

What's Working In Demand Generation In 2024

Practitioners Revamping ABM
& Content Strategies With A
GTM & Personalization Focus

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Introduction

Marketers, take a deep breath and channel your inner da Vinci, Michelangelo or Botticelli: The ABM & Content Renaissance is upon us. According to the “[2024 Demand Generation Benchmark Survey](#),” 57% of respondents plan to allocate more budget to ABM initiatives throughout the year, while 54% pointed to content marketing investments. For reference, just 46% pointed to ABM and 43% to content in 2023. This strategic rebirth is primarily fueled by one key factor — content overload.

“When we were hunkered down during Covid-19, we became content-consumption machines in our personal and professional lives,” said Steve Armenti, VP of Revenue Marketing at [DigitalOcean](#), during his [B2B Marketing Exchange](#) (#B2BMX) keynote. “This created a false positive signal to the brands and marketers targeting us, so they created more content because they thought their buyers were hungry for more. But then life went back to normal, and now we have this content surplus — and it has alienated our buyers.”

To put that alienation into perspective, **54% of B2B buyers** said they are overwhelmed by the amount of content available, meaning marketers have to power down their content machines and focus more on building strong intent data strategies that enable hyper personalization and targeting.

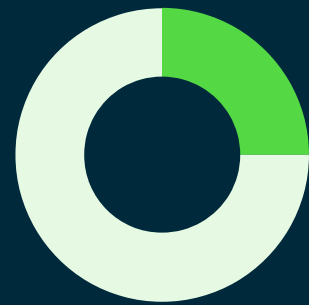
But fret not: Practitioners have big plans (aka budgets) to revamp their demand gen strategies:



27% anticipate
increases between
1% and **10%**



26% plan to increase
their budgets by more
than **11%**



25% indicated
they'll keep their
budgets the same

Throughout this report, we'll analyze where/how organizations are investing that budget to restructure their demand strategies, with a specific focus on the role ABM and content will play. Leveraging unique insights from *Demand Gen Report's* recently released research, we'll uncover:

- How practitioners are tapping into hyper-personalization through deeper segmentation, dynamic content personalization and leveraging technology like AI and chatbots for real-time engagement;
- The role of data-driven intent targeting in understanding where customers are in their buying journey and what they're actively searching for;
- How ABM and ABX are moving beyond targeting high-value accounts and leveraging multichannel engagement and virtual events to create immersive experiences that nurture relationships across decision-makers within target accounts;
- The steps needed to incorporate emotional storytelling, interactive formats like video and audio and even humor into B2B strategies; and
- The AI-powered tools that are starting to make a real impact on B2B demand generation.



Uncovering The Next Phase Of ABM Through Intent

One of the main drivers behind ABM's rebirth rests on the increased prioritization orgs are putting toward account-based strategies throughout 2024 — but there's a caveat. With 45% of marketers planning to test/deploy better account-based marketing and 49% desiring better sales and marketing alignment around go-to-market (GTM) initiatives, experts are suggesting practitioners combine the two. Armenti spoke to the power of account-based GTM, which he defined as a strategic, long-term approach to entering a market through advanced targeting that helps all departments better understand an account's decision-making process.

"This is a long-term initiative — not a campaign," he explained. "There are some prerequisites you need to come to grips and reality with: First, you need to become highly cross functional with the entire GTM team, and then you need a deep understanding of your ideal customer profile (ICP). The third is understanding the capabilities needed to become account-focused (aka cleaning up your CRM), and the fourth is creating agile content."

In his #B2BMX Campfire session, Mason Cosby, Founder of ABM agency [Scrappy ABM](#), dove deeper into the role alignment plays in successful account-based GTM strategies. He noted that to promote cross-functionality, marketers need to allow other teams to feel like they're in control and equip them with the necessary tools.

"You can't just go to your sales team and tell them that you're building a new ABM program, because they'll just Google the term and get a bunch of information that sounds really complicated," said Cosby. Instead, he shared his "Four D" framework of building account-based GTM plays, which include:

- **Data**, a summary of the target, messaging, positioning, personas, product and any input that impacts the content and targeting of the activation play;
- **Distribution**, which are defined strategies, tactics and channels for how the data is then distributed to the target audience;
- **Destination**, which consists of the "what" and "where" that data and distribution push prospects to, whether it's pages, content, conversion points or desired outcomes; and
- **Direction**, which are the conversion points or paths that are established to better track target direction and outcomes for the activation play, such as forms, CTAs and demos.

Proof Point:

When Honeywell spun-off its residential technology business into a separate, stand-alone company called **Resideo**, it wanted to position the new brand as the go-to for powering the connected home with smart technology. To help update their strategy, the team partnered with **Data Axle**, a provider of data-driven marketing solutions, to leverage data and develop a strategy that would boost demand by marketing to end consumers. Through the partnership, Resideo saw:

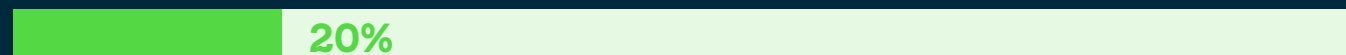
Increase in activations



Lift in new product activations by existing users



Customer base growth



Revenue increase from retained customers



Infusing Qualitative & Quantitative Data Sets

The best way to increase personalization is to take the insights straight from prospects and customers' mouths, which requires a strong intent data strategy. As 63% of marketers plan to allocate their budgets toward intent-data and data management, 38% plan to use that capital to increase personalized and customized buyer experiences.

But in her #B2BMX keynote, Ann Handley, Chief Content Officer of [MarketingProfs](#), warned practitioners that they can't "coerce" this first-party data out of customers through tactics such as forced sign-ups. Instead, she spoke to the power of re-thinking customer engagement to create content that makes prospects proactively reach out.

"We're over-indexing on the short-term pipeline, and not thinking enough long term or those emotional connections that we're building," she continued. "The first step is to build relationships; not audiences. And most importantly, we must invite the elephant into the room: How do we talk about the things no one else is talking about?"

With that foundation in place, DigitalOcean's Armenti added that practitioners need to go into their CRMs to understand their target buyer's history, which includes historical sales activity, reading the call notes, understanding pain points and knowing their workload, amongst others. He noted that this will help marketers identify patterns of what's working for their prospects and customers and build a more "sophisticated" data-driven process from there.

Proof Point:

[Save the Children](#) was challenged with creating a timely and effective onboarding program while still maintaining high data quality standards. The non-profit brought in Data Axle to audit their current process and determine where the gaps are and where the opportunities lie. With the results, Data Axle created an on-demand data cleansing process — Smart Match. Through the partnership, Data Axle appended 50% of the profiles in Save the Children's house file with additional data and increased full names from 9% of profiles and addresses to 30%.

SETTING ACHIEVABLE EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUR DEMAND GENERATION FUNNEL



If you're not getting the business value you expect from your marketing budget, your demand generation strategy is a failure — there's no way around it. At the same time, you and your demand gen partner can't work miracles (at least not most days). If you go into a campaign expecting to book sales calls with half the CFOs on your named accounts list, you're going to be disappointed. The key to success is setting ambitious, but reasonable, expectations for your demand gen efforts.

You need to critically examine the demand for your solutions and draw a quantifiable map to revenue based on past results and top-line goals. Then, you must lay out a data-driven plan for finding and driving engagement with ideal customers and agree on how you'll measure progress toward those expectations, because B2B marketing in the digital age is all about measurement. This process will require some homework from your team, as well as open give-and-take with your trusted B2B demand gen partner. But it's an essential investment in getting the results your business needs to grow.

1 Decide What You REALLY Need From Your Campaigns

Many B2B marketers simply look at demand gen as a volume function that ultimately converts to revenue at some standard rate. They issue requests for proposals (RFPs) that simply call for X number of MQLs/AQLs, of which they assume Y percent will ultimately result in sales. Don't get me wrong — revenue is king; I get it. But sometimes you also want to build a little awareness about a big launch on the horizon, or even learn a little about what headaches your prospects are dealing with.

Your demand generation strategy should be able to deliver on all these expectations. Every customer touch is an opportunity to learn, so, work with sales, product and your respective C-level executive to ensure you cover all the goals from near-term revenue to strategic positioning.

2 Be Certain Of Your Markets

One of the biggest challenges marketers face is wringing high-quality opportunities from the same narrow, targeted account list with a message that's growing stale and, at a certain point, *annoying*. You should constantly review their total addressable market (TAM) estimates to ensure they understand the scope of

companies and contacts they want to talk to. You don't want to miss a chance to drive engagement with a new audience because they weren't included in an outdated TAM map from three years ago.

In addition to folding in new regions or adjoining verticals, market sizing also suggests plausible revenue and, by extension, demand generation goals. As I said earlier, a key component of meeting expectations is setting reasonable ones from the outset.

3 Get On The Same Page With Sales

More than half of marketers indicate that misalignment with sales is still a big issue for them — if sales can't (or won't) sell to the opportunities you pass to them, revenue will not be served. We know that sales may just want to talk to that "wish list" of named accounts. That's why homework assignment two — sizing your markets and finding new hunting grounds — is so important.

4 View Digital Demand Gen A Key Component, Not The Whole Strategy

If sales wants you to drive engagement with 100 C-level contacts from a target list of 1,000 companies, you're not going to meet expectations unless you get really creative. Email, inbound and display can be part of the equation, but you'll also need to incorporate phone, trade shows and postal.

Sometimes, "We're just not able to do as you suggest" is the right answer from a digital demand generation partner. Be willing to have your assumptions challenged and build flexible, multi-faceted programs that get the job done.

5 Set (& Document) Clear Campaign Metrics

To meet revenue goals and other business expectations, you need to go a step further and develop two sets of metrics on how well your campaigns perform: Near-term and long-term.

In the near-term, the best immediate measurement of an opportunity is whether it advances to the next step in the customer journey. You should also quantify delivery pacing and, if possible, the time between the last activity and when the opportunity hits your CRM — factors that can be optimized as a campaign is running.

For long-term goals, these key performance indicators can range from contribution and gross company revenue to customer acquisition cost. Each company will have different measurements, but at some point, you will be challenged to prove your programs are profitable. Long-term metrics are invaluable in refining the expectations for your next campaign and overall demand generation funnel.



Increasing Personalization & Emotional Storytelling

With a slew of data insights in-hand, marketers then need to wield that information to craft content and campaigns that directly address customers' concerns. **Dan Gingiss**, an international keynote speaker and customer experience coach, suggested practitioners can create content that resonates with audiences by infusing it with their own first-party insights.

"You need to become a customer of your own business, so fill out a form, register for something on your website or even 'forget' your password," said Gingiss. "As consumers, you'll notice the things that are annoying. So, you must turn it around and become a customer of your own brand, and that's how you'll find extraordinary opportunities."

While Gingiss admitted that it often feels time- or money-intensive to innovate or adapt marketing strategies, he continued that practitioners don't have to do anything elaborate or over the top; instead, he noted they can engage audiences by creating immersive content that evokes emotions.

"Immersivity is about creating an experience people feel in their bones, because that's how we remember things," he explained. "Most of all, you need to appeal to one of the five senses or emotions — if you think back to all the memories you have of being a child, most of them will come back to an emotional moment or something you can smell, taste, see or touch."

Proof Point:

Lorena Fortuna, Digital Marketing Team Lead — CPG for Adobe, wanted to generate awareness among both new and existing markets while improving reach within their target audience. She decided to partner with **Bython**, a provider of demand generation solutions, to help revamp their offerings and, with the partnership in place, Adobe looks forward to surpassing its pacing goals and expanding its reach within the target market.



Conclusion

While da Vinci and other great artists used paint brushes and chisels, modern marketers will use CRMs and personal experiences to craft successful demand generation programs. To properly engage and sustain customers, the human element of marketing is all too clear.

"We need to show our humanity and show up as people," said Handley. "We love data, and we love talking about data, and technology, and tools. Those are fantastic, but ultimately our job as marketers is to show up authentically and connect to the people who matter to us."



Founded in 2012, Bython is a leading demand generation company in Frisco, TX, with a global presence in the United Kingdom, India, Mexico, and APAC. We provide marketing services to enterprise and agency companies across all industries and geographies. Bython aims to provide demand generation solutions that foster meaningful connections, drive tangible results, and create a positive return as we strive to be "Always On" for our customers.

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Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multichannel demand generation efforts.

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