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ABM

ACCOUNT-BASED MARKETING BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

Turbocharge your marketing with laser-focused advertising campaigns and generate 3x times more opt-in, qualified prospects.

Contents

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by Gil Allouche

Gil is the co-founder and CEO of Metadata Inc., a marketing software startup in San Francisco, CA that employs artificial intelligence and machine learning to make demand generation more predictable and scalable. Gil founded Metadata.io to make demand generation easy for non-technical marketers.

The Metadata.io platform and AI Operator evolved from Gil's experiences hacking various marketing and CRM systems to get the solutions he needed. Prior to founding Metadata, Gil was VP of Marketing at Qubole, a Big Data SaaS startup in Mountain View, CA.

What can this eBook do for You?

CMOs are on the ropes

B2B CMOs today are under immense and immediate pressure to deliver Sales pipeline and revenues to the business. At the same time, B2B CMOs have many marketing tools they've invested in, a limited budget, and mostly limited time and resources to connect with prospects who want to do business with their company. At first glance these problems seem like a Catch-22: how can a CMO deliver more pipeline, faster, with fewer resources?

Many B2B CMOs have embraced account-based marketing (ABM) to solve all or parts of these problems. But **ABM means different things to different people**. In the course of our engagement with hundreds of B2B CMOs and their teams and running tens of thousands of campaigns (~15K* campaigns in Q1/2018 to be exact), Metadata.io has seen ABM in all its permutations. The purpose of the eBook is to provide CMOs with an outline of account-based marketing and explain why it works.

We're sharing our ideas because understanding how account-based marketing works can help **you** be successful.

Start at the Top (of the Funnel), and Flip

Account-based marketing can be nerve-wracking at first because it flips 'traditional' marketing on its head.

Traditional marketing grabs a big bucket of potential customers to 'pour' into your pipeline through the wide end of the funnel.

Your marketing and sales teams then spend hours or weeks of time and money to narrow down the list into qualified leads.

Account-based marketing turns the funnel upside down – starting with a smaller lead list than you may expect, but resulting in **significantly more qualified leads** (listen to Knowi VP of Marketing speaking about it here - minute 25) . But remember, your goal is to effectively focus your efforts on ideal prospects – those who are the right fit and have a propensity to purchase your company's solutions.

You choose your target accounts by examining data in your CRM for your existing customers and prospects for key decision metrics – a revenue stage, industry, geolocation, job title, technologies used (e.g. company is using a competing or complementary technology?) and more – to pinpoint the companies and the contacts who belong to the buying committee within those companies who are going to be open to talking with you. The wide part of the funnel takes on a new role – delivering engaging, relevant and persuasive content to help you engage with the multiple decision-makers you'll encounter within your target account list.

Adopting a flip-the-funnel approach sets the stage for first part of the account-based marketing journey: identifying your ideal customers.

Identify your Ideal Customers

Ideal Customer Profile Analysis (example)

Technology			Function		
Tech1	0.329		Engineering	0.137	
Tech2	0.323		Information Technology	0.097	
Tech3	0.310		Support	0.094	
Tech4	0.307		Legal	0.092	
Tech5	0.305		Purchasing	0.088	

Employee Count			Industry		
5001-10,000	0.170		Insurance	0.350	
501-1,000	0.049		Logistics and Supply Chain	0.296	
10,000+	0.049		Wireless	0.294	
1,001-5,000	0.027		Supermarkets	0.258	
1-10	0.022		Higher Education	0.219	

Title			Seniority		
Chief Information Officer	0.213		VP	0.127	
Legal Contract Administrator	0.165		Manager	0.062	
Buyer Sourcing	0.158		CXO	0.048	
Network Engineer	0.132		Partner	0.008	
IT Engineer	0.127		Senior	0.006	

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Although you've analyzed your existing accounts and contacts, your 'picture' of the buyer may still be a bit fuzzy. Persona Insight can bring the customer into focus.

Personas are an element of an ideal customer profile (ICP). An ICP takes your CRM data and the companies you've identified as a good fit for your solution and adds details about buyer motivations, behaviors and pain points. These personal details are the buyer persona.

A buyer persona is a mix of data and empathetic intelligence, grounded in known characteristics about your current customers. It adds in your team's observations during customer engagement, and incorporates data you've gathered from your air cover.

How many buyer personas do you need? At least one, and maybe two or three, depending on your target market and the typical purchase decision-making process.
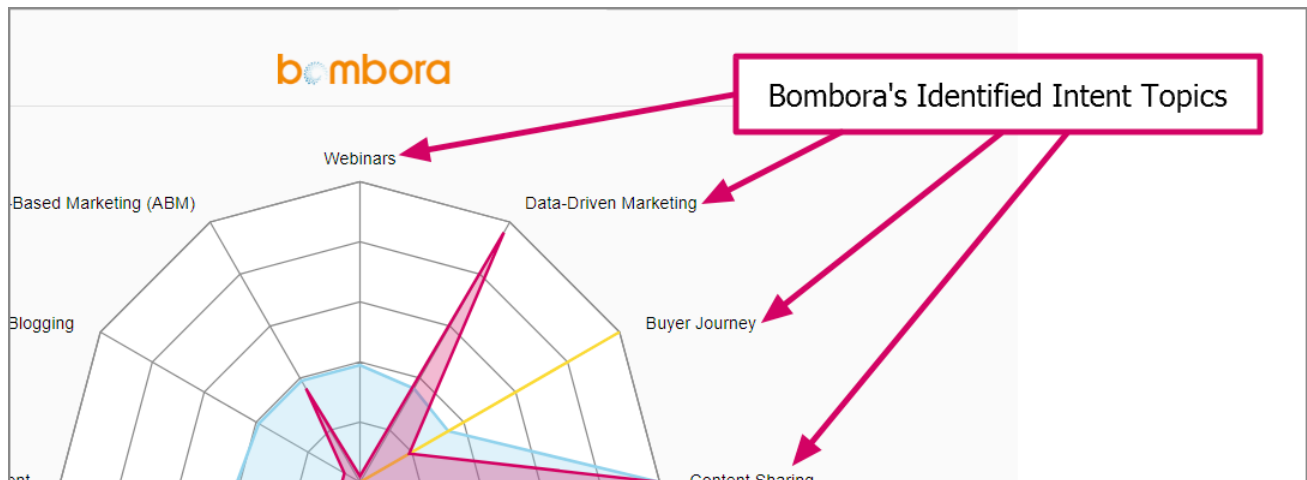
Key questions to ask when building personas include:

- What are your buyer's priorities?
- Does she have authority to make business decisions?
- What types of information resources does he use to help make a purchase decision?
- What pain points does she face?

Be sure to include technographic information, buyer journey details, industry updates and emotional or motivational triggers that may be in play during the decision process.

Answers to these questions not only identify strong targets, but help you further personalize the messaging, product and service mix to best meet customer needs.

Identify Buyer Intent

Bombora's Identified Intent Topics

Another key component of account-based marketing is identifying who's truly interested in your solutions, or at least leaning toward making a purchase decision.

In the digital world, we leave 'footprints' behind – on the websites we've visited, the articles we've read, and the content we've downloaded. If read correctly, you can use these footprints to identify 'buyer intent' – those contacts who exhibit a propensity to purchase a solution like yours.
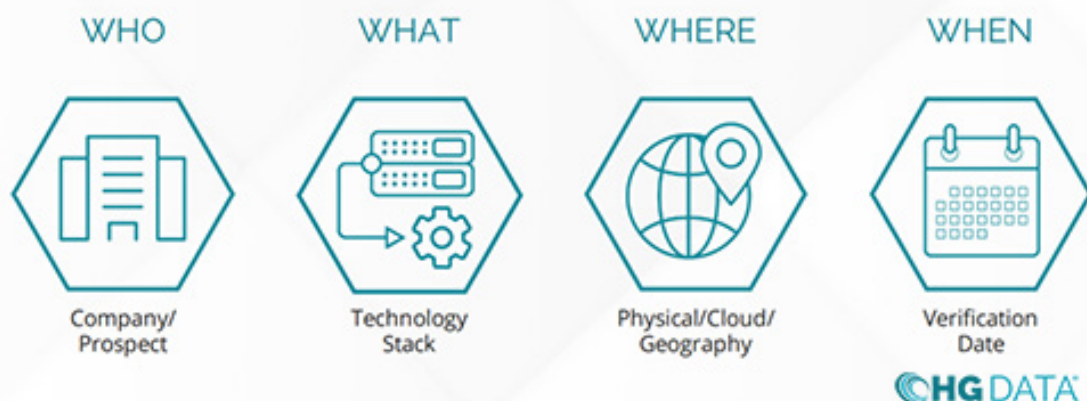
Here's a simple example: if someone is visiting websites of various marketing automation system providers, and reading or downloading analyst reports and other literature about how to purchase marketing automation and compare marketing automation vendors, the chances are good that they intend to purchase a marketing automation solution in the near future.

There are third-party data firms who track these digital footprints, and you can enrich your customer data with these information trails.
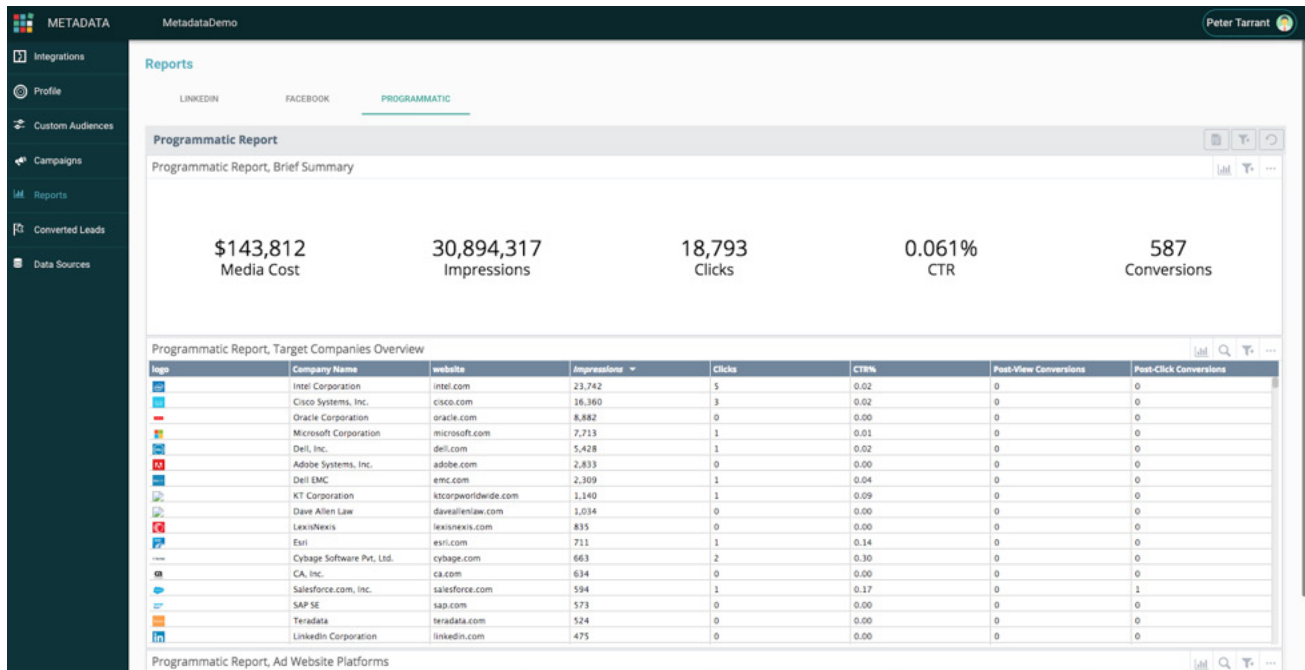
Your goal is to learn more about the characteristics of the potential customer's organization, the technology the company is currently using, and most importantly, gain insights into the type of information the buyer is seeking – and the problems he or she is trying to address.

Now that you know who your ideal customers are, and which contacts among them are exhibiting buyer intent, you can then begin to deliver personalized content to contacts within your ideal accounts, aka 'air cover.'

BEST IN CLASS TECHNOGRAPHICS

WHO	WHAT	WHERE	WHEN
Company/ Prospect	Technology Stack	Physical/Cloud/ Geography	Verification Date

HG DATA

Lay Down Air Cover

Developing an understanding of your potential customer's needs, technology, corporate culture – even the language used to search for information, gives you the tools to build targeted, personalized messages - 'air cover' - to influence key decision-makers at your ideal target accounts.

The term air cover has its origins in World War II, where it referred to using aircraft to protect land-based or naval wartime operations. More recently, the term is used in marketing to describe inbound marketing -- those efforts you have in place to attract customers to your solution using branding, social media, search engine optimization, landing pages, and marketing content.

But in account-based marketing, instead of waiting for prospects to find your content, you can directly engage specific contacts within your target accounts with personalized content – podcasts, product demonstration videos, case studies or white papers – tailoring the messages you send to fit the needs and roles of buyers.

The idea is provide your target contacts with content on the sites and ad channels they are already visiting. This can have two main benefits: one, your target contacts can convert to leads by downloading your content at that point, or; second, at the very least they become more familiar with your brand so that if you engage with them later through other means, like outbound sales development, the chances are greater that they recognize your company.

By demonstrating your understanding of the customers' challenges and speaking their language, you'll be able to speed prospects through your sales cycle.

Develop a Named Account Marketing Plan

Identifying customers to call on without a supporting marketing plan is like buying all the ingredients for a great meal, leaving them on the kitchen counter and hoping the meal appears.

Named Account Marketing acts as the 'chef' bringing together the right combination of ingredients to deliver a compelling, 'tasty' and personalized message for potential customers to savor, so much so that they return to the buffet for more.

A data-driven approach can help you find the type of content your target is seeking, but whether it's a landing page or a detailed whitepaper, **effective** content will have the following characteristics:

- It establishes **connections**. Your customers are people trying their best every day to succeed. Be sure your content allows for interaction and feedback.

- It **answers questions** and **solves problems**. Content that makes life a little easier will build your credibility and your value.

- It's in **their language** and it's **conversational**. We all throw a little jargon around once in a while, but easily understood content makes you approachable and relatable.

- It's a **robust menu**! No one likes a skimpy buffet. Offer a variety of content including infographics, videos, webinars, landing pages, case studies, whitepapers and eBooks to meet the needs and appetites of your audiences.

Getting the right message delivered through the right channel will make your marketing efforts more effective. At Metadata, we use massive multivariate testing to quickly and easily evaluate your menu across online channels, so you can quickly find the best combination to drive pipeline and revenues for your named accounts.

Metadata's closed-loop approach to demand generation makes it easy to refine your 'menu' over time to keep pace with changing conditions and your customers' evolving needs.

Pipeline Acceleration - Speeding up your Sales Cycle

You've already determined buyer intent and outlined a plan for engagement. Now, after your air cover and named account marketing efforts, you can determine your audience's level of interest.

Did your target contacts click-through one of your online ads or submit an inquiry? Did they download an eBook or view a webinar? And was engagement one-time only, or was it steady or increasing over time? By tracking these interactions, you can understand what customers need from you.

After assessing engagement levels, you can provide information to address questions or concerns, tailoring the timing and delivery vehicle.

For those who show interest but are still in early pipeline stages, white papers, thought leadership articles, and capabilities presentations are useful for encouraging deeper involvement. For qualified leads, information such as case studies, product comparisons, and customer testimonials have proven to be powerful conversion content. If your content generates additional questions, then adjust your messaging, note where the customer is in the process, and continue.

The ultimate is, of course, to accelerate your pipeline and reduce your sales cycle. As you learn more about how potential customers respond to and interact with your content, you then close the loop and use the information to inform new campaign strategy.

Why We Exist and What We Do

Manual Execution vs. Agile Marketing

At Metadata - we think marketers should get back to building programs, generating content and optimizing messaging and positioning, and spend less time creating UTM tags, buying and segmenting data, running a/b testing, placing pixels and doing other tasks that computers do better and cheaper. Below you can see a quick example of how life looks like when you do things manually vs. automatically using an experimentation platform like Metadata.

Key Use Case - Running a 1000 variable campaign

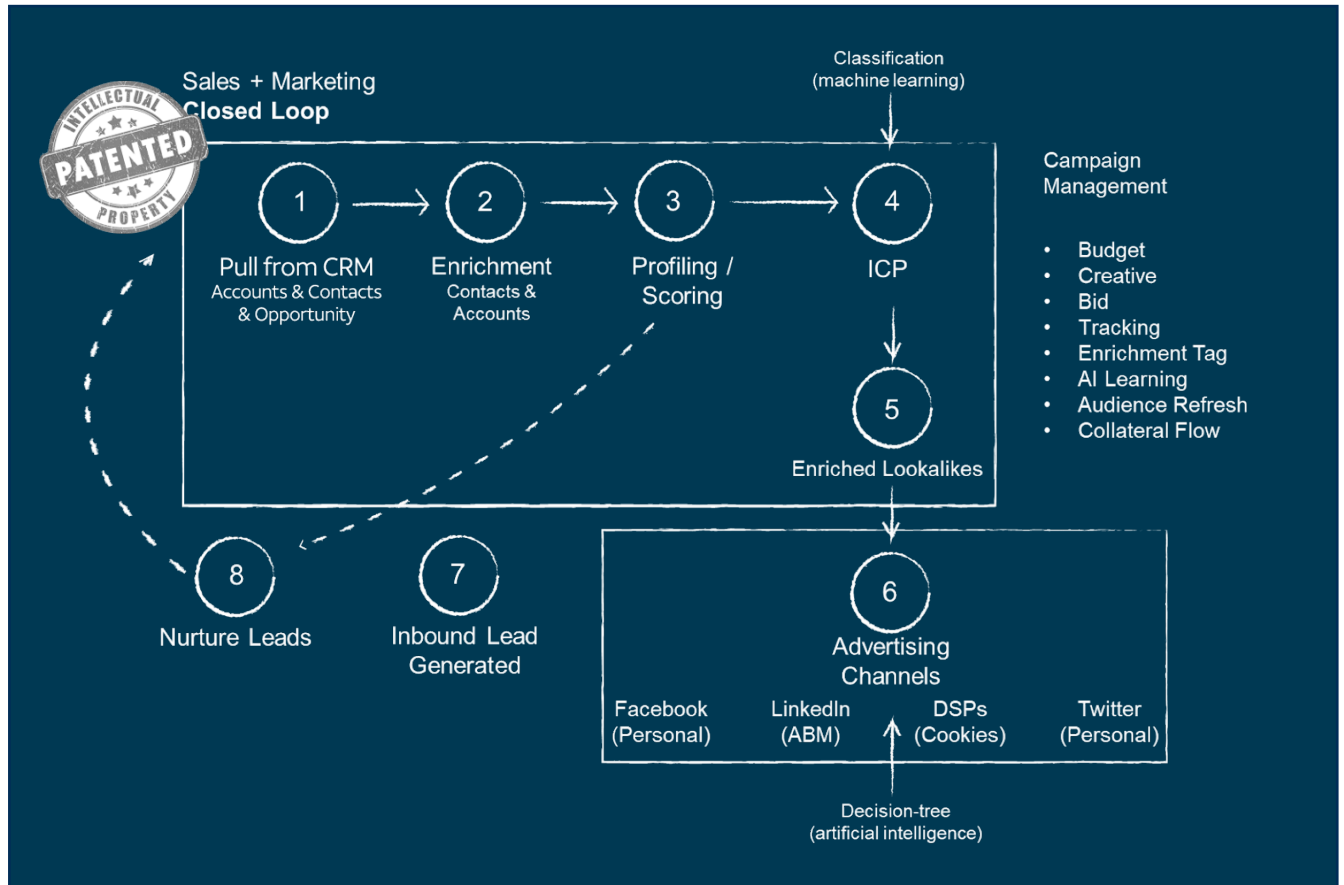|	RESOURCES	EXECUTION	DATA	RESULTS
Waterfall Approach (Manually)	6 people, 7 weeks – manual. **$140,000**.	massive campaigns, human errors	unstructured data in silos, inactive	Baseline
Agile Approach (Metadata)	1 person, 1 hour – AI executes. **$1,000**.	micro campaigns, multivariate experiments	normalized data, actively analyzed using deep learning	**30% - 400%** more effective

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Example Campaigns

Here are examples of the types of campaigns that Metadata customers are running today:

- **Classic ABM** - Define your total addressable market, prioritize accounts, find the buying committee, and run evergreen campaigns that self-optimize based on the KPI of your choice.

- **Sales Acceleration & Retargeting** - Push prospects and stalled opportunities by identifying additional contacts on the buying committee and targeting stakeholders with relevant content.

- **Competitive** - Advertise against ideal cutomer accounts who are engaged with competing products and/or are in the market for a new solution.

- **Complementary** - Advertise to accounts with the highest propesity to buy and who are using a technology with whom you integrate, with content specific to your integration or a case study of a company with a similar tech stack.

Our Method and Sample ROI

The Patented Metadata Platform

Proven ROI

Company	ROI Metric 1	ROI Metric 2
USERVOICE	33% Increase Lead→ Opportunity Ratio	
ReFUEL4	50% Increase Lead→ Opportunity Ratio	66% Increase Lead Quality
knowi	436% Increase Net New Leads,	200% Increase Lead→Opportunity Ratio
CONCURRENT a vecima company	48% Lift in Lead→ Opportunity Ratio,	161 Named Accounts Engaged Within a month
atscale	200% Increase in Marketing Qualified Lead Ratio	
APP DATA ROOM	300% Increase in Qualified Leads	

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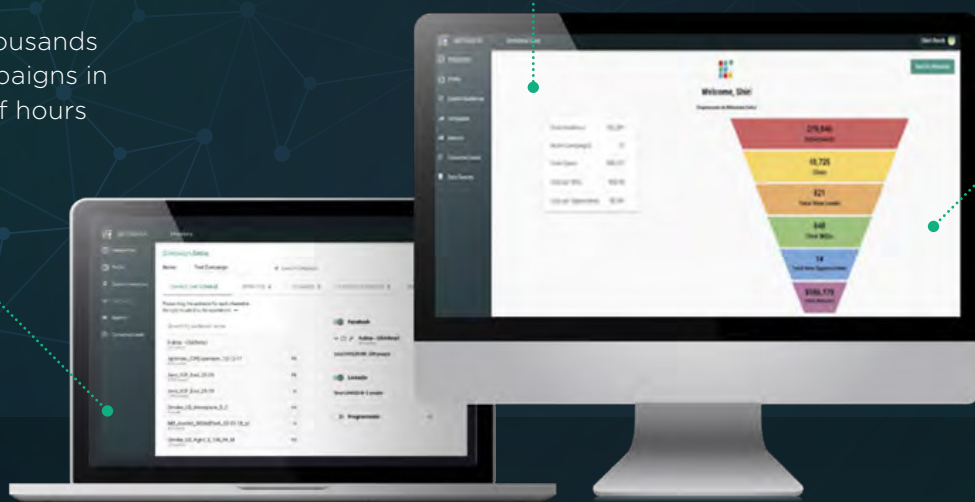# The only AI campaign execution platform for B2B companies

Quickly locate the most effective components of your marketing mix

Automatically optimize campaigns for pipeline impact

Execute thousands of B2B campaigns in a matter of hours

Experiment with your marketing mix and know what works and what doesn't.

VPs of Marketing in B2B are under constant pressure to create pipeline, and know exactly which components in their marketing mix work – and which don't.

Experimentation is the only proven method to guarantee that knowledge, and A/B testing doesn't deliver results fast enough.

Metadata's patented technology executes thousands of B2B campaigns in a matter of hours, automatically optimizing campaigns for pipeline impact at a velocity that is not humanly possible.

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