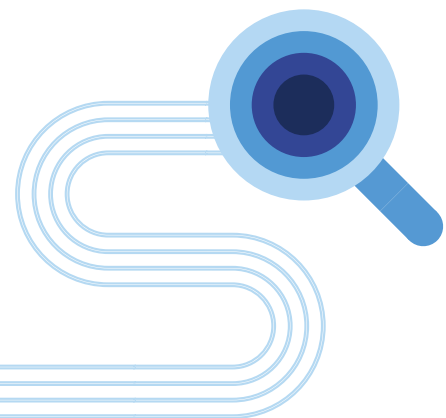
If you have a group of high-fit (ideally scored via machine learning) set of accounts with common attributes, rush to the gold mine. Segments of accounts can be expanded — find ways to get more accounts that mirror these high-fits and prioritize across channels, budget, and sales outreach. Here are a few factors you can consider when honing in on segments:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Tech stack (Where do we have overlap? How can I create stickiness?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry (Which industries are hot for us right now? Which can we double down on?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Company size (Are some companies more at risk than others right now? Where are we strong?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Persona (Which buyer's do we need to pull into the conversation? How can we go multi-threaded while putting most attention toward top buyers?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Funnel stage (Are we seeing cohorts trapped in certain stages over others? Can we tap into a subset like 'gone dark' or 'high-engagers'?)*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recent news (Do we have accounts with new funding? Folks taking new jobs?)*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intent (Are some keywords surging over others? High searches on review sites?)*
<input type="checkbox"/>	And...the list goes on!

**These 3 are going to be hype-important in a downturn — these are your levers go get in-market accounts ASAP*

The key here is to see the endless possibilities to get down to your most RTB (ready-to-buy) accounts, and prioritize efforts accordingly. This is where having a clear picture of account data is critical across marketing and sales, and to keep all your touches coordinated. Don't be afraid to experiment, but also don't be afraid to double down on a few combinations of these attributes that continue to show big wins for you. Rise, repeat, and reap the revenue rewards.

If you want to take a deeper dive on getting hyper-focused on the right targets, get a copy of our [B2B Audience Building Workbook](#) chock-full of customizable templates to save you time and effort.



3

Use data to take the next best action (quick)

Data, data, data — a term we hear night and day as marketers and sellers. There's data that identifies targets, data that they push back to you, data you get from their actions, data to report on their actions... the list goes on. While all of this data is critical, it's important to parse out which data is most important to inform your next best action when you need to be more nimble than ever to beat the competition for in-market accounts.

IMAGINE TWO SCENARIOS:

Scenario A:

You have a prospect showing high-intent and high-engagement and they just scoped out a high-value product page. That day your assigned seller gets a notification on all this activity, and can prioritize (and personalize) outreach to make sure they influence the buyer before competition can swoop in.

Scenario B:

You have a prospect showing high-intent and high-engagement and they just scoped out a high-value product page. Your sales rep has no clue. Your competition sees their purchase intent and starts coordination marketing/sales activities toward the account and swoops in.

We all know which scenario you'd prefer in a market like this (yes, the answer is A).



That's the sort of data you need to ensure your marketing and sales teams have their hands on — where each account is in the funnel (from unaware to post-sale), what content/messaging is resonating with them specifically, and how to coordinate timely and personalized follow-up.

Here's a couple ways to think about getting that data and acting on it:

With this data, marketers can quickly adapt and put their budget and effort toward the right accounts and sellers can coordinate their follow-up in sync. Without this, your competition will swoop in. You need to be able to act fast and show impact quickly.

Want to uncover quick plays you can take with this data? We've got [20 easy-to-implement ABM plays just](#) for you.

Fit data isn't enough — the ultimate goal right now is to zone in on high-fit, high-intent, and high-engagement — make sure you have a way to scale and prioritize these audiences

Give marketing and sales teams unified views into the entire account journey — allow them to see where there's a backup or a quick progression (ex: do we have a set of accounts stuck in the funnel? Can marketing trigger a campaign to this segment, and sales get alerted when they've engaged to continue the momentum?)

Make sure your account lists can sync to dynamically based on changes in journey stages and automatically adjust campaigns accordingly

Allow sellers to take a deep dive view of each action along one account's journey to see what actions were most successful so they can not only repeat this across other accounts, but personalize follow-up messaging

Send alerts for accounts that have the highest level of engagement so that overworked/overwhelmed sellers know where to allocate their efforts (no time to waste on low-interest accounts in times like this)

Make sure all of this data is flowing through your day-to-day systems like Salesforce, HubSpot, Marketo, etc. — data is only as good as its accessibility and integration in your workflow

Have the ability to integrate your full MarTech stack to enable multi-touch, cross-team plays — just one channel doesn't cut it

4

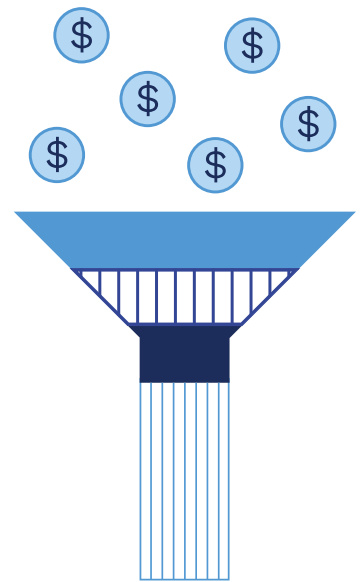
Optimize full-funnel channels for better returns with ‘ABMification’

There’s no question that when markets change and teams try to do more with less — marketing mix and budget become a hot topic. Which programs should we keep investing in? Where should we pull back? And of course, this is a super nuanced topic to try to coat with a one-size-fits-all answer.

Each GTM team has different priorities and challenges — naturally impacting whether they invest or pull back in certain areas. The top tip that applies to all? Don’t go cutting back fully on one channel as a whiplash response. We’ve seen how this works out in the past, and the results caused loss in market share, slipping behind competition...you get the picture.

The best thing to do is to optimize your channels to get the most out of your investments, versus fully pull back your investments. How can you do that? Something we like to call ‘ABMifying’ channels and holding vendors to a more scrutiny in the quality they’re producing.

Here’s a few quick examples of how you can turn old school, higher-waste efforts into higher-return, precise campaigns:



Tip #1: ABMify content syndication



OLD-SCHOOL DEMAND GEN:

Send assets to content syndication vendor targeting your industry, hope for high-value leads to trickle in. Rely on sales to follow-up with their discretion.

ABM-IFY IT:

First, battle-test your vendor. While they typically ‘promise’ to bring you leads with certain characteristics (usually title only), they often miss the mark. As ABM matures, syndication vendors are increasingly more open to delivering leads only from accounts within your TAL. We call them ‘pre-qualified’ prospects from within your accounts.

Stop paying for volume only coming from buyers that aren’t a true fit for your product or service. It will only wreak havoc on your lower funnel numbers. Instead, your sales team will now be following up with mutually-agreed upon, high-value targets.



Tip #2: ABMify e-gifting

OLD-SCHOOL DEMAND GEN:

Send assets to content syndication vendor targeting your industry, hope for high-value leads to trickle in. Rely on sales to follow-up with their discretion.

ABM-IFY IT:

Pluck the best of the best from your database, those with a higher fit and more ready-to-buy signals to focus your re-engagement efforts on. These should be TAL contacts. And rather than offer an 'ask', offer them something with no strings like a lunch gift card.



Tip #3: ABMify digital advertising

OLD-SCHOOL DEMAND GEN:

See the entire internet as your oyster (when you should only be going for the pearl), slap general messages and CTAs to hopefully catch your ideal audience through retargeting. Follow-up with every conversion.

ABM-IFY IT:

First, if you're not retargeting — you should be. Digital spend has gone up 20% since the pandemic hit, and for good reason; it's how you can reach the right buyers at the right time while they WFH.

But you shouldn't be doing retargeting alone. First, start by proactively running 'pre-targeting' campaigns against your TAL to control those coming to your site. Don't leave your site traffic up to chance.

Once you've driven your TAL to your site, direct your retargeting toward those same site visitors to enhance chances of moving through the funnel. From there, have dynamic campaigns that change the message/offer throughout each stage of the funnel to accelerate deal cycles and support your sales team to be top of mind in a crowded digital market.

5

Don't just stop at the opp: embrace post-sale

While acquiring new customers and generating high-quality opportunities should be at the top of a marketer's list to support the revenue team, that doesn't mean it ends there. Adaptable marketing and sales teams that can build full lifecycle impact are the ones that thrive in changing markets — especially now.

Want to know what could be costing you up to [25x more in budget](#)? Putting all your eggs into the 'acquiring new customers' basket. That's right — if you turned some of that demand gen magic toward retaining customers, you could save yourself a ton of time, energy, and yes...budget! You'll also want to get more multi-threaded than ever (including marketing to a broader buying committee) if any of your contacts were let go or reorganized. You'll need to put extra effort into securing your account.

But we're not just talking about retaining customers — [30% of your revenue](#) could be coming from expansion revenue, which is money brought in from upselling or cross-selling to existing customers. Expansion revenue is scalable, sustainable, and a surefire way to consistently grow your business year over year.



While you want to be keeping your eyes out for a few customer retention indicators you can look to combat customer churn, such as a decline in annual recurring revenue (ARR), poor product adoption, change in communication, and increase in complaints, you also should be looking for areas of opportunity to expand into accounts.

Here are a few plays you can put into place to not only retain, but upsell:

Retention Play #1: *Low Product Usage*

Indicator: Low product adoption score

ABM Strategy:

- Segment audience for more personalized, targeted advertising content and messaging that will resonate with them
- Enroll in an educational ad and email series to deliver timely, targeted information to your subscribers
- Launch in-app messaging to offer support regarding the underutilized features
- Align with customer service management (CSM) to strategize and launch marketing initiatives (such as email or social media) to boost low product adoption score

Retention Play #2: *Customer Showing Interest in Competitors*

Indicator: Intent data surging on competitor keyword

ABM Strategy:

- Monitor intent keywords around key competitors
- Align with product marketing management (PMM) and CSM teams to better understand your product's value proposition and turn it into a compelling, competitive message
- Enroll customers in a multi-channel campaign to communicate value, such as ads, email marketing, and e-gifting to be present and sway their decision email or social media) to boost low product adoption score

Expansion Play #1: *Accounts Binging Content*

Indicator: Increase in account score and engagement with high-value product pages

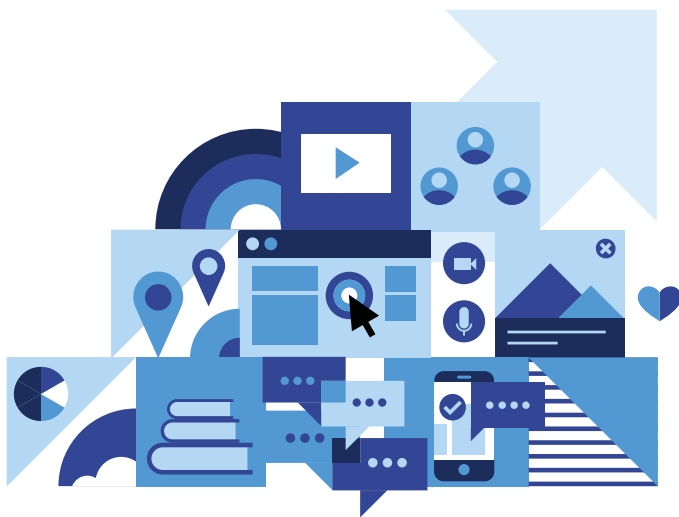
ABM Strategy:

- Segment groups by content category to target more effectively based on their interests
- Create a product-oriented ad and email nurture campaign to help guide them through the benefits they could get from other departments adopting your product or increasing their package
 - » Invite them to a lunch-and-learn during which you can provide additional product information and get to know both them and their needs better. Make sure you follow up after the event, too, to demonstrate persistence and prove you were listening.

6

Break up with any old-school tactics that lack precision

If this message hasn't become abundantly clear, now's the time to not just focus on what you can start doing — it's also the time to focus on what you should stop doing. That's one of the silver linings markets, pandemics, and the like have brought about for marketers: a forcing function for change. While this growth may not come in the prettiest or most convenient package, it's essential to pushing marketers toward smarter, more impactful strategies.



Whether it was adapting to GDPR years ago, eliminating 'spray and pray' batch and blasting email marketing, sloughing off in-person events temporarily in 2020, doubling down (or shall we say 1000xing down?) on virtual during the pandemic, embracing micro-content over 400 page 'ultimate' guides...the list goes on — we've done it. Now's the time to take stock of assumptions you've made, strategies you've clung to, and embrace precision over all else. And the way you'll do that? Account-based.

“Forrester predicts that, by 2025, account-based marketing will become the main way most B2B companies identify, plan, manage, and measure buying and post-sale activity”

The data you have at your fingertips from an account to contact level has grown insurmountably over the years, allowing you to be that much more precise across the entire funnel with an ABM approach. You no longer need to build endless amounts of keyword targeted content or vanity lead-gen programs and 'wait' for a high volume of 'leads' to find you — you have the power to personalize and get in front of them when they're ready. With steps #1-5, this should be more clear than ever.

You have the power to see a light at the end of the funnel, but don't be too hard on yourself on your way there — we'll get there together.