



Transition From Silo To Symphony:

ABM FOR THE MODERN B2B MEDIA
AGENCY

ABM For The Modern B2B Media Agency

B2B media agencies have been met with several new and increasing headwinds over recent years including the pandemic's impact on **agency talent**, a new privacy landscape and digital transformation within a more socially distant world. Despite the momentum behind these challenges forcing agencies to adapt their business models and client offerings, the media agency market continues to mature into an integrated, content-rich, precision marketing offering, perhaps spurred on by the very adjustments many have been forced to make over the past few years. And while the hangover from the pandemic may continue into the coming years, today's new and complex constructs of industry partnerships and technology will prove to be effective in driving solution demand, and customer engagement.

However, much like the rest of the B2B marketing world, media agencies aren't in a place to rest on their laurels just yet. The move towards reinvention will not be without its hiccups. Fragmented audiences and technology will continue to be an issue, with the Association of National Advertisers (ANA), in its **April 2021 Programmatic Media Transparency RFP**, ascribing "mind-numbing complexity" to the state of the programmatic market. The deprecation of browser's cookies and far-reaching data privacy legislation has also meant marketers that rely on third-party cookies and programmatic ad engagement to source intent signals will be forced to rethink their approach.

While media agencies have always been receptive to marketing support from vendors, it should come as no surprise that today's agency CMOs are still on the hunt for better outcomes and partnerships that they have become increasingly more dependent on.

Account-Based Marketing (ABM) continues to be an area of development, with **11% of agencies** claiming they are considering adding it as a service in the next 12 months and an additional 7% adding it in more than a year's time. In a world where 67% of agencies are already providing some level of ABM, some basic math dictates that we could be looking at 85% of all agencies providing ABM services in a couple of years.



We found that 84% of companies who launch ABM report favorable revenue impact, but few have cracked the code to achieve significant increases to the bottom line.

— John Follett, Co-Founder and Chief Customer Success Officer at Demand Metric

However, as the adoption of ABM grows, **research** by Demand Metric and MRP has found that the number of marketers and clients who report a negative or moderate revenue impact from their programs continues to grow, as well. Fewer than one-quarter of all Account-Based Marketing programs produce significant revenue impact; that is, these programs account for at least 25% of marketing attributed revenue within their organization. Contrasting this, over **40%** of ABM programs produce negative, uncertain, or unmeasured revenue impact.

Maintaining The Status Quo Is No Longer Viable

While much of today's ABM solutions and technology may be effective in helping to meet the 'transactional' agreements with clients', agencies need to evolve how paid media is planned and governed across campaigns and programs. The intersection of an integrated ABM strategy with this new agency business model could lead to driving more valuable demand and therefore higher client engagement. B2B agencies must also be prepared to navigate the following obstacles to improve the current levels of ABM effectiveness:

Fragmented Audiences & Data Quality.

B2B marketers indicated in Forrester's 2021 Global Marketing Survey that the "quality of customer data" is the number two challenge to achieving their goals over the next two years, only behind "changing economic conditions." Accurate and complete data fuels the entire media cycle, and while 71% of marketers state they rely on data analysis to drive future business decisions, 59% have stated insufficient data has led their organizations to miscalculate demand. Agency programs generate masses of data from multiple internal and external systems; however, this data is also delivered at unpredictable intervals, often incomplete or inaccurate, and does not provide an integrated view of each partner or channel performance as a whole.

To accelerate the performance of their partnerships, alliances, and ecosystems, integrated data intelligence needs to conform to the diversity and sophistication of the agency go-to-market strategy. This capability

is the most foundational element of ABM success, from accurate insights to multichannel delivery of consistent and high-value marketing messages. Delivering connected data across the agency environment isn't trivial, especially with growing data volumes, complexity, and the need for a high ingestion speed.

Overlapping Media Functions, Processes & Technologies.

The number of ways to agonize from audience and technology limitations across channels, browsers, and devices is rising. The reality is that most ABM isn't actionable across the agency ecosystem. Because of this, too many ABM platforms serve to separate cross-agency collaboration further and fragment the approach to every client program. Eliminating the ability to share insights and targeting, or even form a consistent and comparable framework for measuring results, the agency devolves into a product or channel-centric course, with each client using an ABM silo to battle their peers for business, causing anarchy within the organization and sowing confusion among target accounts. Marketing teams with siloed paid media budgets, advertising responsibilities, technologies, or processes will struggle to execute effectively without a solid campaign implementation process.

Not being able to control the software or solutions yourself puts you at the mercy of the application vendor.

Confining Performance Expectations

Many ABM solutions confuse marketers by conflating recognition with simply identifying the company of a website visitor or targeting with the ability to gather cookies or IP addresses. Instead, recognition is the ability to resolve the identification of companies and people to target accounts and contacts, regardless of channel or application. Without this, an enterprise organization may resolve to their corporate headquarters in London while your client is trying to resolve a website visitor from the US. Here, geographic precision and the ability to consistently reach the same audiences across platforms are paramount. Because clients' marketing functions already have multiple channels of marketing engagement in play, these capabilities are necessary to keep their target account customer experience consistent across channels.

Increasing pressure to attribute both brand and demand to pipeline and revenue has resulted in marketers with brand and demand goals seeking new measurement and optimization constructs — and these constructs are more sophisticated than the traditional direct response metrics used to evaluate tactical effectiveness. Research has revealed that identified that two-thirds of ABM programs cannot be measured across platforms, channels, or funnel stages, and many don't even know which metrics to show. Agencies that don't use advanced measurement approaches (e.g., quantifying marketing influence, adapting ROI concepts for ABM strategy or program evaluation) will be unable to tell the story of its' effectiveness because ABM influences audiences in ways that are independent of loose indicators, like media impressions and website visits and click-throughs.



The 'one fits all needs' ABM suite of solutions is rarely sufficient because the applications are not designed to meet individual client requirements. Most applications are not suited to handle the unique needs of the agency, and even those that may be, are unlikely to cover all your core business processes and will, therefore, be fragmented and inefficient.

With years of tracking, your clients already have KPIs, most often focused on tight relationships between lead sourcing and pipeline attribution. Agencies require common measurement frameworks that align to existing systems and the capability to view your ABM activities across individual programs, teams and provide global results. This challenge is also left unaddressed by most ABM platforms, yet without proper answer, the downstream complications in measuring across groups and geographies, and across channels will drown your team.

Taking A Multi-Pronged Approach To Improving ABM

Agencies, and their related operations, portfolio, digital, demand, corporate, and client marketing teams must align and act quickly to maintain ABM's effectiveness. Only when agencies execute their marketing strategy in the light of their clients' operating reality can the magic of high performance happen. To deliver an ABM strategy in which each client executes their programs autonomously while providing an optimized target account experience, agencies need to:

Scale Insights, Not Channels

B2B agencies can't rely only on the data clients hold in their CRM system or marketing automation platform to create audiences. A hallmark trait of the agency-client base is its' diversification, with inconsistent data spread across a wide range of applications. This creates a critical need to recompose the reality of target accounts and their interaction with their organization. While foundational to ABM success, it can also be a daunting task. Therefore, agencies should leverage a strategic buyer audience framework to govern the building and management of digital audiences in simple constructs so they can be matched and circulated across technologies, people, and processes. Audit your client tech stack and look for new opportunities for deeper integrations. If your systems are already connected, consider how you can optimize them further to ensure that you have visibility into all relevant data in relation to your client's key accounts.

Next, evaluate the quality of those connections and decide if you can move contact and account-level data between those systems or aggregate account-based knowledge. Enterprise-class ABM solutions can supply advanced data management technologies that can organize account-based data from contact-based systems and can cleanse, map, and append data for deeper insights and more accurate reporting. With a single view of target accounts across platforms and teams, agencies can target precisely, deliver personalization across channels, and measure program results accurately. By using a solid data strategy process with robust, accurate, first-party data and onboarding practices, media agencies can create a distinct advantage in audience segmentation, targeting, personalization, and measurement.

Integrate Technology, Media & Channels

The best global agencies offer brands integrated agency structures that seamlessly connect technology, media, and channels. Modern B2B buyers are in control of their journeys, and while many ABM solutions possess multiple channel capabilities, that's not enough for today's agency clients. When audience targeting remains within siloed platforms and teams, multichannel capabilities create a discord of overmarketing and inconsistent messaging. In order to tell a contextual, consistent story across devices, channels, and platforms, agencies need control of their ABM solutions, control that can help them coordinate activity priority between

marketing teams when they aim at gaining attention from the same audiences, and message consistency for their orchestration across channels. Beyond siloed capabilities, you need advanced controls and real-time triggered connections between the identification of needs within client target accounts, the identification of the next best action, and the resulting delivery of high-value sales and marketing actions.

Enable Intelligent Client Outreach

When your clients engage with empowered buyers, their outreach needs to be intelligent — and informed by the buyer's journey to that point. Driven by the movement to multi-experience selling, platforms, and solutions that can upload buyer and seller insights at the speed of engagement will finally take both agency and client out of the data entry game. Alleviated from these endless administrative duties, both agency and client will have more time to operationalize insights and orchestrate more meaningful engagements with buyers, with intelligent platforms guiding the next best action and identifying buyers' preferences. The key, however, is that when the transition from the agency does need to happen, minimize disruption by ensuring it is done in calibration with client sales and marketing teams. The objective here is to provide transparency in your ABM programs and create a partnership with your clients, rather than merely "tossing leads over the fence." Deliver account-focused engagement reports and make them viewable in the tools your client's team uses each day. Create alerts that proactively notify specific account owners when their account moves in positive or negative manners. Develop consistent measurements objectives for those outcomes and discuss those reports frequently.

Evolve Measurement Beyond Impressions

ABM measurement does not exist in a single platform; it exists across all platforms. More than a superficial view into a platform or econometric assumptions of smaller attribution systems, agencies must move beyond marketing sourcing metrics and rethink client campaign measurement and optimization. Clicks and impressions must be replaced with more tangible results and a complete picture of engagement, giving them the latitude to demonstrate the value of media for more considerable short- and long-term outcomes. This level of rich attribution is the only way to provide the correct revenue accountable environment for the revenue-generating side of the business to justify and optimize their marketing investments. This connected relationship will control program personalization, lead routing, and program spending. It will also serve as the framework necessary to report a connection between marketing spend and the generation of actual pipeline that is attributable to the agency in a consistent manner.

EightBar Delivers Global Account-Based Impact for IBM, Using The Unique Power Of MRP Prelytix

IBM wanted to reach C-level IT leaders in EMEA interested in cloud and AI solutions, but was disappointed in the engagement delivered by numerous platforms and vendors. Hearing of the results delivered by MRP Next Generation Inside Sales, IBM directed its agency – EightBar – to engage MRP. In a short time, MRP delivered the volume and quality of target account buyer engagement that IBM needed to gain traction in EMEA.

Unfortunately, after running demand generation and qualification campaigns with various vendors, EightBar was unimpressed. As Ross Smith, Account Manager at EightBar explains, most vendors delivered nothing more than unqualified engagement, or worse, multiple instances of low engagement from the same organization.

Unlike traditional ABM solutions, MRP aligns itself with the modern buyer journey and an account-based approach. MRP's inside sales team is equipped with a next generation inside sales platform powered by MRP Prelytix that supports this advanced approach. This platform is unique because it connects with machine learning and neural nets. Unlike other platforms that only leverage prospecting data gathered inside the firewall, the MRP platform taps into additional data to understand the buyer journey, purchase intent, and timing. This action- oriented architecture solves the top challenge plaguing marketing professionals who have already seen the value of predictive analytics and intent data:... the ability to put that data to use and derive value from it.



My clients within IBM are extremely happy with the quality and contactability of the opportunities. MRP delivered head and shoulders above the other vendors.

— Ross Smith, Account Manager at EightBar.

Harnessing a massive amount of sales intelligence, the platform guides nimble, responsive conversations attuned to each buyer's interests. In other words, MRP's inside sales team is empowered to engage with relevance at the right moment. Specifically, they can adeptly engage and verify highly engaged buyers at the account level showing explicit purchase intent.

After just two quarters of campaigns, MRP accelerated the delivery of quality BANT qualified opportunities to EightBar, who then uploaded them to IBM. In just 9 months MRP delivered 2,675 quality engagements, of which 1,343 were MQLs and 1,332 SQLs. Impressed with the results IBM doubled its budget and expanded the geographies that MRP targeted. MRP in turn doubled the opportunities delivered from Q1 FY2021.



pharosIQ, a global leader in “intent-to-purchase” lead generation, provides insights and demand for B2B sales and marketing success. Leveraging over 40 years of expertise, pharosIQ turns intelligence into impactful engagements for efficient global revenue growth. Powered by first-party data, it connects vendors with buyers, transforming strategies worldwide.