



Netting Deeper ABM Engagement with Webinars



Introduction

The goal of any account-based marketing (ABM) program is to drive more revenue from a set of high-value accounts. It's about investing the extra effort to drive more engagement with the right accounts and generate more and bigger deals from them. To achieve this, teams need Marketing and Sales to come together to identify the accounts to prioritize, but even more than that, they need tactics that will drive deeper engagement with the buying team members at those accounts.

In a lot of ways, ABM is like fishing. Like how fishermen go where they know the fish are, ABM practitioners need to go where they know their target accounts are. And just like fishing, you need to know when a target account's buying journey begins, where they do their research and what content they like to consume.

To help you use webinars to "fish where the fish are," we've created this e-book, which explores how webinars can drive deeper engagement within target accounts to boost ABM performance. You'll learn how buying teams actually want to consume content, ways to generate deeper engagement with webinars and tactics for activating Sales around webinar engagement signals, all to improve the performance of your ABM program.



Across organizations, ABM definitions vary and often don't reflect what we'd consider "true" ABM.

How do you define ABM?



Source: TechTarget ABM Survey: n= 152

Where ABM programs can fall short

A typical ABM program can often be broken into four key stages — planning, developing, executing and measuring. Of course, this is a major oversimplification of the thinking and internal teams involved in building out and maintaining an effective ABM program, but it showcases the workstreams required to get an effective ABM program off the ground.

Despite marketers' familiarity with this type of "campaign thinking," there's common areas of breakage given the complexity and level of collaboration required for ABM. Because account selection involves alignment with Sales and is the often the starting point of an ABM program, many ABM practitioners invest significant time and resources into the planning phase. However, we often see a breakage in between developing campaign assets and execution. This is where it becomes really important to consider your prospective buyers and customers — What are their specific preferences and needs and how are you going to use those insights to reach them?

A typical ABM framework

PLAN

- Kickoff
- Account selection
- Sales alignment
- Stakeholder mapping

DEVELOP

- Assess campaign assets
- Create new collateral
- Collaborate on sales "plays"
- Design custom offers

EXECUTE

- Marketing campaigns
- Sales plays
- Targeted advertising

MEASURE

- Campaign tracking
- KPI tracking
- Optimize

To better understand buying team members look to answer these questions:

- Where do your buyers consume content and information?
- How do buyers prefer to learn about trends and technologies?
- What combination of information, format and offer appeals best to buyers' needs?

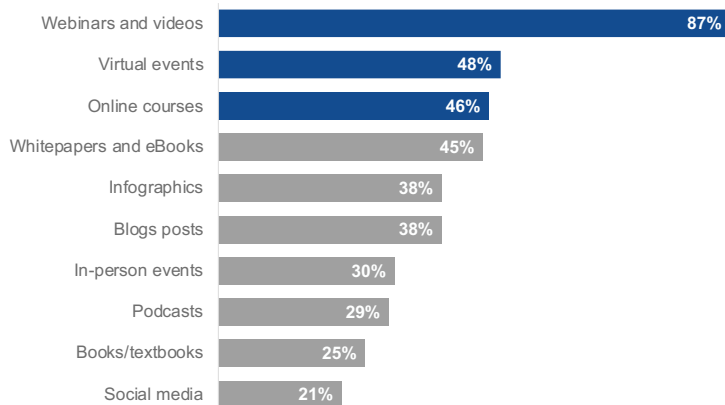
Engaging buyers and buying teams with the content they want

Today's buyers are more digitally driven than ever, preferring to do the majority of their research in a self-guided approach, engaging sellers only at the very end of their journey, if at all. For vendors, this means the content you make available to buyers (and where it's accessible) plays an important role in determining if you make it on that buyer's short list.

Unsurprisingly, buyers prefer a mix of content formats, with webinars and videos at the top of their list. 97% of decision-makers watch webinars when considering a vendor; 77% dedicate two or more hours a week to learning about new solutions; and 60% watch a webinar once a week. In the context of ABM, this means that marketing teams need a mix of content formats and topics to engage and appeal to different members of the buying team. In addition to the right volume of content, teams need to find the right balance of content frequency to support an always-on engagement approach.



What kind of content do you prefer?



Source: 2023 BrightTALK Webinar Lead Gen Report: Content preferences data

97%

Buyers watch webinars when considering a vendor

77%

Of buyers dedicate 2+ hours a week to researching new products and solutions

60%

Of buyers watch a webinar once a week

The role of webinars in an ABM program

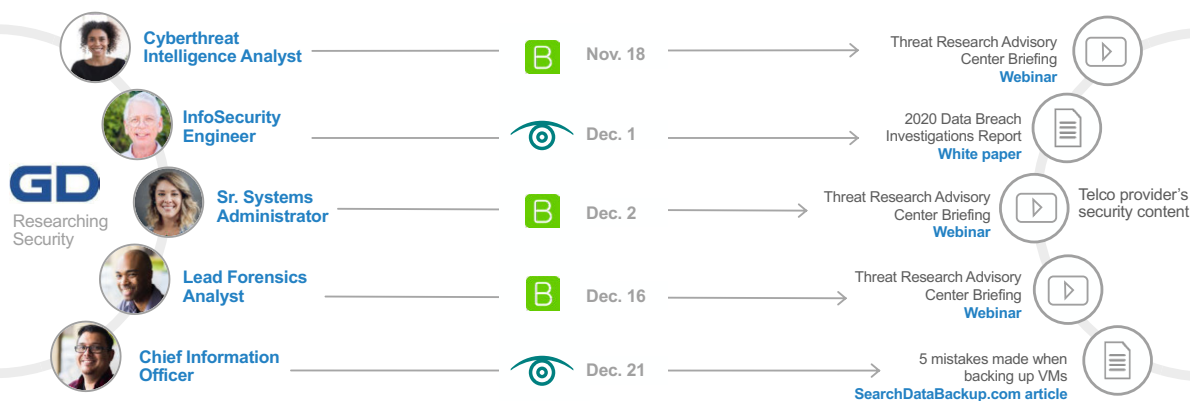
To drive deeper engagement within target accounts, teams need to have an always-on content strategy that connects with buyers whether or not they're in market. After all, if we apply the 95:5 Rule, only about 5% of your audience is in-market at any given quarter. That means you need to be continuously engaging key stakeholders at your accounts, so deep connections with your brand exist when they do enter a purchase cycle. Webinars are incredibly effective at driving this type of engagement because they help educate and support your buyers in a captivating format.

As well, because webinars drive rich interactions, marketers can collect data, track activities, measure engagement and generate insights at the individual and account levels to inform sales activities. You can identify key decision-makers and analyze aggregated account-level engagement based on the volume of activities, depth of interactions and recency of behaviors to inform your ABM strategy. You can also gain additional insights based on viewing time, questions asked, attachments downloaded and poll responses to fine-tune your approach.

Tap into account-level signals with a multi-media, multi-channel approach to ABM.

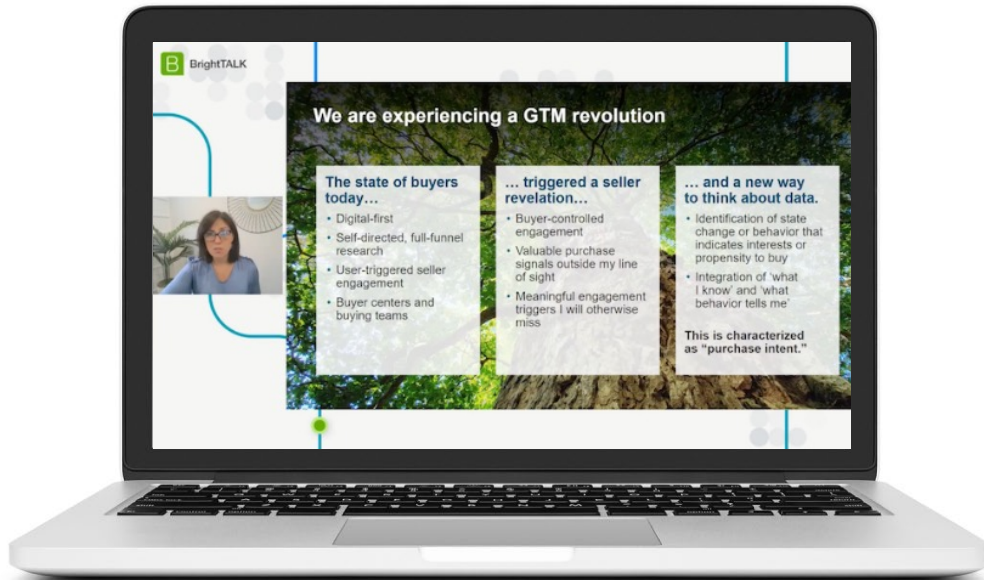
In this example, you can see anonymized activity of individuals within an account researching on key topics across both BrightTALK and TechTarget. During a period of two months, the account engaged with the vendor's webinar content 12 times and interacted with TechTarget's written, decision-support content 16 times. This example demonstrates how different individuals are interested in different topics and formats, which is why it's so important to surround your accounts with a variety of content, from white papers, articles and infographics to in-person events, webinars and videos.

A multi-media approach is key to tapping into account-level signals



Three key considerations when leveraging webinars for ABM

Because of webinars' ability to engage accounts in a deeper way, and their appeal to buyers, every ABM team should consider webinars as a part of their content strategy. Of course, just having webinars isn't going to instantly change the level of engagement you see from target accounts. The success of webinars depends on the quality and value they bring to buying teams. To help you create highly effective webinars, we're going to take a look at three key considerations when creating webinars for ABM: format and delivery, the promotional plan and sales activation.



The ABM engagement checklist

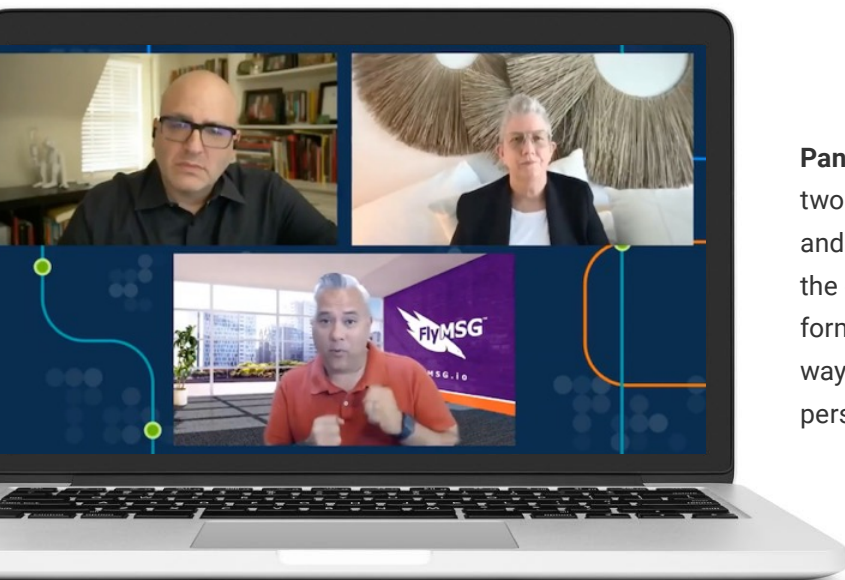
- Drive continuous engagement with a proven promotional plan.
- Create a consistent brand experience.
- Eliminate friction wherever possible (e.g. streamline registration and access to content on-demand).

1. Webinar format and delivery

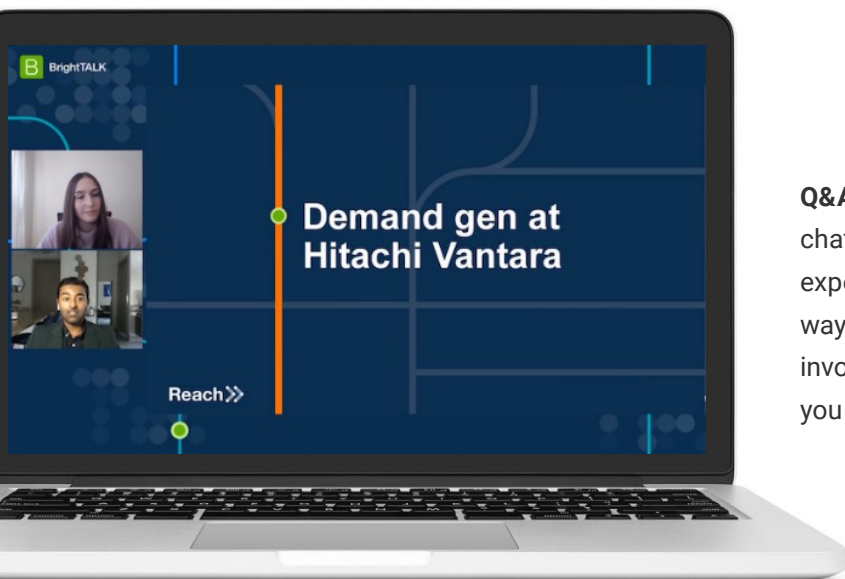
Leverage different webinar formats

Webinars can come in many flavors – they could be as simple as a slideshow with one speaker or a panel of experts on a topic sharing insights and advice for your audience. There's no golden webinar format – we've found that selecting the right format depends on the topic, audience and objectives. We also found that upfront interaction with the audience increases engagement, helping more prospects remember your brand, products and message. Here are some popular webinar formats:

Individual speaker: We recommend using visuals (e.g., slides) to guide the conversation in these standalone presentations to keep the audience engaged.



Panel presentation: With two or more speakers and a host to guide the conversation, this format offers a great way to provide different perspectives on a topic.



Q&A: These fireside chats with subject matter experts offer a compelling way to get audiences involved, especially when you take their questions.

Drive deeper engagement with a webinar series

While webinars produced in an “ad hoc” or one-off way can work, when it comes to driving engagement in accounts, we recommend producing webinars as a part of a series. We define a webinar series as webinars that share a theme and are run consistently. A webinar series can achieve a cumulative effect by keeping the audience returning to the content over time for additional information. Episodic webinar programs provide multiple touchpoints with your brand and allow viewers to deep dive into a topic. Using this approach, you can align content with ABM profiles for more targeted and personalized buyer interactions.

With a webinar series, we recommend creating a series landing page to encourage your audience to return regularly to check for new content that can be consumed at their own pace. The content can also become building blocks for different assets in the future.

For more insights on creating webinar series, download *Webinar Series for ABM: An 8-Step Planning Framework*.

Extend your reach with virtual events

Virtual events, defined as a collection of webinar content unified by a theme and delivered during a specific timeframe, can be beneficial for ABM because they often drive more urgency and larger audiences when compared to a one-off webinar.

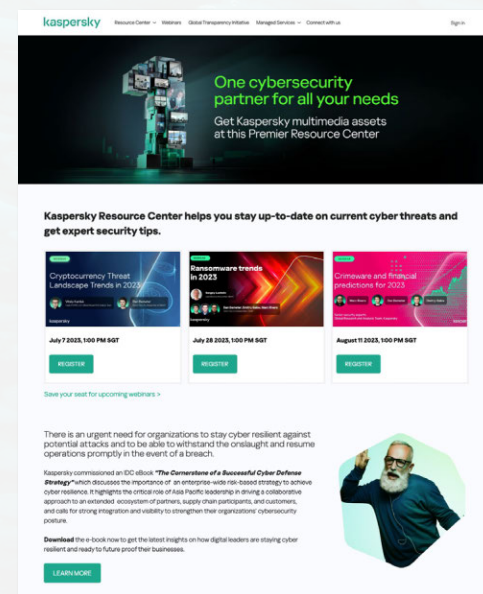
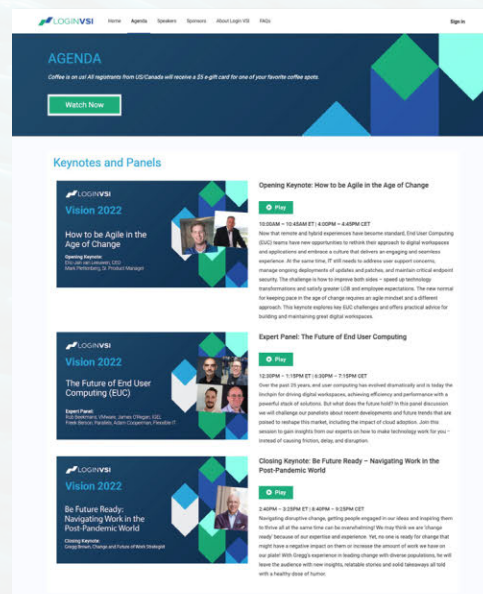
And when virtual events are specially curated to cover a specific topic your audience cares about, they offer an opportunity for your potential buyers to delve deeper into a topic or learn many different things quickly. Since individuals who prefer this format may be different from those who attend your webinars regularly, virtual events give you access to an audience you may not normally have.

Virtual events can vary significantly in size and scope. Use your objectives and knowledge about your audience to help you laser-focus on the right event structure. Some of our clients run “mini” virtual events on a topic with only a handful of webinars, while others see success hosting multi-day flagship events to engage all their target accounts at once.

Executing a virtual event can be hard. Tap trusted event management experts to make it simpler.

Depending on the scope of your virtual event, you may find the idea of running multiple live webinar programs in a short timeframe overwhelming. BrightTALK provides both the technology and the event management know-how to run your event end-to-end. We'll consult you on the best way to structure an event to meet your goals, and we'll even help produce and promote the content to ensure content quality and reach.

Contact a BrightTALK virtual event expert today.



Examples of virtual events



2. Promotion plan

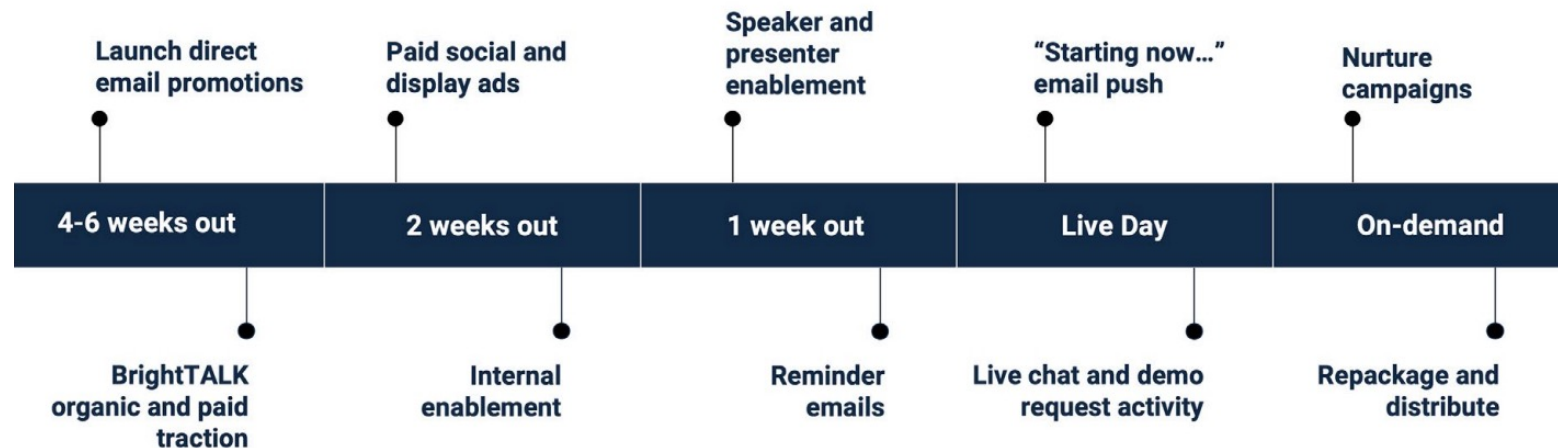
The ideal webinar promotion timeline

When first starting to map out your webinar promotion plan, you should consider the webinar timeline and utilize several channels to maximize your content program's reach within your target accounts. In working with our clients, we've found it best to begin webinar promotions four to six weeks out from the webinar air date. This gives you ample time to promote the webinar to your audiences through your own channels, like social and email, and allows you to take full advantage of the BrightTALK network's promotional power, too.

When thinking about your webinar promotion strategy, you want to build up anticipation among your audience — both those who have

viewed your content in the past, as well as those you are looking to engage for the first time.

Rally your entire organization around the event to build internal awareness and to tap into the networks your colleagues have at their disposal. Encourage colleagues to share about the event with clients on your target account list and leverage social media to generate more buzz. If you are hosting your content on BrightTALK, the webinar will be available instantly on-demand so your prospects can share the content with colleagues or return to it later. Lastly, don't forget to maximize every good content idea by building derivative assets like blog posts, infographics and e-books from the webinar content to drive further account engagement.



A close-up, low-angle shot of a fishing reel mounted on a boat. The reel is a bright, metallic gold color and is positioned in the foreground, slightly to the right. A fishing rod extends upwards from the reel, and a thin line of white fishing line is visible. The background shows a vast expanse of blue water with white foam from the boat's wake. In the distance, a range of dark, rugged mountains is silhouetted against a bright, low sun. The sky is a mix of soft orange and pale blue, with wispy clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and evokes a sense of outdoor recreation.

Develop a consistent brand experience

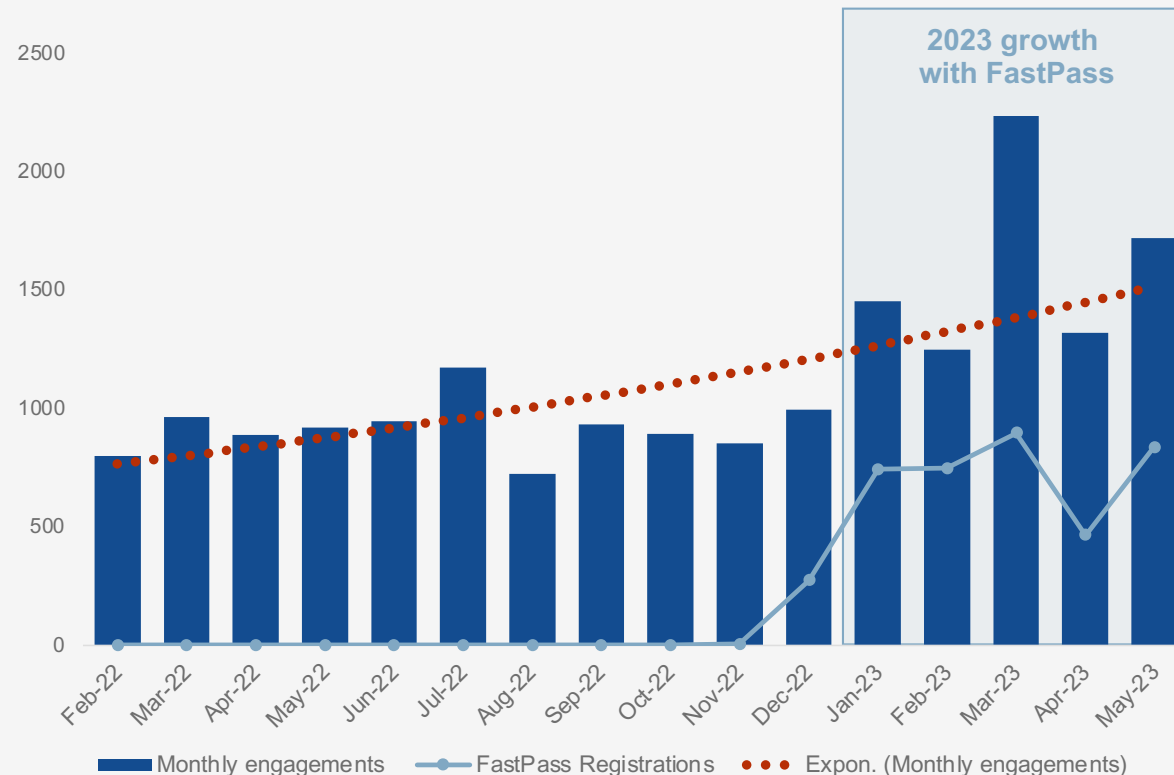
To strengthen brand awareness across your audience, maintain consistent branding across every webinar and all distribution channels. With BrightTALK, you can embed your BrightTALK webinars onto your website to deliver a branded experience and encourage viewers to explore other content. You can also engage them via live chat while they're on your site to facilitate the buyer's journey.

How FastReg increases webinar conversions from email by 300%

No matter how brilliant the subject line is, if your registration experience is clunky and tedious, your webinar promotions will fall flat. With so much content available to buyers today, expectations for simplicity and ease-of-use are high. That's why BrightTALK recently introduced FastReg, the next generation of B2B webinar registrations.

FastReg includes a new, speedy form that intelligently adapts to users as they register. Using smart data lookups, the form only asks for information from the user that it doesn't already have, or it can't find — making registration for new users a breeze. The result is an easier registration process that fast-tracks your known audience while also helping you seamlessly generate new leads from your webinars.

Cloud Security vendor saw a 65% increase in monthly channel activities when using FastPass



1597

Average monthly active users with FastPass (up from 966 in 2022)

50%

Of promotions included FastPass URL

75

Average viewers per webinar (up 27% over 2022)

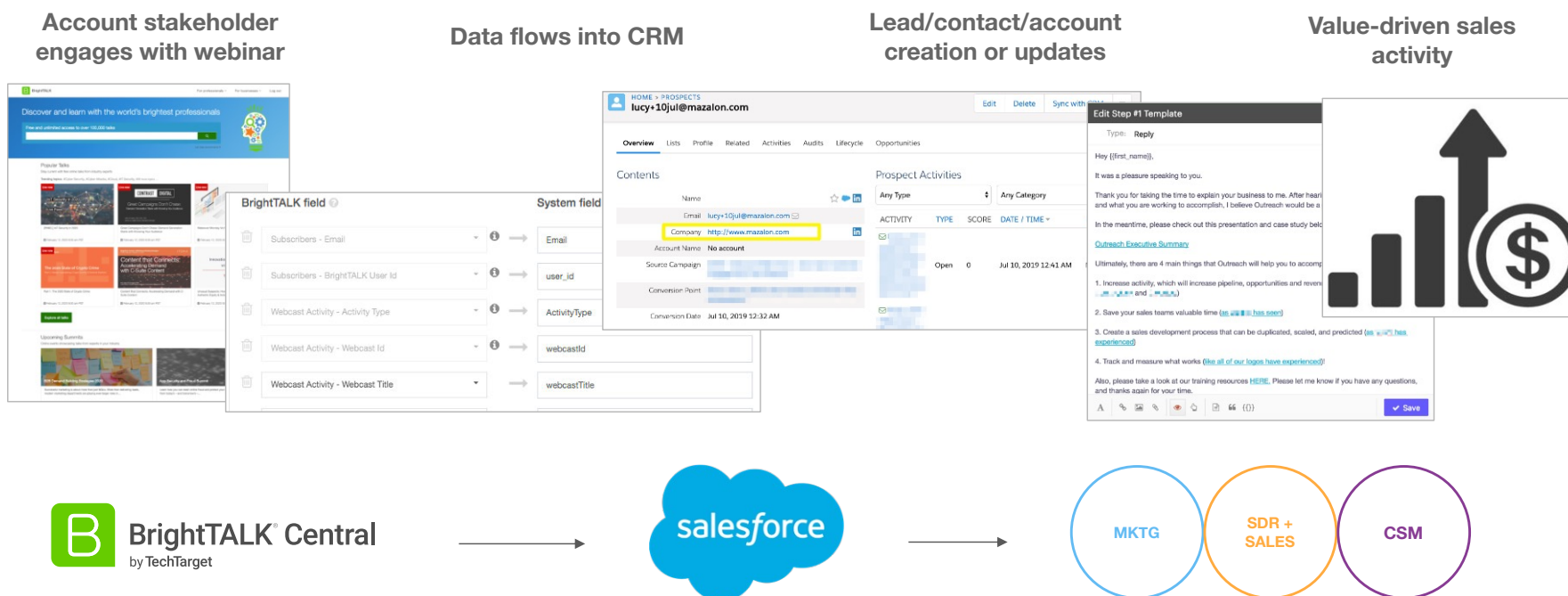
Activity data from Feb '22-May '23 for large cloud security company

3. Sales activation

We all know that Sales and Marketing alignment is critical to ABM success. By involving and educating your sales team early on about your webinar program, you'll help them be better prepared to follow up with engaged buyers. You likely have a process in place already for sharing relevant campaign engagement signals from target accounts, but context is key when it comes to activating Sales around your webinar programs.

Implement a sound underlying infrastructure to capture the data from your webinars and put it in a meaningful format in your CRM. It's the marketing team's job to ensure that all sellers can easily and quickly see which accounts engaged with the content, so they can follow up with the right buying team members with a relevant message.

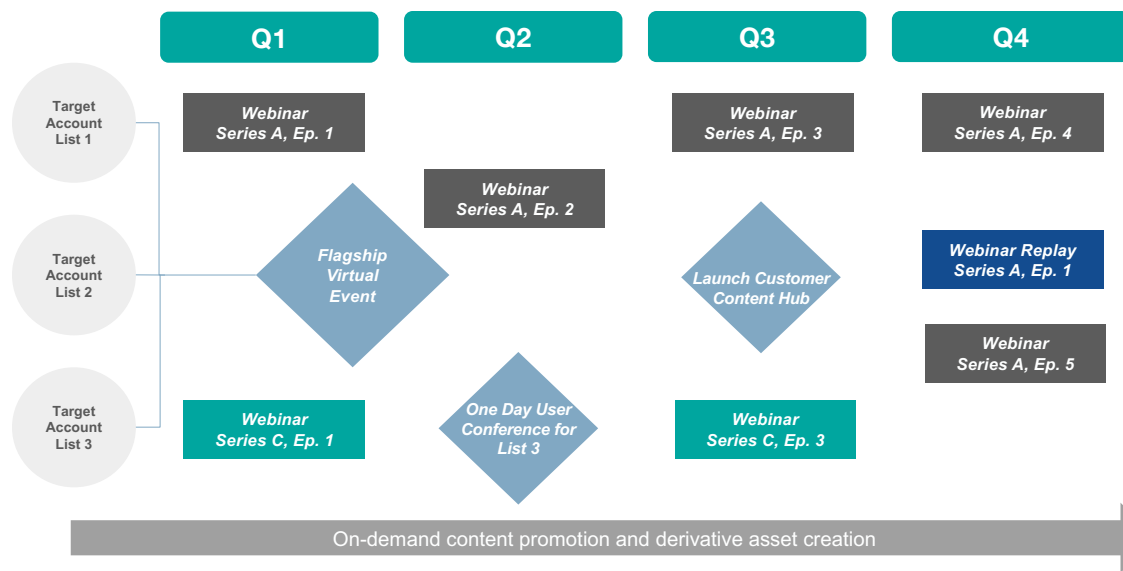
Set up your systems to help drive better sales engagement



Engaging the entire buying team with an end-to-end approach

To drive deeper engagement with target accounts – and create activity that sellers can action on – marketers need a clear plan for how and where they engage with their audience. The key is to take an always-on approach, aligning buyers' research preferences with content distribution methods. Webinars should be an essential part of this plan because of their ability to offer a consistent and scalable way to drive deep engagement with multiple stakeholders in an account. And, when Marketing includes a plan to enable Sales around the buyer insights from webinar engagement, you'll maximize every webinar registration and view.

An always-on ABM strategy fueled by relevant content



When designing a successful webinar series for ABM, you'll want to be thoughtful about both the technical and content requirements to truly educate and convert your target accounts. As the leading global platform for B2B webinars and virtual events, BrightTALK is ideally suited to support your episodic webinar activities. We fuel thousands of live talks and events each year with our platform and leverage our network to 12M+ opted-in subscribers to drive relevant engagement for our clients.

Schedule a demo with BrightTALK to see how to start your webinar series with expert support.

About BrightTALK

BrightTALK is a B2B marketing platform for content marketing and demand generation. Marketers use a single platform to engage professional audiences with webinars and virtual events that deliver pipeline and revenue growth. With a global audience of 30M+ subscribers, BrightTALK extends your reach to win more customers.

Industry leaders such as Dell, Cisco, Citrix and BNY Mellon trust BrightTALK to drive marketing and sales performance. BrightTALK is a subsidiary of TechTarget, Inc. (Nasdaq: TTGT), the global leader in purchase intent-driven marketing and sales services that deliver business impact for enterprise technology companies.

For more information, please visit:



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