



The ABM Platform Buyer's Guide

A comprehensive guide for B2B marketers on why they need an ABM platform and how to evaluate one

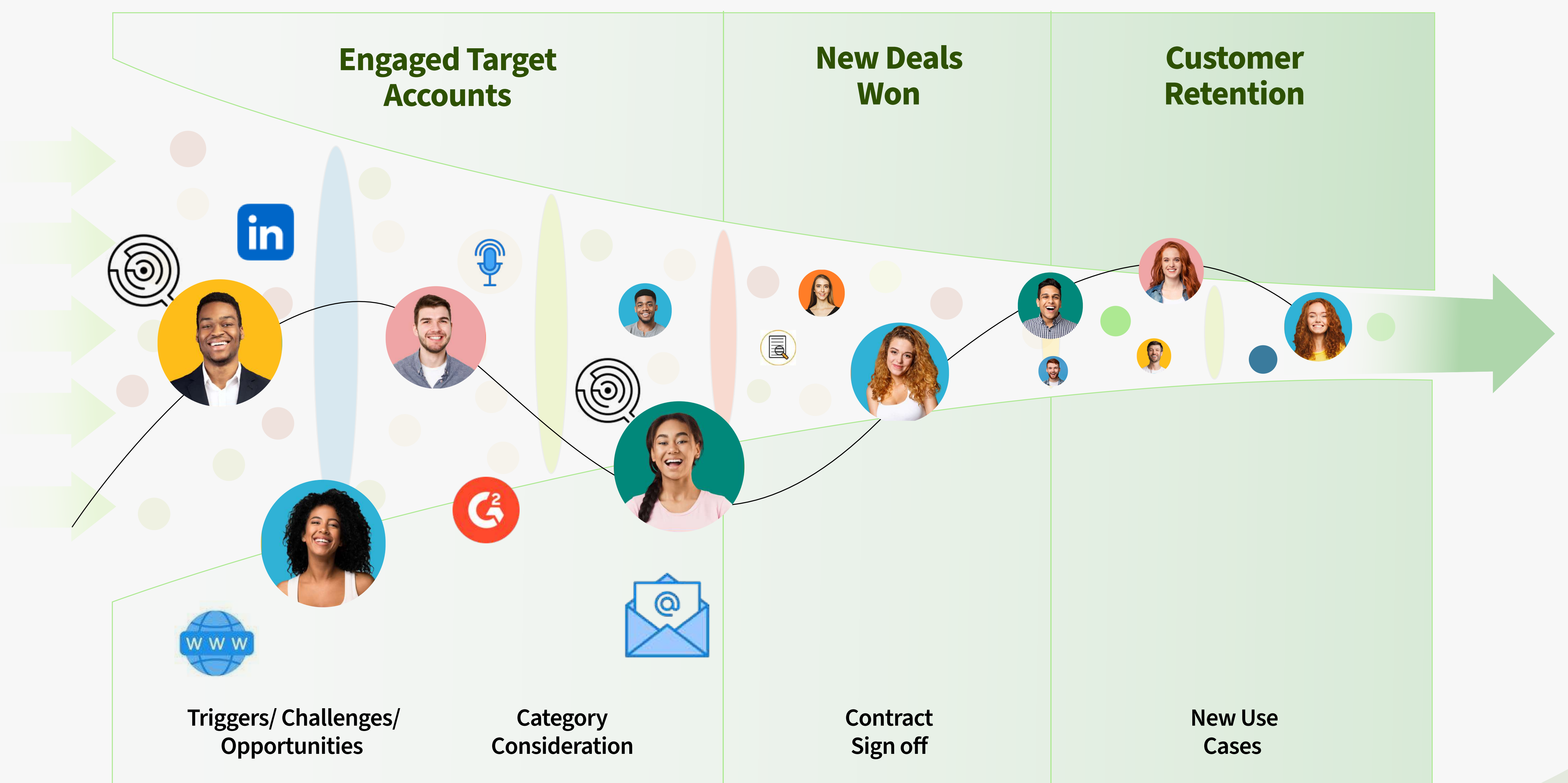


Table of Contents

03	An Introduction to ABM in 2023
05	Unveiling the Secret Sauce: The Ingredients of a Successful ABM Program
08	The Current MarTech Stack is Broken
12	Bridging the Gap Between GTM Teams
13	How ABM Platform Empowers Different ABM Roles
14	Finding the Right Platform to Support Your ABM Maturity Level
20	Conclusion

83% of B2B marketers are either piloting or in the early stages of implementing ABM programs

Year	Number of people in the workforce
2019	17
2021	27



Over the decades, the B2B buying process has become increasingly digital and self-served. It is dominated by digital word-of-mouth and driven by personalized experiences. For buyers, it's your word against their peers. They're demanding tailored experiences, not standalone interactions. Clearly, this shift is impacting how marketers think about ABM programs in 2023.

Throughout the course of ABM evolution, many point solutions have cropped up to support ABM execution. But tools, no matter how effective, can only help at the tactical level. Before GTM teams can unlock lasting ABM success, they need to first address and overcome the operational roadblocks at the organizational level.

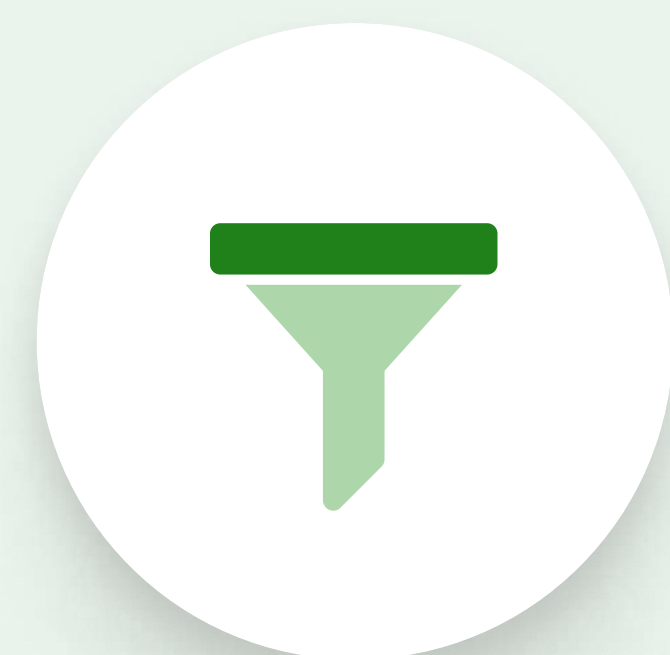
This comprehensive guide will help you deepen your understanding of:

- Unveiling the Secret Sauce: The Ingredients of a Successful ABM Program
- The technological shift from lead scoring to account scoring
- How ABM platforms align and empower the GTM teams
- Choosing the right vendor to match your ABM maturity level
- A platform checklist to help you pick the right solution



Unveiling the Secret Sauce: The Ingredients of a Successful ABM Program

The effectiveness of ABM programs has been proven time and again.
Here are some stats on why ABM has emerged as the key revenue driver.



59%

significant increase
in per-account pipeline



57%

significant increase
in per-account revenue



37%

highest ROI of any
marketing approach



69%

significant increase
in cross-sell, upsell

But what does it take to make an ABM program successful?

ABM is not a tactic. It is a strategic approach that aligns sales, marketing, and customer success teams to organizational goals. ABM success requires a mindset shift from MQLs to championing customers and promoting advocacy. It is important to focus on the entire customer lifecycle rather than just on lead scoring.

There are many challenges involved in achieving the mindset shift across different teams.
These challenges include:

Sales challenges beyond conversions	Marketing challenges beyond personalization	Customer success challenges beyond onboarding
Moving from MQLs to high-touch account selling	Creating a cohesive journey for each account at different stages of the buying process	Building relationship with other teams of the same account to understand their needs
Identifying which accounts are ready to buy	Aligning with sales on target accounts	Identifying cross-selling opportunities
Ensuring personalized selling approach for each account	Driving engagement throughout the entire customer lifecycle	Nurturing product advocates for account expansion

Despite the common interest, neither of the three teams have access or visibility into the systems of other teams. They're often too siloed, leading to unexpected challenges and inefficiencies. And this misalignment is the biggest roadblock to ABM success.

Get your sales, marketing and customer success teams aligned

The secret sauce to better ABM outcomes is a company-wide alignment on goals, people, processes, and metrics among revenue teams. ABM platforms provide a single source of truth for all teams regarding account information, journeys, trials, and triumphs. Before we discuss ABM platforms, here's a framework for you to get your foundation right.

MAAP: A Smarter Framework for ABM Success

Remember, ABM is a team sport, not a singles match. If revenue teams remain siloed, it's game over even before taking a swing. Here's a framework to consider what matters the most for account-based marketing and sales.

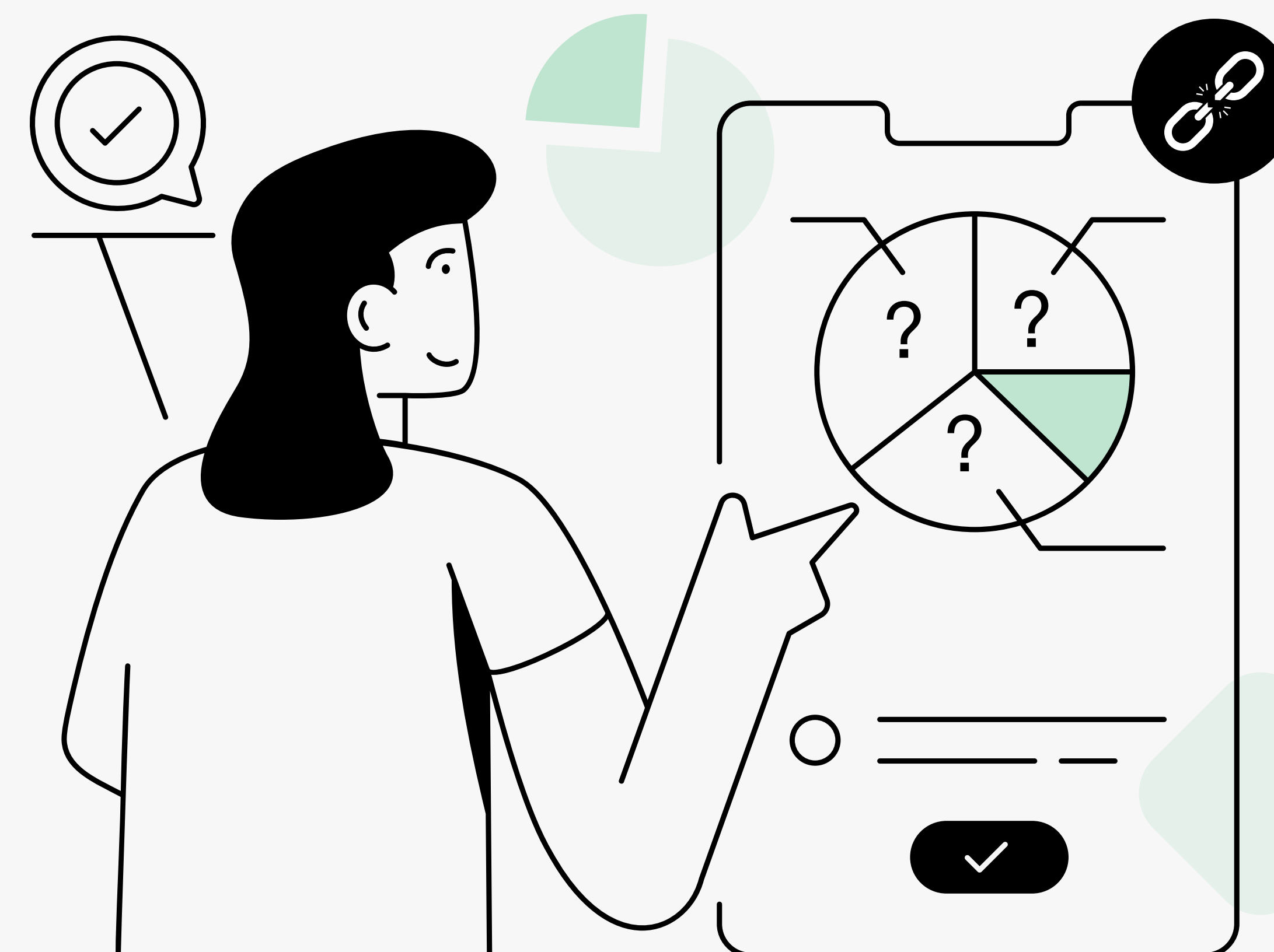
1. **Mindset shifts:** Revenue teams must transition from lead-driven to account-first targeting.
2. **Aims and Objectives:** All revenue teams should work towards a common goal, with clearly defined processes and KPIs.
3. **Alignment and Prioritization:** Sales and marketing should align at the account level, sharing the target list, ICPs, hi-touch experience and other relevant data.
4. **Process and technology:** With automated processes and account insights, GTM teams can leverage technology like ABM platforms to capitalize on the right timing.

More on how the MAAP framework can facilitate ABM success in BambooBox's [The State of ABM in 2023](#).

The Current MarTech Stack is Broken

No more point solutions. It's time for an all-in-one fix.

For the longest time, tools like CRMs and MAPs have been at the forefront of ABM executions. However, today's B2B landscape demands more sophisticated and preferably AI-powered tools for quicker sales activations.



“ABM platforms and B2B customer data platforms are enabling more relevant buyer interactions. New tactics such as intent monitoring, conversation automation, and digital audience management are improving buyer engagement.”

-Forrester Vision Report

ABM platforms are designed to support the automation and execution of such strategies via predictive analytics, campaign management, account expansion, personalized outreach, and more. By filtering the best-fit customers from a bunch of contacts, they go directly for the most valuable accounts so opportunities can be created, not waited upon.

Marketing Automation Platform vs. ABM Platform

MAPs are designed to support lead generation but this reactive approach is not appropriate for account-based marketing practices.

How does MAP help?

- Track and manage customer interactions through the lifecycle
- Contact-level interactions
- Campaign management and automation
- Lead scoring
- Multi-channel analytics & reporting
- Built-in engagement and nurturing

Where does MAP fail?

- Single customer view and customer insights
- Account-level engagement
- 1st and 3rd party intent data
- Account scoring and prioritization
- Account-based personalization, campaigning, and advertising
- Sales and marketing alignment
- Next best actions
- Marketing attribution to revenue and channel performance

Customer Relationship Management vs. ABM Platform

The CRM is the ultimate sales hub, capturing all sales activity and pipeline numbers. However, because it is built specifically for sales, it is limited to firmographics, and doesn't capture account engagement, insights into marketing channels, and orchestration capabilities.

How does CRM help?

- Sales team focused account activities tracked
- Sales pipeline management
- Contact management
- Opportunity management
- Demographic and firmographic segmentation
- 360-degree customer view
- Sales triggers and engagement
- Pulls data from CDP

Where does CRM fail?

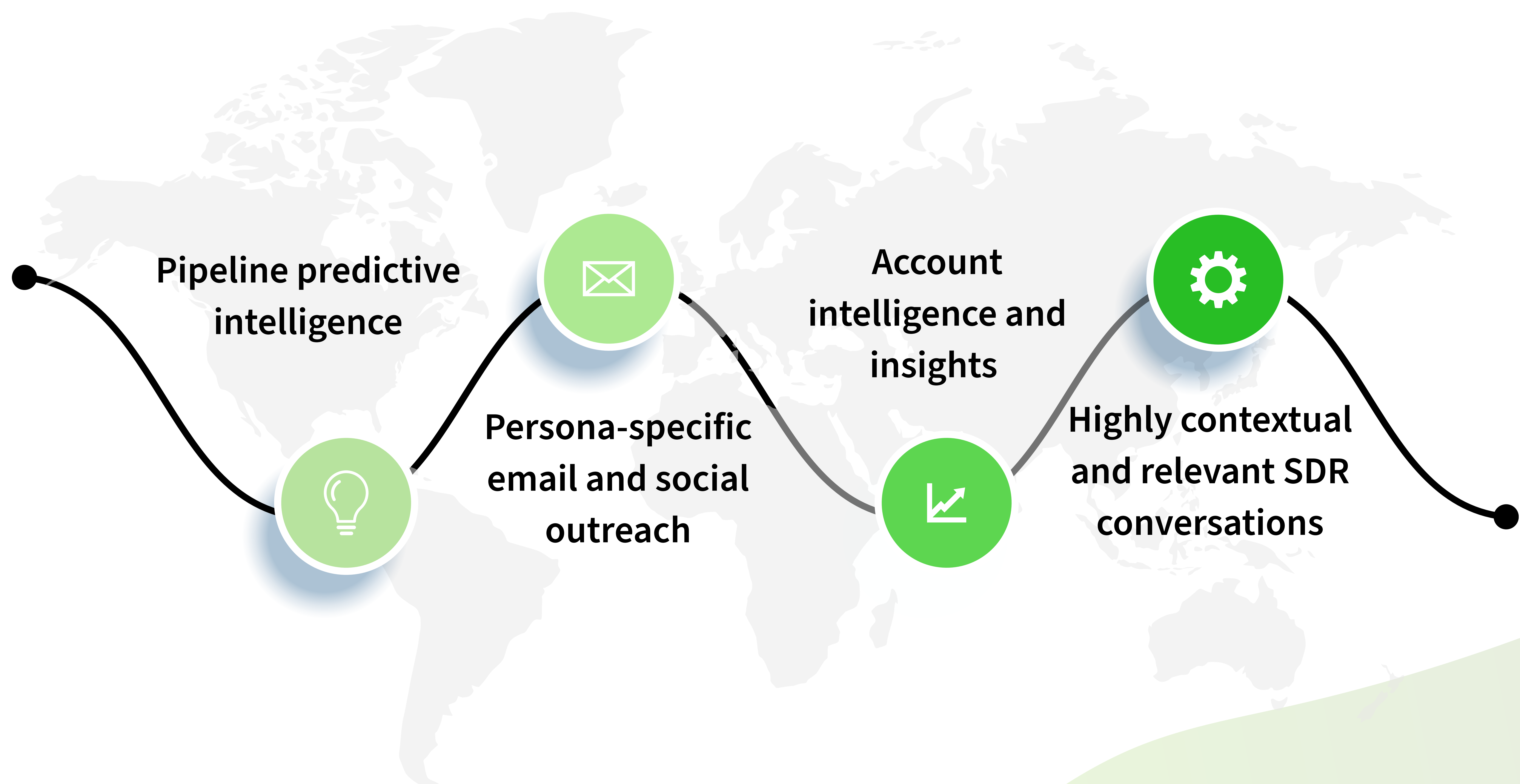
- Marketing focused engagement tracking
- Account intelligence and insights
- 1st and 3rd party intent data
- Account scoring and prioritization
- Account-based personalization, campaigning, and advertising
- Campaign management
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Harness the power of predictive engine

From “Hi <first name>” to hi-touch account interactions in real-time.

Building a sustainable, predictable, and repeatable pipeline is no longer a pipe dream for ABM players — with real-time analytics and insights provided by AI-enabled ABM platforms.

Today’s ABM platforms come fortified with impressive machine learning functionality and predictive recommendations relevant to buyer preferences, behaviors, and intent signals. In real-time, such advanced AI capabilities can elevate personalization efforts to include:



Bridging the Gap Between GTM Teams

When reputation, relationships, and revenue are on the line.



ABM success often hinges on how cleverly revenue teams can break silos and pivot to the buying group dynamics and demands.

Technology can aid this. ABM platforms are architected to create cohesive ecosystems for tracking and recording account interactions and engagements. As a result, they can facilitate cross-functional collaboration, process coordination, and account data integration to help ABM teams work towards common revenue targets.

Now, while these issues are easily solvable with ABM platforms at the tactical level, sales and marketing need to align strategically to see successful outcomes. Here's how.

- **Have a single source of truth:** At the operational level, standardizing processes across the customer lifecycle with best practices can augment alignment and enable frictionless collaboration.
- **Galvanize teams through shared vision and KPIs:** Align sales and marketing using shared business goals and account metrics like pipeline velocity, momentum, close rates (revenue), account-level engagement (relationship), NPS, and brand perception (reputation).
- **Optimize for all opportunity types:** Unified revenue teams will help you identify opportunities beyond acquisition, from cross-selling and upselling opportunities to post-sale growth and retention.

How ABM Platform Empowers Different ABM Roles

With a sophisticated, AI-enabled ABM platform, all stakeholders can track progress, ensure alignment, and get actionable insights via a single dashboard view of the pipeline.

Operations managers can use robust analytics and reporting to have a pulse on the day-to-day pipeline progress.

SDRs will have a deeper knowledge of the account's actions and intent signals to drive a higher conversion rate.

Center of Excellence (CoE), a committee of executives, will have a high-level overview of all ABM operations to aid and augment the sales motions.

Content teams can keenly observe buying group behavior to create relevant and tailored assets.

Marketing can bank on audience segmentation, firmographics, demographics, and technographic to drive engagement and build success kits for sales.

Customer success can monitor customer activity post-sales and communicate content/product training needs they might have.

Channel experts can harness the campaign management functionality of ABM platforms to maximize engagement.

Finding the Right Platform to Support Your ABM Maturity Level

No - It doesn't start with looking at the top features.

Beyond savvy features and predictive capabilities, choosing the right platform should be about finding the right functional and architectural fit for your ABM objectives. When choosing a vendor, look for:

Functionality offered (Do they align with your ABM objectives and program maturity?)

Here are the must-have functionalities for Successful ABM program execution.

- AI-driven pipeline intelligence
- Multi-channel campaign activation
- Integrations with MAPs and CRM systems
- Technographic, intent, and firmographic data enrichment
- Account journey analytics
- Ease of onboarding
- Insights on account-level engagement
- Predictive recommendations
- ABM performance analytics and attribution

Configurability and flexibility of the program (How well can the software fit the needs and functions of the ongoing ABM programs?)

The most easily configurable ABM platform will offer the quickest time to value. The higher the degree of configurability with the built-in workflows and tools, the more user-friendly the platform will be now – and even in the future.

Support extended before and after sale (From custom onboarding and training to strategic consultation on demand?)

Ease of onboarding: Customer onboarding is usually the final litmus test. You want to look at distinct capabilities up-close and determine the value they can bring to your ABM programs. Now, different ABM vendors will offer different onboarding timelines, ranging from a few weeks to a couple of months. But depending on your business use cases and roles involved, you can steer the process at convenience and specify the type of features, automation, and use cases you'd like to witness.

Support & Success: Ongoing customer support should be non-negotiable. If things go south, you may want to lean on the technology provider for strategic help. A vendor offering comprehensive and personalized training services is a blessing to count on. And if they can provide strategic consultations on demand, then you've hit the jackpot.

Actionable insights (Does the platform offer predictive support for next best actions?)

A powerful ABM platform will help you create cards for activities that are critical to more buyers at different stages. Discover the next best step with AI-enabled recommendations.

Your Platform Checklist

Narrow down the search to the best-fit ABM platform with the following questions.

Deployment

- ☐ How quickly is time to value delivered?
- ☐ How often will the performance reviews happen?
- ☐ Who will be responsible for driving ABM tool adoption?
- ☐ How easy is the platform to use?
- ☐ Consider customer testimonials for post-install performance

Platform Configurability and Flexibility

- ☐ Is the platform configurable to specific business needs?
- ☐ Can you configure prospect activities that make the biggest impact on their buyer journey?
- ☐ Does the platform learn from your historical data?
- ☐ Does the platform integrate with your Martech stack?
- ☐ Understand the product roadmap to see how the platform fits in your evolving goals

Onboarding

- ☐ How long will the onboarding go for?
- ☐ Which internal stakeholders should be present for the onboarding?
- ☐ What resources are available to support the process?
- ☐ Do they provide customized support for each ABM function?

Customer Success

- ☐ Will the vendor provide strategic consultation when needed?
- ☐ Is there a dedicated customer success manager?
- ☐ What type of support is extended in the contract?
- ☐ What's the turnaround time for grievances?
- ☐ Is customer support available 24x7?

Actionable Insights

- ☐ Understand what information does it capture from your CRM
- ☐ Check whether you can create cards for account, contact, and each activity
- ☐ Can you share the insights with other team members?
- ☐ Can you create alerts to ensure your teams stay on top of key activities?

Identifying Accounts

- ☐ Ask what type of data is used to create a target account list
- ☐ What is the match rate?
- ☐ How often is the intent data refreshed?
- ☐ Can it mine intent signals from existing CRM data?
- ☐ Is the data sync offered dynamic or static?
- ☐ Can the platform integrate with your website to capture 1st party data?

Managing and Segmenting Data

- ☐ How is the data sourced, and through which providers?
- ☐ Ask about the production timeline of the dataset
- ☐ How does the platform aggregate and move data between different systems?
- ☐ Does it come with built-in capabilities to clean and enrich data?
- ☐ What is the process for data enrichment?
- ☐ What is the process for segmenting data?
- ☐ How to leverage segments to drive specific business outcomes like upselling and logo acquisition?
- ☐ How is the accuracy of data checked and validated if it changes constantly?
- ☐ Does the vendor provide technographic data along with demographic and firmographic data?

Orchestration

- ☐ How are campaigns designed, launched, and managed across different channels?
- ☐ How are buyer journeys orchestrated?
- ☐ What channels are used to deliver the sales alerts, and how often?
- ☐ Are the buyer journeys driven entirely by AI- from identifying signals to sending personalized outreach?
- ☐ Does it provide insights on the next best actions to deepen account engagement?
- ☐ Can it make buying-stage predictions?
- ☐ How can sales and marketing teams view and act on the buying stage predictions?

Pipeline Analytics and Reporting

- ☐ Take a walkthrough of the performance dashboards
- ☐ Inquire about each display metric and what they imply
- ☐ Understand the best ways revenue teams can track and interpret the metrics to optimize performance
- ☐ Ask how revenue teams can access and leverage engagement data
- ☐ Do the reports demonstrate how predictions are impacting conversion rates?
- ☐ Can the reports help identify internal inefficiencies and support internal training?

Conclusion

ABM Enabled by AI

No more siloed marketing. Develop an actionable view of key accounts. Improve time to value.

The next decade of account-based experiences will be driven by ABM platforms, with a prediction engine sitting on top.

AI-enabled platforms are already surpassing traditional platforms by delivering value in half the time. They can analyze diverse datasets to provide deeper insights into account actions and offer hyper-personalized experiences at scale. This type of account intelligence can help reduce the lead-to-revenue cycle dramatically. That's why ABM platforms enabled by AI should be non-negotiable.

So, when you start looking for a solution to your business-specific ABM needs, remember the MAAP framework and leverage the platform checklist to make a sound choice.



About BambooBox

Our ABM platform helps B2B marketing and sales teams achieve consistent, predictable, and aligned pipeline goals. Our modern ABM platform delivers value in 1/6th of the time as compared to traditional ABM platforms.

FASTEST-GROWING B2B TEAMS CHOOSE BAMBOOBOX TO GROW FASTER



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