**4 Rules for Building and Scaling a Successful ABM Program**

Byline: Jenny Rhine, Director of Digital Demand Generation at Genesys

[Genesys](https://www.linkedin.com/company/genesys/), a global provider of customer experience solutions, was an early adopter of account-based marketing — and over the last 24 months we have taken our ABM program to new heights. With the help of LinkedIn, we at Genesys have been able to truly scale our program.

By working closely with our colleagues in sales to identify their best fit prospects and then tailoring customized programs and personalized messages to the individuals inside our targeted accounts, the Genesys marketing team has delivered concrete, impressive results:

* New prospect pipeline sourced by marketing increased 16 percent,
* New customer bookings contribution rose 30 percent year-over-year
* Cost per lead dropped by 30 percent
* New customer engagements score grew by 10 percent
* Inquiries grew by 40 percent year-over-year

With the caveat that every ABM program on LinkedIn should be as unique as the brand behind it, I’ll share my four essential rules for establishing a successful ABM program:

**1. Build Your ABM Team**

Right people. Right seat. This principle resonates with all areas of business, but it’s absolutely critical when it comes to ABM. If you are planning to dabble with ABM alongside your other priorities, you will find the journey to measurable success long and confusing. But if ABM makes sense for your business model — meaning that you sell to companies where there’s more than one decision-maker in the buying group — then you need to commit.

You’re embarking on new territory, so carefully consider who you put in the driver’s seat.

Once you’re committed to building the team, find that key team member who “gets it.” As you’re getting started, much of the success is found by simply doing. And then doing again. And then doing again. Ensure the person you identify to lead the program is skilled and hungry. It’s critical that your ABM leader be capable of jumping from defining strategy to getting into the weeds of execution to measuring and reporting back on ROI. This should be your unicorn -- the team member(s) who is highly effective at getting work done but who you also trust.

Ensure your ABM unicorn sits close to sales on the org chart. The goals of your ABM program should align to the same goals as your sales organization.

**Bonus recommendation:** If you’re going all-in on ABM and looking to build out a full team to support the initiative, consider aligning roles to specific campaign cohorts. For example, ABM campaigns designed to open doors/opportunities look very different than ABM campaigns designed to accelerate or close open opportunities. The strategies are different, executed differently, and in many cases have different KPIs. If you’re planning to make ABM a priority (or are in the process of scaling up) consider this approach.

**2. Define Unique ABM Definitions Within Your Organization.**

A simple Google search for “types of ABM” will bring back a slew of definitions and visual aids meant to help marketers understand the differences between Strategic ABM, ABM Lite, and Programmatic ABM. This is a great place to start. But if you’re building an ABM practice, you need to go further and define exactly what each type of ABM means for your own organization. You may determine that textbook ABM definitions make sense. But allow for the possibility that they won’t.

Why is this important? Especially when you have multiple teams executing ABM campaigns — in our case, globally — if everyone is not aligned to the exact same definitions, you’re going to find inconsistencies in the number of accounts targeted per campaign, level of spend per campaign, depth of personalization, and goals of the campaign. By extension, your program ROI will be immeasurable without significant re-work.

When setting definitions, we focused more on the degree of personalization delivered by the ABM campaign vs. on the number of accounts being targeted. Taking this approach was a breakthrough moment, because it allowed us to finally be able to compare effectiveness of campaigns region by region. Even though an ABM Lite campaign in North America, for example, may have had a larger number of targeted accounts and the same campaign in Germany — we are now able to look at the effectiveness of the campaign as a whole. Further, we’re able to look at ABM Lite categorically to understand the level of personalization (and account-level investment) that is necessary to see a maximum level of ROI.

If you’re operating with different definitions, it will be impossible to track performance across the full ABM practice.

**3. Align content strategy to the needs to ABM**

Any marketer worth their salt knows the power of high value content. And while ABM programs certainly benefit from fresh, high value pieces, ABM programs have different content requirements. Early planning for the content your campaigns are going to need is critical. Even if ABM is a highly communicated initiative for your team or company, be explicit with what your team needs. Without ABM-specific content, you will spin your wheels getting your first campaigns launched.

Not sure where to start? Make sure you have a clear roadmap of where your program is headed, and then back into your content needs. Consider the following:

* Are you taking a highly verticalized approach? Make sure everyone is planning toward that.
* Does it make more sense to laser in on delivering 1:1, Strategic ABM campaigns instead? Ensure everyone is working towards easily templated, customized content.

Give your content team time to create resources that will fuel your campaigns. Don’t forget to bring your designers and web teams along for the ride as well.

**4. ABM Metrics vs. Demand Generation Metrics**

Spoiler alert — they’re different. But they have to be considered together.

The same lead-based metrics that you’ve been driving for years as a part of your demand generation program will not work when you start executing under an ABM model. This is the most difficult piece of the puzzle.

Even after you’ve established an account-based data model (which is no small feat!), reconciling how leads and accounts advance through the funnel together, and making sure you have goals that are aligned to the successful progression of each, takes time and a lot of effort.

You need to establish clear progression points for your ABM program, knowing that your traditional demand generation efforts will continue and have different progression points. You will still get leads. Accounts will also progress. Make sure you understand the implications of operating with the double-funnel model and start to identify lead and account handoff processes that make sense with your sales counterparts.

For more information on Genesys’ ABM journey leveraging LinkedIn, make sure to subscribe to the [LinkedIn Marketing Solutions blog](https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/blog) and view LinkedIn’s ABM resource hub launching in January.