



# ABM IS JUST GOOD MARKETING

Latané Conant cmo, 6sense

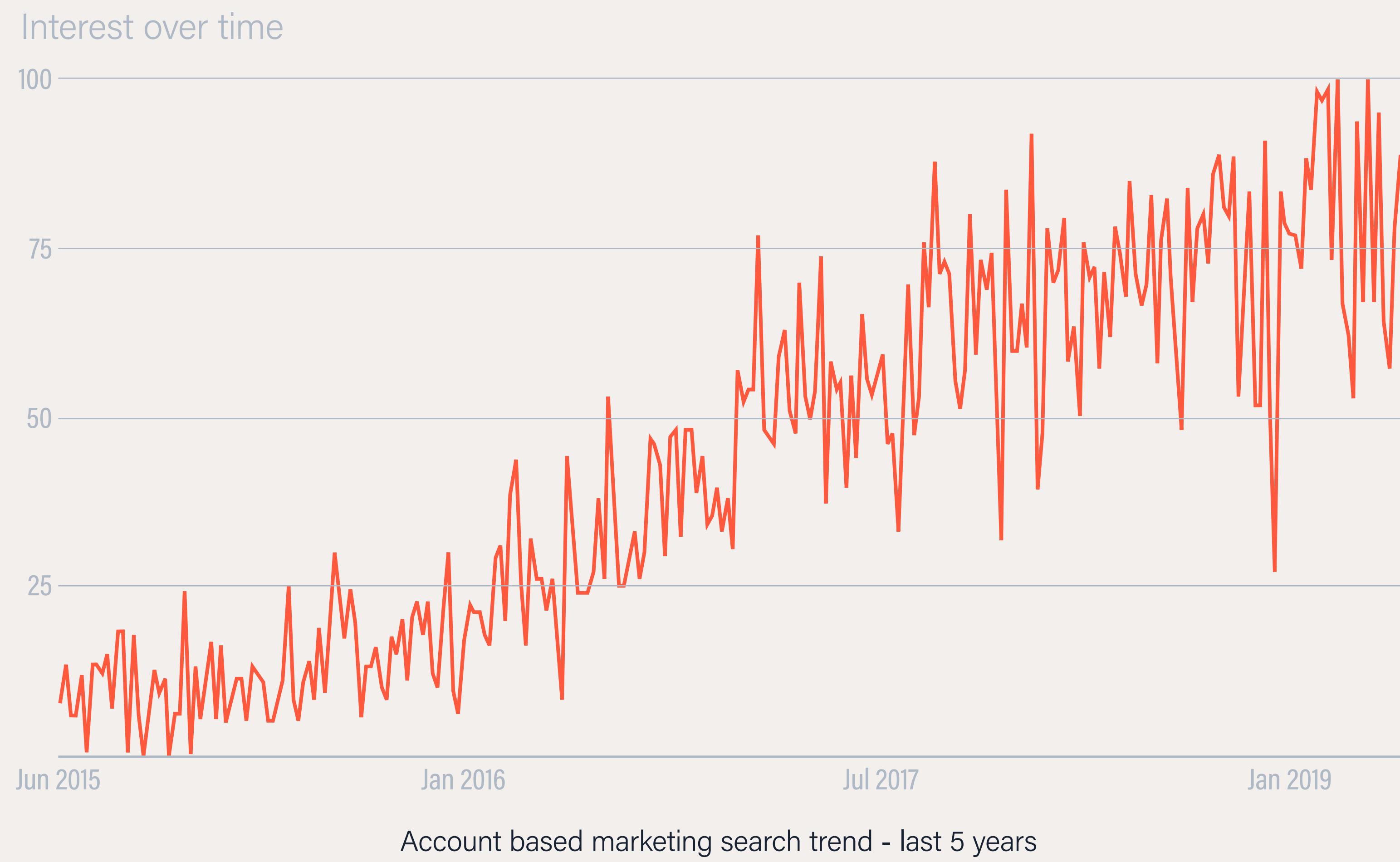
EBOOK

## The Popularity of ABM

Interest in Account Based Marketing (ABM) has never been higher than it is today. As industry leaders like Laura Ramos at Forrester say, "Unless you have been living under a rock, you can't have helped but notice the hype around ABM."

ABM is an overnight sensation that's been building steadily for the past five or so years. Based on the simple idea that B2B sellers concentrate sales and marketing resources on a clearly defined set of target accounts and execute personalized campaigns designed to resonate with each account, ABM is fast becoming a staple of modern B2B revenue teams. But how did we get here? Why the rapid shift from selling to individuals to selling to "accounts?"

To answer that question, let's zoom out and talk about how B2B buying has changed.





## TODAY'S B2B BUYER: ANONYMOUS, FRAGMENTED & RESISTANT

Today's B2B buyers prefer to remain anonymous until much later in the sales cycle. Some studies have shown that buyers can complete close to 70% of the buying journey without ever engaging with a salesperson. Add to that the fact that a B2B "buyer" is now likely a committee of ten or more individuals from all parts of the organization, and you begin to see how B2B buying has changed to become a much more fragmented exercise, with each member of the buying team owning only a small piece of the transaction. In this new world, each member of the buying committee needs to be engaged at different times and with

different approaches and value messages, all in the hopes of building consensus across a very diverse set of functions, needs, and readiness.

It is now buyers who are in control of the information flow, pace and preferred channel of communication, often resistant to engage until they have completed their own research and product comparison. This has created a huge problem for revenue teams: the "dark funnel."

This dark funnel is made up of all of the research activity and buying signals within an account, like anonymous web site visits, 3rd party research, and false form fills that go unseen by sales and marketing teams & systems. In fact, roughly 90% of B2B buying activity takes place in the dark funnel.

# BUYING HAS CHANGED, AND PROSPECTING IS STUCK IN THE PAST

While B2B buying has evolved, we are basically fumbling around in the dark, relying on the same old bag of tricks for prospecting: forms, spam, and cold calls.

Ever since marketing declared "content is king," we've been trying to lure prospects out of the dark by gating the content we think they need in order to make an informed decision (or make us sound really knowledgeable). The thinking being that a prospect will step out of the shadows and give up their anonymity in exchange for some exclusive, or even relevant content. However, marketers are beginning to wake up to the fact that B2B buyers aren't willing to sacrifice their anonymity to access information that is readily available online, so content gates are dropping, but so are leads.

Even with this realization, we're still holding out hope that if we gate some of our "high value" content this approach will continue to deliver enough quality leads to meet our pipeline goals because, well, anyone who fills out a form must be a good prospect.

The other thing we love to do in order to lure prospects out of the dark funnel and turn them into "leads" is scan badges at trade shows. There is nobody faster than a demand gen manager at a trade show with a scanner in hand. "I got 437 scans today!" she'll declare, forgetting all about the drawing for the Bose headphones, or the mini drone with the HD camera.

And so Fred Formfiller and Sally Swaghorder are now "leads" who will need to be processed, scored, and followed up on. This, of course, means they'll likely go in our "nurture track," where we'll send them every video, eBook, blog post, article link, and customer testimonial we've got - relevant or not - which is basically putting them on the fasttrack to unsubscribe island.

Maybe they open one of those emails, maybe they don't. Doesn't really matter, we're calling them anyway. After all, we've determined they're an MQL and, by God, we're following up. The BDRs pound away on the phones, leaving message after message until finally one day the "lead" shows up on the "stuck leads" report where sales management can ask about why no one is following up. This was a trade show lead people!!

Nevermind the fact that this may be an account we can't even sell into (too small, wrong industry, incompatible technology). It also doesn't matter that they have exhibited virtually no buying behavior other than doing some research or perhaps throwing darts at the trade show booth to get a squishy ball. And we don't care that this is just one person of an entire buying team... We've got a lead!

I'm exaggerating to prove a point. (Or am I?)

Forms, spam, and cold calls aren't working. The way we prospect is broken, and we know it. Want proof? The total number of business



emails sent and received per day will exceed 293 billion in 2019, and is forecast to grow to over 347 billion by year-end 2023.<sup>1</sup> There are only 7.7B people on the planet!

Of the 293B emails sent, 249B of those will never be read (15.1% open rate). They will immediately be deleted or IDd as junk/spam upon receipt. Of the 44B emails that are opened, only 1.4B of those will elicit a click (3.2% click-through rate on opened emails). That's a .4% effective engagement rate, meaning 99.6% of email doesn't drive engagement.

If those numbers sound too big to get your head around, let's bring it down to a personal level. If your prospect works in an office she receives an average of 121 emails per day. She will open 18 (103 will be deleted or filtered out as junk). Of the 18 she opens, .5 will elicit a click. That's right, she will engage with one email every two days. Will it be yours? Unlikely.

The numbers aren't much better for cold calling. According to InsideSales.com, only 1% of cold calls actually result in meetings, and 90% of B2B decision makers say they don't respond to cold sales outreach. Further, only 28% of outbound calls result in any conversation at all! The good news is 74% of B2B buyers say they will talk to someone who is providing value and insight. The bad news is buyers report that only 20% ever do (add insight).<sup>2</sup>

And it is precisely this lack of insight - what remains in the "dark funnel" - that is making it so difficult to effectively reach prospects in this

new era where B2B buyers are anonymous, fragmented, and resistant. And costly too. Altify, a customer revenue optimization company, crunched the numbers and discovered companies with salespeople carrying a quota of \$1 million and an average deal size of \$100,000 suffered a loss of \$218,000/rep over the course of a year by pursuing the wrong leads and opportunities.

Well, don't fret. Leave it to the marketing technology industry to make a big splash with a fancy new thing called ABM that has come to breathe life back into our prospecting efforts and take us all to the promised land.

## ABM TO THE RESCUE

Account Based Marketing shifts the focus from a "lead based" to an "account based" approach, where knowledge and insight about an account are used to create targeted, personalized outreach. It also comes with a smorgasbord of side benefits including getting into deals earlier, larger deal sizes, higher win rates, and the elusive marketing and sales alignment. So, thanks Marketing industry!

But now what? What does this really mean for your business? Do you need to string together 57 disparate tools to make it all work, or hire consultants to deploy a 70-page success framework? My guess is, if you ask 50 people, you'll get 100 different definitions of what ABM is and how to do it right.

**The total number of business emails sent and received per day will exceed 293,000,000,000 in 2019, and is forecast to grow to over 347,000,000,000 by year-end 2023<sup>1</sup>.**

**There are only 7.7 billion people on the planet!**

<sup>1</sup> The Shocking Truth about How Many Emails Are Sent, CAMPAIGN MONITOR - MAY 21, 2019

<sup>2</sup> The Staggering Cost of Chasing Bad Sales Leads, Posted by John Ternieden, INSIDESALES.COM - APRIL 26, 2016

# ACCOUNT BASED MARKETING - DEFINED

A strategic approach that aligns demand creation programs and messaging against a set of defined accounts and goals in a way that is relevant and valuable to those accounts, and to sales.

- SiriusDecisions

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ABM combines B2B lead management and B2B relationship management techniques to grow LTV by engaging accounts and individuals across all stages of the buying process.

- Gartner

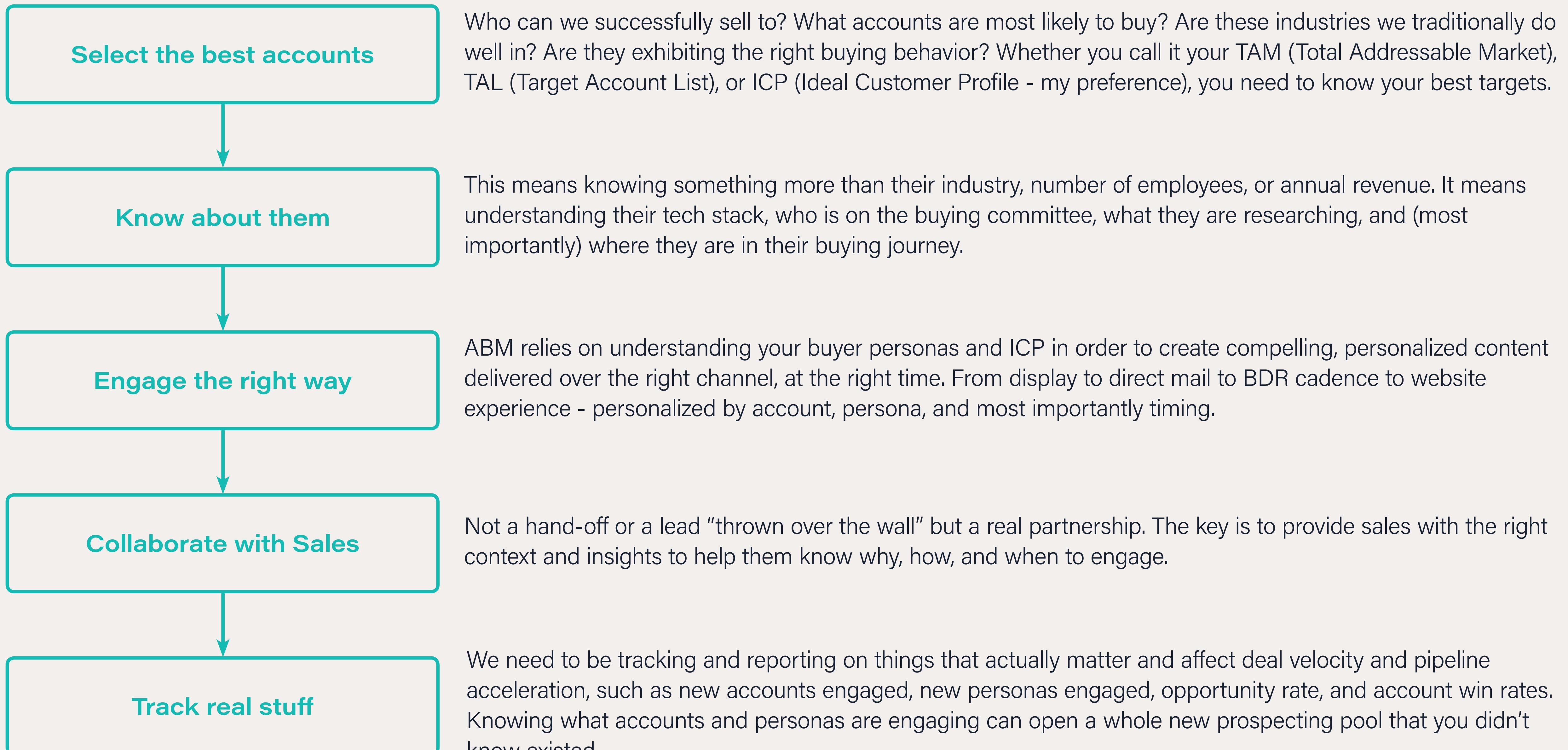
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ABM is a strategy through which marketing and sales jointly obsess over how to pursue, establish, and grow long-term, highly engaged revenue relationships with specific customer accounts.

- Forrester



## LET'S BREAK DOWN THE ABM PROCESS TO ITS SIMPLEST FORM



## OK, I'm calling BS on ABM

Marketing has basically been doing exactly this (or trying to) for the last forty years. Pick good targets (often based on previous success), know something about who you're marketing to, engage them on their terms, share what you learn with sales, and measure what matters. This is just good marketing!

**50% of all companies currently have ABM pilot programs in place and more than 60% of companies plan to invest in ABM technology.**  
**84% of B2B marketers believe ABM provides significant benefits for retaining and expanding current relationships. - SiriusDecisions**

So what happens when companies fire up an ABM pilot? Naturally they are wildly successful. As if by magic they see an increase in pipeline, larger deals, and improved sales and marketing alignment right out of the gate, all common benefits of ABM (psst, and good marketing).

But, here's the rub. While marketing is high fiving and chest bumping, sales is giving them the stink eye. Twenty accounts, fifty accounts, maybe even 100 accounts but that's about as much as marketing can handle. And if you're a salesperson who doesn't have a whole lot of accounts on that list, you're probably pretty annoyed. What about my accounts?

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The PUNCH in the gut comes when you realize ABM is REALLY hard to execute at any kind of scale.

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And since we need to run a business and not science experiments, we have to be able to scale the program, or it's simply not feasible.

We have creative, smart, hard working people, great processes, and tons of technology to throw at it (7,000 tools to be exact), so why is it so hard to scale your ABM program?

The simple answer is limited insights and NO real orchestration. What do I mean by that? Well, let's take that same simplified ABM flow and identify some difficulties and gaps.



## Select the best accounts

According to who? Based on what data? What's in our CRM? According to Steven Casey, Principal Analyst with Forrester Research, only 12% of B2B marketers have confidence in their data, so that's not going to cut it. What's in sales' gut? This can be a hotly debated, no conclusion, string of conversations, pivot tables, and meetings with no real result. Or worse yet the result is a static list of accounts.

The point is, we need to select accounts based on real buyer intent and activity data that's in the "dark funnel," and we also need to model out the buyer journey that leads to a closed/won opportunity based on previous behavior, which takes data crunching power we don't have.

## Know about them

How many more 3rd party data sources can we license? Collecting account data including geographic, technographic, and firmographic data, along with personas and contacts, can be difficult, time consuming, and expensive. And this is table stakes. We also need to know what prospects care about. Are they early stage or late stage? Have they filled out a form? Who are the members of the buying team? All data we must extract from the dark funnel. No, we'll just whiteboard that out with sales.

## Engage the right way

If we want to provide useful information and help our targeted accounts build consensus, we need predictive analytics to understand where they are in the buying journey and what they care about. This requires stitching together millions of signals to understand buying patterns and predict when an account is ready to engage. This requires advanced orchestration capabilities across multiple personas, channels, messages and most importantly timing. If we're dealing with one system for display ads, another for email, and a third for BDR outreach, it is impossible to coordinate this effort at scale and the likely outcome is a lousy prospect experience. So we fall back on manual coordination, detailed project plans, dedicated teams, or my favorite, "We do ABM... its a direct mailer."

## Collaborate with Sales

If you're using spreadsheets, weekly calls, handoff processes, or operating from outdated information - or using multiple systems to track, report, and manage your sales and marketing collaboration - you're doing it wrong.

## Track real stuff

In marketing, we typically have the MQL (Marketing Qualified Lead). We typically separate MQLs from unqualified leads using some kind of lead-scoring system, often based on points assigned to actions a person might take, such as reading an email, downloading an eBook, or filling out an online form. Once the prospect has tallied up enough points, they are considered an MQL and thrown over the wall to sales. Not only is that a subjective measure of a person's intent, it only accounts for one of a potential 10+ individuals participating in a complex B2B sale. Not to mention it provides zero insight at the account level with regard to intent, engagement, or where they are in their buying journey.

## UNCOVER, PRIORITIZE AND ENGAGE, WITH THE POWER OF AI

The reality is, ABM is solid, principled marketing - and it works. But in order to reach the promised land of ABM at scale, you'll need more than a few automation tools stitched together to unlock the secrets of the dark funnel, prioritize for timing, and engage with buyers on their terms. This requires you to collect and analyze terabytes of data to understand prospect behavior at a scale that simply cannot be achieved without a robust Customer Data Platform (CDP), Machine Learning, and AI. It also means you need a way to orchestrate how, when, and where to use these buyer insights on a massive, yet individualized scale.

### UNCOVER DEMAND

Ask yourself a few questions: How many companies are actively looking to buy my product right now? At what stage are these companies in their buying journey? How many people are involved in the purchase decision? How many deals are going down in our space that we're not even aware of? Why didn't we get invited to the RFP? Got answers?

In order to truly understand the level of demand in the market for your product, you must first uncover your dark funnel to make the anonymous known, and connect it to your known funnel (data in your CRM, MAP) in order to get a complete picture of where each identified account sits in their buyer journey.

In addition to capturing intent signals from every known and anonymous source, you must also be able to easily identify new contacts and build out the complete buying center for those accounts that do meet the threshold of being "in market" for your product. This is what ultimately will allow you to create the targeted micro-segments necessary for ABM success. None of this can be done at scale without a robust CDP and the power of AI.

### PRIORITIZE ACTIONS

When scaling your ABM efforts to thousands of accounts, each with dozens of potential contacts on the buying team, prioritization becomes critical for success. But how do you decide which accounts to spend time, effort, and budget on today? Here, AI does the heavy lifting to ensure you're concentrating resources on accounts with high buying propensity by leveraging AI-powered behavioral and fit scores for accounts, leads, and contacts. Ultimately, this gives you the power to give sales insight into the complete account buying journey, and to shine a light on why it's time to engage.



## ENGAGE BUYING TEAMS

Overcoming buyer resistance at scale means orchestrating “always-on” personalized, multi-channel, multi-touch outreach, based on AI-driven insights. But how do we get there? The key is to utilize the demand signals we’re capturing to trigger the right campaign, to the right member of the buying team, at the right time, and over the preferred communication channel.

Imagine trying to manually tweak our ad segments or outbound campaign lists to accommodate new accounts moving into the

segment, or accounts with diminishing buying signals moving out every day - or maybe even every hour. This is precisely what we are unable to do manually and why we end up wasting time and money sending ill-timed and unwanted communications to accounts that have no interest in buying our product, while remaining completely in the dark to emerging buying signals.

Again, AI is what allows us to execute high-ROI digital campaigns that truly engage members of the buying team with the right message at the

right time, along with helping sales to identify when to take the next best action at not just ten or fifty accounts, but at thousands.

## ABM, POWERED BY AI

AI and orchestration then becomes a game changer for the entire revenue team, when applied to scaling ABM. Let's walk through the ABM simplified flow again, this time infusing these AI capabilities into a single platform that can collect, connect, and orchestrate the data and functionality needed to scale ABM.

First of all, let's establish that an AI-powered ABM platform is not going to do EVERYthing, but it will do a lot of the heavy lifting. As a revenue team, it's up to you to define four key elements:

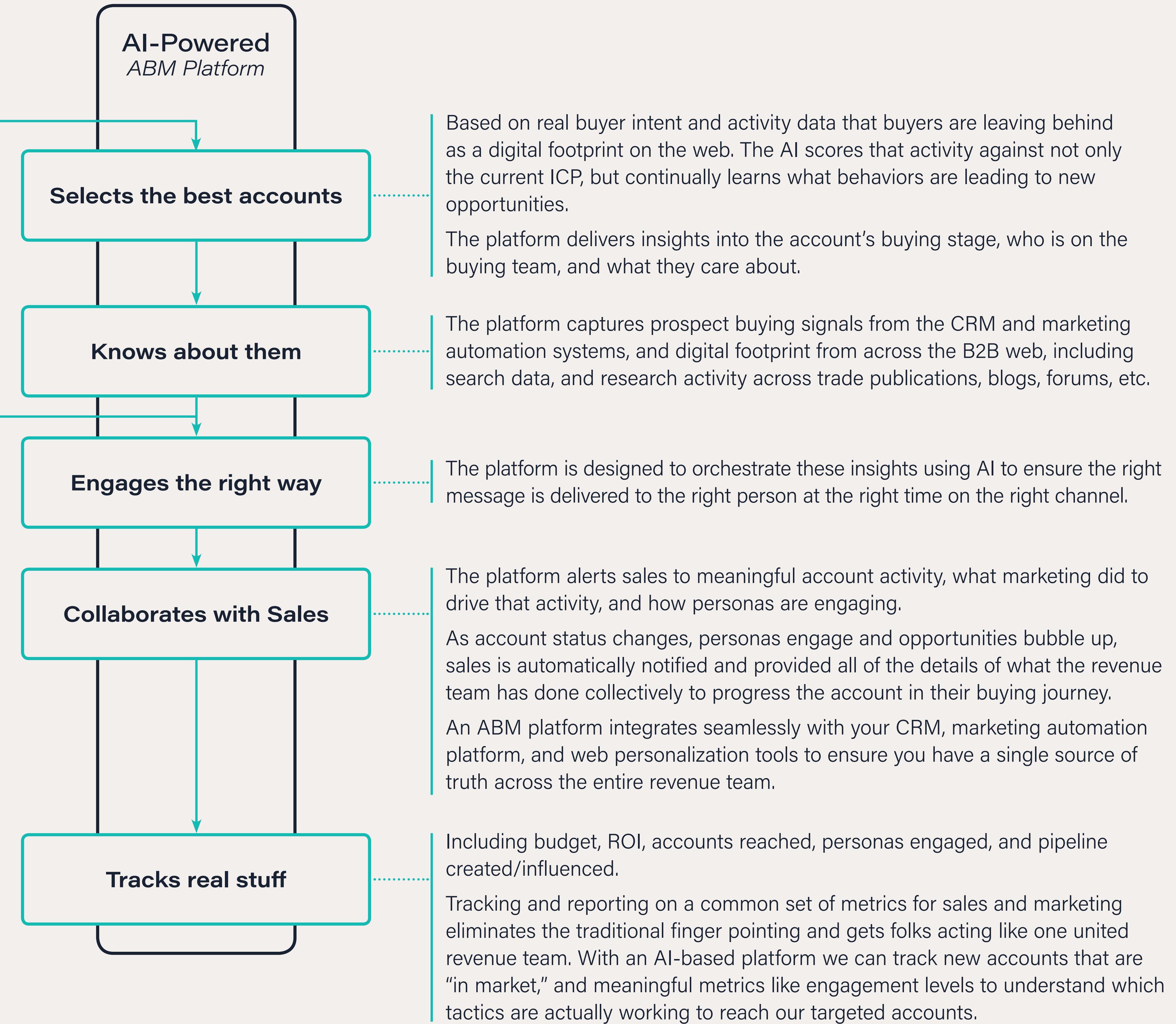
- Your business objective
- Your budget
- Your content and creative
- Your prospect experience (*by this I mean activation channels, like direct mail, eEmail, BDR outreach, events, and special programs*)

The ABM platform does the rest.



You:

**Define the business objective** (e.g., Enter a New Geo/Industry, Competitive Takeout, Introduce a New Product/Feature, Expand in a Territory, etc.)



By employing an ABM platform powered by AI, human intervention can be reduced to establishing the business objective, and determining the experience you want for your prospects. ABM at scale now seems attainable.

This still sounds a bit academic, so let's take it for a spin in the real world.

## EXAMPLE #1 - THE COMPETITIVE TAKEOUT

### The Scenario

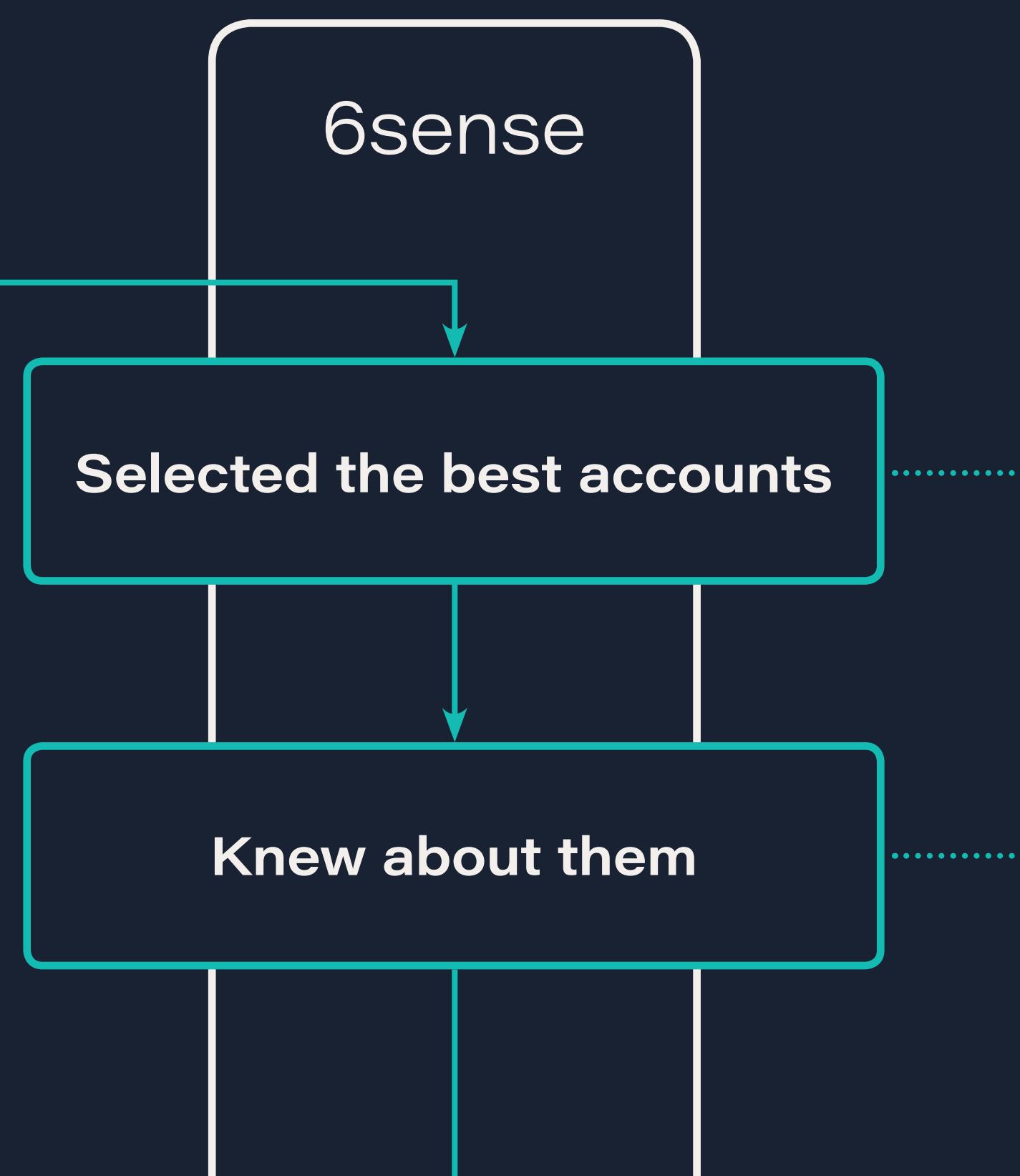
I get a message on Slack from sales with a news alert. One of our competitors fumbled a product release and our sales team wants to launch a "campaign." My first instinct is to say "No, we've got a ton on our plate, and by the time we get the entire thing mapped out this will be yesterday's news." Plus, I'm not real big on the whole "competitive takeout" thing anyway. But, I do have 6sense and I should be using it, so why not.

What happened next was pretty interesting.

We determined:

#### **The Business Objective**

Win business away from a competitor who had fumbled a product release.



The platform identified around 200 accounts that were currently using the competitor's technology solution, or actively researching the competitor's solution based on keyword search analysis.

6sense also identified the key personas on the account along with additional keywords they were researching to provide us with more detail on what they cared about.

## We determined:

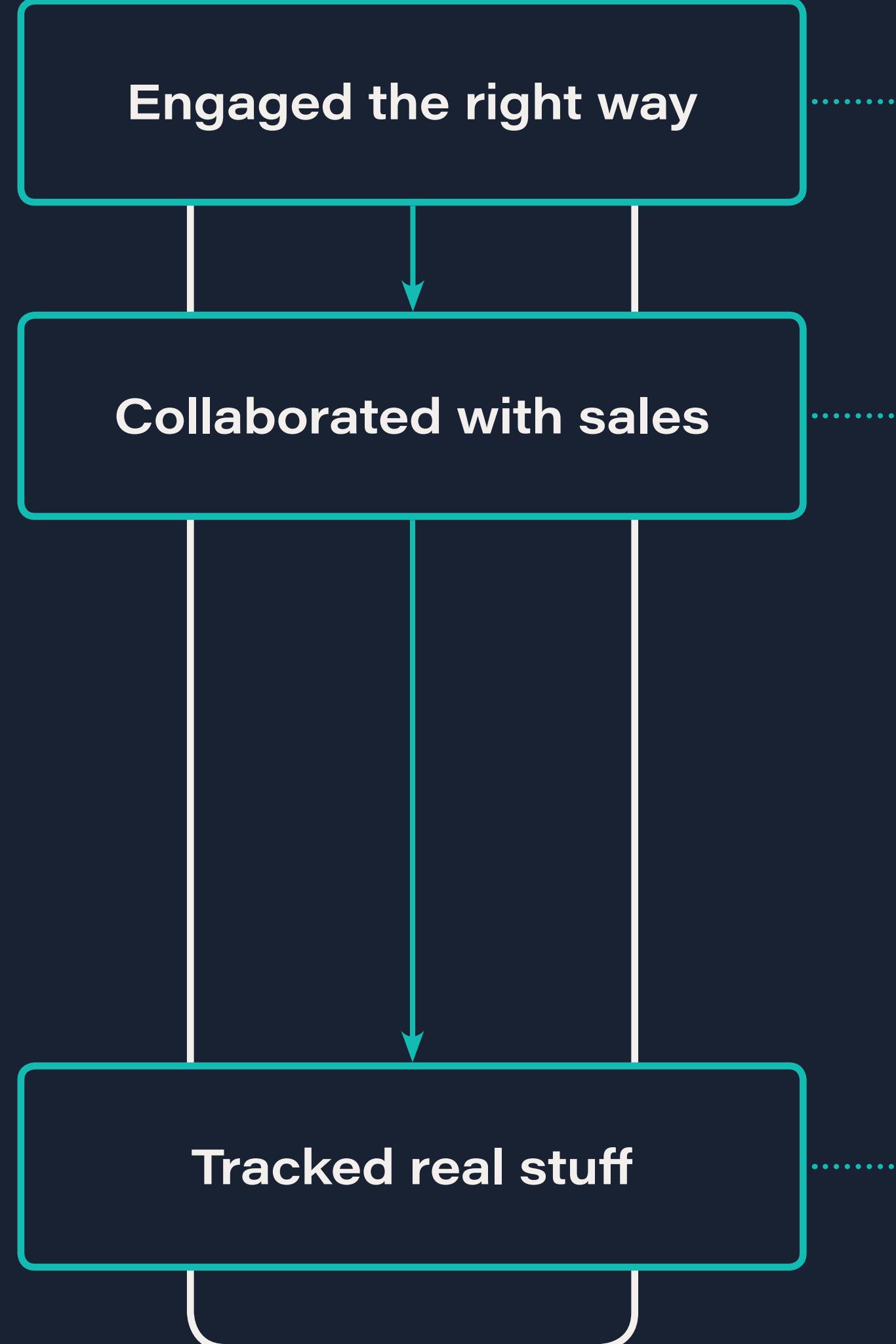
### The Budget/Creative/Content

Based on the dark funnel intelligence uncovered by the platform, we huddled and came up with our creative. We ran a set of ads through an A/B test in 6sense and quickly got feedback on which message was resonating.

Based on the outcome of the A/B test we determined our content, tactics and channels. And since this was not a major campaign, we decided on two channels: display ads to the 200 accounts, plus BDR outreach if an account moved into a relevant buying stage.

### The Play

\$500 ad spend, with a message tailored to those dissatisfied with their current solution - specifically issues related to the most recent product release - with a call to action to put us to a real live test, proving we could do better.



6sense orchestrated the campaigns, making sure the ads got in front of key personas in the target accounts and automatically triggered BDR outreach when accounts reached decision stage.

6sense kept our salespeople in the loop the entire time by updating the opportunity record right in our CRM, allowing our AEs to easily see which accounts were viewing the ads, which accounts visited our website and which accounts had responded to BDR outreach. In addition to that activity data, they could also see which personas were engaging and what topics they cared about. And finally, account owners received an alert from 6sense when an account moved into purchase stage, letting them know it was time for them to act.

6sense tracked how much we spent, how we increased engagement, what open opportunities we influenced, and lo and behold, the new opportunity we created.

## The Results:

Why do I think this is so cool? It's not the whole competitor takeout thing - I actually don't spend much time or energy focusing taking down competitors, it's not really my thing. What I think is cool is the fact that we did this in two days. TWO DAYS! And the bulk of that time was creating and testing the ads.

We spent a total of \$237 and were able to increase engagement, identify (or move) accounts to "in market," influence opportunities, and even created one new one. We responded in a timely and agile way to changing market conditions and built all of our creative based on what our audience indicated they were interested in. And because we

didn't have to spend any resources arguing over which accounts to include, or really even over what our messaging should be, it allowed us to focus on our business objective, not making pivot tables.

To me, this putting marketing back where it belongs - as close to the customer as possible.

# PERSONALIZED FOR TIMING, USING SMARTPLAYS

If power to the people feels like anarchy let's discuss a more programmatic example.

For this example, I need to introduce the concept of a "SmartPlay." A SmartPlay is one or more if/then statements used to build custom audiences and/or automate actions based on account activity across any channel, account/contact fit score, or attribute (firmographic, technographic, etc.).

For example, a SmartPlay can specify that when an account moves into the awareness stage to automatically buy the associated contacts to round out the buying center, or when an account is identified as "in market," to start BDR outreach. Other examples include things like identifying accounts likely to churn (such as existing customers in-market again for a competitor's product); setting up campaign triggers for deal progression drips; and automatically enabling digital media campaign activation to enable a surround strategy on accounts where the buying team is not fully engaged.

SmartPlays allow for automated ACTION to be taken on account insights. If this seems like a fancy term for a nurture track, in its simplest form it is. But there are a few differences, that today's modern ABM platforms offer that are missing from current marketing automation technology.

First, SmartPlays use AI to continually adjust the audience and tactic based on real-time behavior from the dark funnel and then orchestrate the action across the preferred channel. Secondly, SmartPlays can be daisy chained together, allowing you to create incredibly sophisticated and personalized outreach based on real-time account activity, intent signals, and where the account is in the buying journey - all on a massive scale using AI. Finally, we're able to personalize not just for a particular industry, persona or account demographic, but for TIMING. All of this is available today with the right ABM orchestration platform.



# EXAMPLE #2 - PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH FOR ACCOUNTS IN MARKET, BASED ON BUYING STAGE

## The Scenario

We needed a programmatic way to increase pipeline for accounts identified with a high likelihood to buy from us.

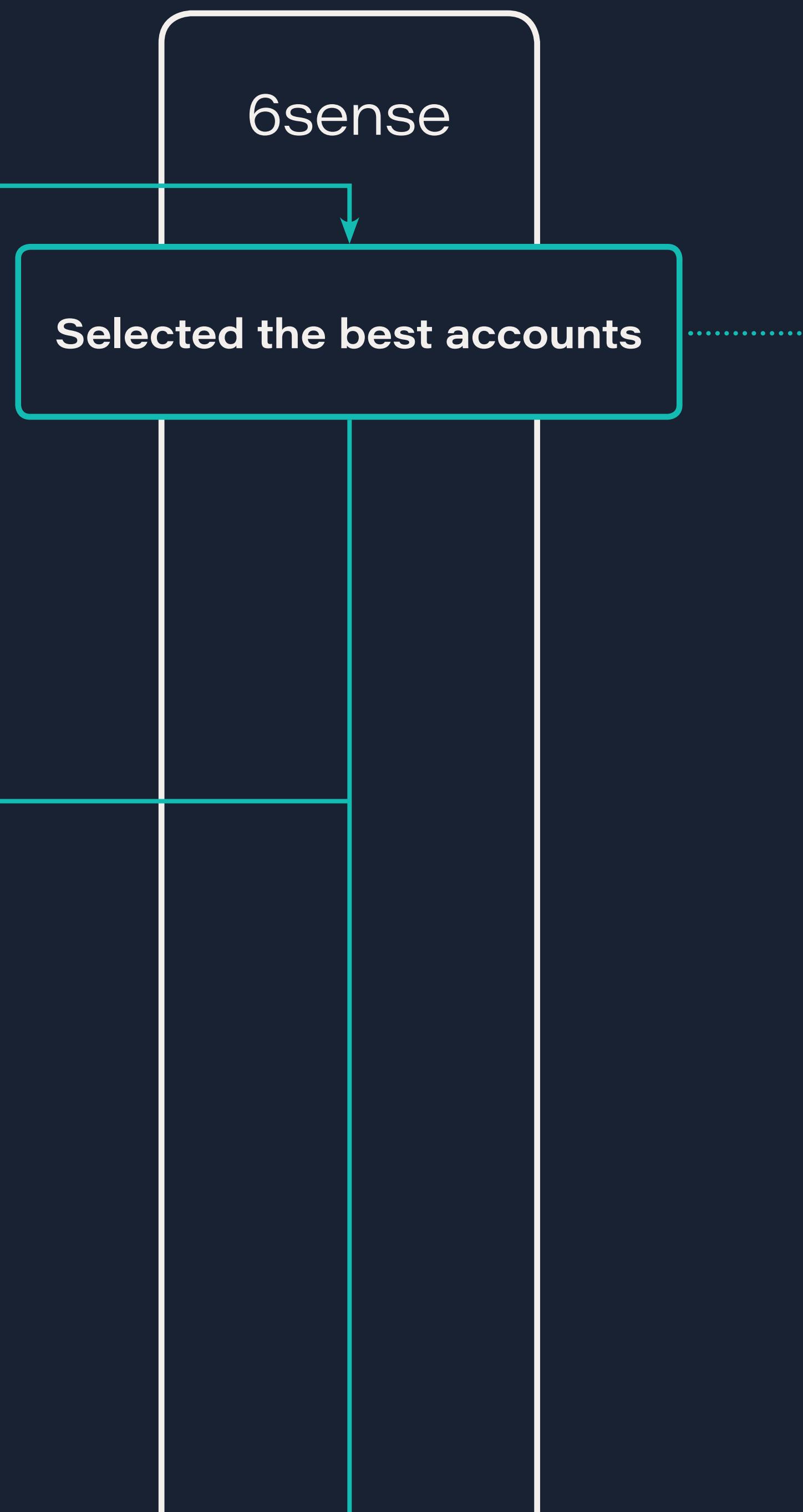
We determined:

### **The Business Objective**

In order to successfully focus our resources and efforts on accounts with the highest propensity to buy, we needed to narrow our ICP down to those accounts that were identified as actively “in market” for our solution, and create personalized outreach based on their buying stage.

### **The Budget/Creative/Content**

We set our budget, determined our tactics and content based on the number of accounts 6sense identified, and tailored personalized content for each buying stage.

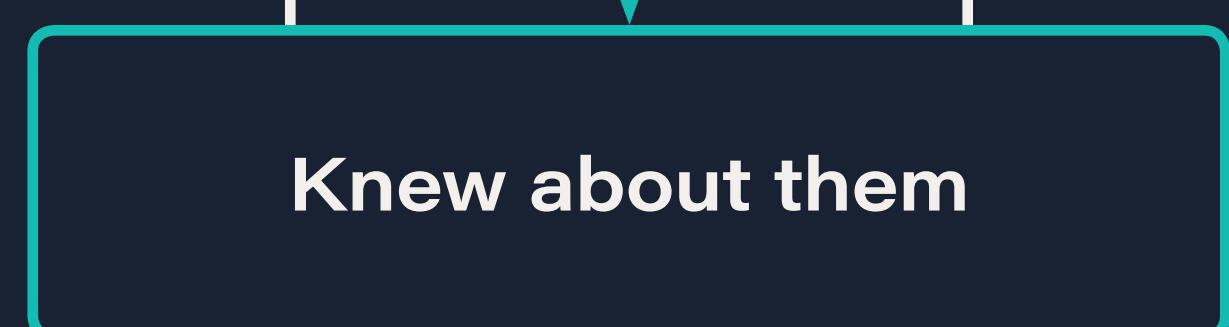


The platform helped us to determine our ICP (Ideal Customer Profile) to identify only those accounts - based on historical data - that are most likely to open an opportunity with us. We called this our IICP - In-Market Ideal Customer Profile. It should be noted here that this is not a static list of accounts that becomes quickly outdated, but rather a dynamic list with accounts continually being added as new accounts meet the IICP threshold and others falling off due to decreasing activity and intent signals.

For us, this meant 6sense allowed us to narrow our focus from about 20,000 accounts in our ICP (far too many), down to around 2,000 accounts that were showing buying intent (our IICP). We were confident this was our real commercial opportunity and where we could impact pipeline growth.

With insights from the 6sense platform, engaging the right way becomes obvious. We were able to use our stage and persona-based content to get the right message to the right member of the buying team on their preferred channel, helping to build consensus and progress the deal. For example, our simplified engagement strategy looked something like this:

- **AWARENESS:** Recommend thought leadership content, based on keyword search terms (e.g. *ABM, Account Based Marketing*).
- **CONSIDERATION:** Serve display ads to accounts in our IICP based on keyword search.
- **DECISION:** BDR outreach with tailored messaging based on persona and keyword search (i.e., *ABM+sales, ABM+marketing*).
- **PURCHASE:** Direct mail door opener (*higher investment*) with an offer to "Start Uncovering Demand Now." Prospects in this stage were offered a customized report showing the number of accounts currently in-market for their solution, along with a firmographic and technographic profile of those accounts, and a sample list of real in-market accounts.



The 6sense platform gave us insight into the criteria used to make up our IICP. For example, I can see that the best accounts are primarily US based, have a marketing automation platform installed, have more than 100 employees, and are in certain industries.

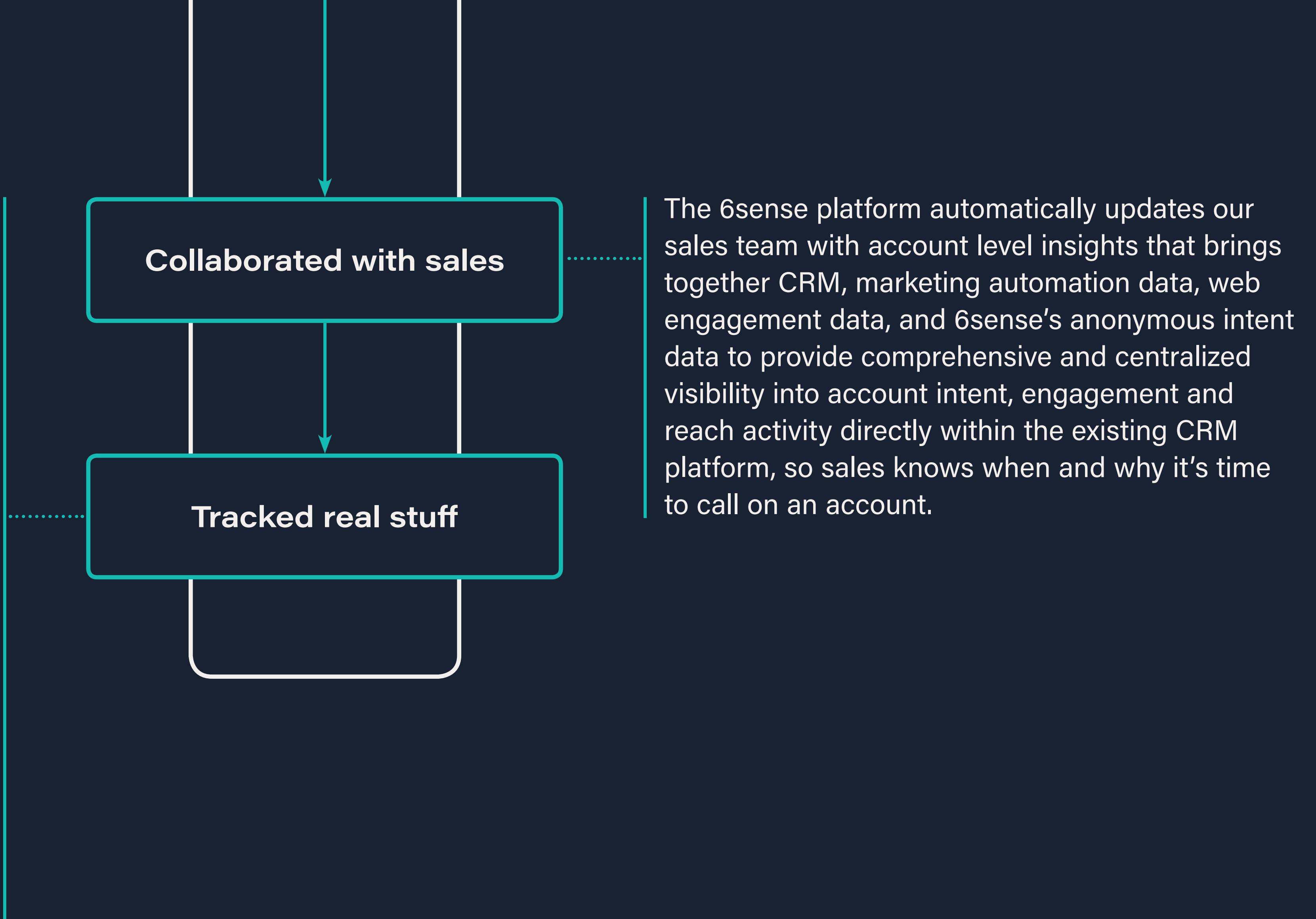
In addition, the platform allowed us to understand where each account was in the buying stage.

- **AWARENESS:** Accounts here were researching things like ABM, CDP, lead generation, or predictive analytics, indicating they weren't researching our specific solution or its capabilities, but rather more generally looking for answers to a particular problem.
- **CONSIDERATION:** Accounts here were researching specific solutions (by brand name), but had not yet visited our website.
- **DECISION:** Accounts in this stage were actively visiting our website, but doing so anonymously.
- **PURCHASE:** These accounts had varying levels of engagement on specific pieces of content at both the account and contact level.

These insights were critical to create messaging and outreach based not just on demographic, firmographic, and technographic data, but TIMED to exactly where each account was in their buying journey!

We were able to measure velocity through the buying stages and ultimately something we call 6QA (a combination of account fit, engagement, and “in market” scores). A 6QA is different than an MQL because it accounts for the entire buying team, not just an individual lead. It is a score based on all the account activity - unknown to known - and shows an account, not an individual, has reached a level of readiness to engage.

6sense also allows us to track things that previously would have been pretty much in the dark, or bucketed into a “reach,” or “awareness” metrics around web traffic, SOV, etc. Things like new accounts “in market,” (we have a monthly quota of new accounts we want to move to “in market” status), the percentage of new accounts that are marketing influenced, average number of personas engaged, and conversion of “in market” accounts to active pipeline.



## The Results:

Like most marketing and sales teams, we were doing a pretty good job of tracking opportunities once they actually become opportunities. Again, this is what we call the “known funnel,” where we can easily see the number of opportunities, average deal size, velocity, and win rates. However, we lose visibility when we move from known to unknown, and the farther up the dark funnel we went the less “real” our metrics became.

At the top, and darkest part of the dark funnel, is what we would typically categorize as “reach” or even generically “awareness.” Things like website traffic, share of voice, and likes/shares on Twitter or LinkedIn get bucketed here.

By using 6sense I’ve been able to shine a light on buying behavior - both anonymous and known - so just like my pipeline metrics

The 6sense platform automatically updates our sales team with account level insights that brings together CRM, marketing automation data, web engagement data, and 6sense’s anonymous intent data to provide comprehensive and centralized visibility into account intent, engagement and reach activity directly within the existing CRM platform, so sales knows when and why it’s time to call on an account.

## NO FORM, NO SPAM, NO COLD CALLS

Did you notice anything interesting coming out of these examples? The real challenge we face as sellers and marketers is the growing disconnect between how today's B2B buyers want to buy, and our reliance on the sales and marketing tactics of the past. Each of the examples above not only aligns with how buyers want to buy, but creates a profoundly better prospect experience - one with NO FORMS, NO SPAM, and NO COLD CALLS.

Prospects don't want to be inundated with irrelevant emails, unwanted calls, or give up their anonymity to find out about our solutions. They want help and guidance to educate themselves, eliminate confusion, build consensus, and move the entire buying team through their buying journey. We have to be engaged with them every step of the way, based on their pace and timing. When we do this, the content, creative, and prospect experience are driven by real insight that puts our audience first (even though we think we're wildly creative), and enables us to execute ABM at scale.

Finally, the ability to personalize for timing - a critical piece of ABM success - requires real-time behavior scoring, predictive modeling and cross-system, cross-channel orchestration that can only be achieved on a consolidated platform that delivers behavioral and predictive insight AND cross-channel orchestration.

## ABM REALLY IS JUST GOOD MARKETING - NOW GET STARTED

If you're thinking ABM is a mysterious black box that requires you to rethink your entire strategy, retool your entire tech stack, and recast your entire revenue team, it isn't. Yes, in order to successfully scale beyond an ABM pilot, you'll need a robust technology platform that can deliver both insight and orchestration. But you don't need to hire a team of data scientists or become an expert on CDPs and data lakes.

So now ask yourself, is ABM really so different from what we've been trying to do? Is ABM a radical new approach, or just great marketing - aimed at accounts, rather than individuals?

ABM, backed with the right technology platform, allows all of us to get back to doing what we do best - creating compelling content and programs that support our buyers in navigating their unique buyer journey, on their terms, and at their pace. Today, organizations are competing and winning on providing the best customer experience. Why wouldn't we want the competitive advantage of creating an amazing prospect experience as well?

# SO, HOW DO YOU GET STARTED?

## Do not pass go without developing your IICP

You probably have a good idea about the size of your current TAM (Total Addressable Market), or maybe you've even done the necessary work to establish your ICP (Ideal Customer Profile). These are both important segments to know and understand, but do little to enable your team to execute an effective ABM program at scale, mainly because both are far too large, and offer little in the way of insight into who is actually looking to buy your product. Developing your IICP (In-market Ideal Customer Profile) allows you to prioritize your budget and effort on accounts with the highest propensity to buy.

## Base your creative and messaging on intent data

This isn't to say there's no room for creativity. In fact, quite the opposite. However, relying on what we think prospects care about is what often derails the best of ABM intentions. In other words, we need to make every opportunity for engagement count, and talking about things our prospects don't care about is the fastest way to ensure that doesn't happen. Maybe you had a consultant come in and help to develop your messaging, or your creative team has come up with some really clever and effective ads, there's no need to throw it away. Just be sure to attach your message and creative to what prospects are actually researching and care about.

## Embrace the golden rule: *Timing is Everything*

Your messaging and creative have to be good - and based on what you know prospects care about - but your timing has to be perfect. It doesn't matter if you create the perfect ad or call to action if buyers aren't ready or able to respond (not "in market" for your solution). In the old days we used to call this a "condition," not an "objection" with the understanding that conditions can't be overcome, like objections. It is critical that you understand what each member of the B2B buying team needs at each stage of their buying journey to enable them to build consensus and make a purchase decision.

## Take a platform approach: *Insight + Orchestration, powered by AI*

One universal theme we hear over and over is how gnarly the marketing tech stack has become. Fifty-seven tools with little to no real integration and CMOs spending more time with IT concerns than growing market share. Today's modern ABM platforms put the power of AI behind the entire revenue team to provide both insight on prospects and customers AND orchestrate the thousands of real-time, micro-actions necessary to deliver effective ABM at scale.

For more information on how the 6sense Account Based Orchestration Platform, powered by AI is helping revenue teams know everything they need to know about their buyers so they can easily do anything they need to do to generate more opportunities, increase deal size, get into opportunities sooner, and compete and win more often, visit [www.6sense.com/platform](http://www.6sense.com/platform).



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As CMO of 6sense, Latané is passionate about empowering marketing leaders with effective technology, predictive insights, and thought leadership so they can confidently lead their teams, company, and industry into the future. As a “recovering software sales woman” she is keenly focused on leveraging data to ensure marketing programs result in deals, not just leads.

Prior to 6sense she was the CMO and a sales leader at Appirio. She was instrumental in aligning sales and marketing under a consistent and relevant message – resulting in increased bookings, average deal size, and win rates. Latané is creative, charismatic, and competitive. Her high energy, positive attitude, and sense of humor are contagious, and it's hard to find a customer, partner, audience, or employee who doesn't want to work with her.