Focusing on the 3 Ps for ABM Revenue at Scale

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The pandemic has sharpened everyone's focus. With no more face-to-face options, go-to-markets have been digitally transformed. Yet, for a lot of B2B teams, sales quotas have stayed roughly the same. More than ever, it's all about the revenue; the nice-to-haves have had to go. Sounds like a job for a whole lot better marketing. Sounds like a real need for the promise of ABM.

But while ABM 1.0 was supposed to be about more revenue, all too many practitioners have been stopping short. Maybe they've concentrated on only a few accounts -- ensuring limited overall impact. Or they've emphasized advertising tactics -- with minimal contribution to pipeline. Right now, your XDRs, Inside Sales, and especially your Field Sales folks need marketing's help. And since they're all focused on accounts, you need to be too. It's time for ABM 2.0 -- because we all need it and we're all in this together. To help better focus your marketing team on your salespeople's immediate needs, here are 3 ways to inject core ABM principles into everything you do. Use them to find more demand, manage it more effectively, and close more revenue across all of your targeted accounts.

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1 Prioritization for every target list

In ABM 1.0, everything revolved around a single very special account list. The companies on that list were the ones that mattered because someone at the top said so. You built a program and applied it to all of those accounts. ABM 2.0 starts from a very different place. In 2.0, instead of beginning from the list and paying equal attention to everyone on it, you turn things around by putting the identification of real opportunity – active demand -- first. Prioritizing opportunities makes real sense because that's where the fastest, most predictable path to revenue actually lies. If you can get better at identifying opportunities – finding more of them and handling them more effectively – you've got your best chance of closing more revenue.

You could apply this opportunity-prioritization principle only to your ABM 1.0 account list and stop there. You'd certainly become more productive within that list. But why stop? Since your whole GTM is essentially made up of target account lists, extending opportunity prioritization to all those lists will deliver similar productivity gains at a much greater scale!

Pursuing opportunities instead of dispositioning leads

Achieving opportunity-based prioritization does require some changes and additions, beginning with two big ones. First is that, given the existential importance of the "opportunity" to a healthy pipeline (if it's not an opportunity, it can't be in the pipe), creating and managing opps can't be left solely to the discretion of each individual salesperson. On straight logic alone, we can all recognize that opportunities exist in accounts regardless of whether or not a salesperson has entered them into the system. And since they're critical to everyone on the GTM team – their existence informs what each of us is doing outbound to an account – you need to operationalize them differently to turn them into an asset everyone can address more effectively.

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More and more teams are implementing this concept by modifying their CRMs to support it. They're planning their years and quarters based on the opportunity potential inside those accounts. Whether as zero-dollar ops, zero-stage probabilities or otherwise, they're building these potential opportunities into how they plan to go after these accounts. They're putting much more specific targets into CRM for their folks to aim at. Instead of passing individual people as MQLs, the world is starting to understand that everyone should be working, and passing, better-qualified opportunities. With the opps set up in their systems, they're then using our prospect-level intent data to populate the opportunity with the right opt-in people to go after and insights to tap into. In short, they're prioritizing their lists first based on where there should be opportunities and then refining this down based on the behavioral data – real purchase intent -- that tells them where the live opps actually are.

The 3 P's of ABM 2.0 – Expanding Marketing's role in sales enablement

Prioritization	Preservation	Personalization
Of specific accounts, and within them, of the specific people and their particular behaviors.	Of data in the account & people records – everyone on the team needs this stuff. And then on the Opportunity!	Not just feel-good nice-to-knows, business-needs-based relevance, building trust from the start!

2 Preservation of information everyone needs

Recent research from TechTarget/MarketOne has shown that the sales managers who've adjusted best to current conditions are paying much closer attention to the activities of their teams and the usage of their systems. They've realized that to optimize; they've got to have better visibility into exactly what their people are doing and how it's working. With the transformation to an all-digital reality that all GTM teams are grappling with, the best ones are becoming more data-driven than ever before. There are two secrets to coming up to speed here. The first is that there's a lot of new tech out there to help your team automate the capture and retention of what you're all doing, whether it be on the phone, in email, on your website, by marketing, sales, customer success, et al. That's a great start: to preserve all the 1st-party engagement data you're creating then making it available to inform subsequent outreach.

Preserving prospect data

Just as important on the "preserve" front is what you do with the 2nd-party data sources you should be accessing. Rather than focusing aggressively where *clusters of demand* are seen – multiple people at an account showing interest – you've likely been training your outbound and inbound teams to move on too quickly. In the old days (maybe just a few short months ago), if an SDR didn't get through to a lead, he/she might negatively disposition it and immediately ignore any further insights on that account (until it came around again for another cadence – and that'd be too late!).

With TechTarget's 2nd-party opt-in prospect-level intent data used together with the as yet un-populated/unqualified opportunities described above, teams should be adding names to the opportunity and working it harder to break in -- because you know it's there and it's happening now! By writing more of this data to the opportunity, they can then supply their AE colleagues with everything needed to run far more productive initial meetings. Because our prospect-level intent data shows you the right accounts, the right people and exactly what they care about, by setting up your processes to preserve all this data, you'll both focus your AEs on the best opportunities and save them a ton of time in their meeting prep and multi-threading efforts.

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3 Personalization means "business-relevant"

Personalization in B2B is very different from B2C. In most of B2C, it's usually about buying something right now. It's about what you've purchased in the past, what others who "look" like you have also bought, etc. It's transactional – a deal that's happening right now. It has a lot to do with demographics – your age, your gender, your community.

In contrast, B2B is about more complex, more costly decisions that are neither made in the moment nor by individual people. Individual demographics have little or no bearing here. What matters is what's going on in the industry, in the prospect's specific company and amongst the team trying to solve a challenge. Personalization in B2B tech requires being relevant to your prospects' business situation and the efforts they're making to improve or evolve their company's infrastructure.

Better personalization for marketing

For marketers, access to opt-in prospect-level intent opens up broad new avenues into accounts and people they wouldn't otherwise know about. When you have the people and you know exactly what they care about, you can easily create powerful campaigns and nurtures using smart lists built around your solutions' most powerful value propositions. Thus configured, the intent data platform will automatically feed in those people who are actively looking for solutions with those specific attributes. Millions of emails have proven that prospects will respond when targeted in this timely, relevant, highly "personalized" fashion. They do this because you're helping them solve a problem they currently have.

Better personalization for sales

For many salespeople, LinkedIn has seemed like a godsend. In it, they can easily find professional details about practically anyone in business. Paired with accurate contact information, it's at least one leg up for an attempt at cold outreach. But the problem still is that you really don't know anything about what that person is actually up to right now. And it's far too easy for less-experienced users to mishandle the available information and come off sounding impolite or worse. For example – praising someone about their achievements based on their profile is a lot like a car salesman praising you for deep knowledge of a car's performance statistics – it's salesy; it's smarmy; it rarely works.

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What's more, in these WFH times, most professionals have even less time for chit chat. They're in video calls all day long trying to manage the initiatives that will keep their companies on track. Real B2B personalization is about making your outreach relevant to the business challenges currently impacting your prospect. That's the information contained in opt-in prospect-level intent data about each member of the team who's involved in an active buyer's journey. So instead of beginning with LinkedIn as the go-to for call prep, your sellers need to begin from what the prospects' own research efforts are telling you.

Once you've tweaked your CRM to properly handle the evolved opportunity concept, by populating those ops with prospect-level intent, you're functionally ready to personalize better at every touch point. By training your inside and field sales teams to find and use the data, you'll save them time in their own prospecting research and they'll begin to pay closer attention to what's relevant to the people on those active buying teams. By enabling sellers with pursuit and messaging guidance – pre-packaged mini-scenarios – right in your system, you set them up to easily personalize in a highly relevant fashion.

It's time to re-center around the 3 Ps

When times were less tough, it was all too easy for the different go-to-market functions to stay within their siloes. Demand Gen delivered MQLs and called it a success. ABM teams focused intently on a small number of top accounts. As always, Sales did whatever it had to do to make its number, including a huge amount of unassisted prospecting. Now, it's harder than ever to find the real demand that's out there. There's little chance of building face-to-face relationships. And we're all trying to use the same outreach channels. So we have to align better and collaborate better to be as productive as possible. ABM 2.0 is about taking the useful learnings from ABM and spreading them wherever they can help. It's about applying the principles of better marketing and selling to every targeted account list and to the underlying processes and systems that remain sub-optimized in too many companies. Powered by opt-in prospect-level intent data, abundant evidence proves that companies who implement the 3 Ps identify more opportunities, engage them more effectively and close them at a higher percentage than those who continue on their legacy paths. ■

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