

PRAISE FOR A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO ACCOUNT-BASED MARKETING

It is my view that account-based marketing (ABM) is on the threshold of revolutionizing the marketing domain. It shows all the potential of bringing about a much-needed paradigm shift. The undoubted leaders in ABM are ITSMA, led by the authors of this remarkable book. It is an evidence-based book and is replete with practical advice about how to initiate, manage and profit from ABM. My hope is that everyone who really cares about customers will read it and act on it.

Professor Malcolm McDonald, Emeritus Professor, Cranfield University School of Management

Burgess and Munn do a terrific job of demystifying account-based marketing. They provide practitioners with highly relevant examples, insightful nuggets and pragmatic suggestions for succeeding in a world where the ability to treat large customers as individual markets really matters.

Jonathan Copulsky, Global Insights Leader, Deloitte

Marketing is only as valuable as its proximity to a customer, and Burgess and Munn have provided the definitive guide to account-based marketing. Very simply, their process works wonders in driving growth. This book should be required reading for all marketing leaders.

Malcolm Frank, Executive Vice President, Strategy and Marketing, Cognizant, and co-author of *What To Do When Machines Do Everything: How to get ahead in a world of AI, algorithms, bots, and big data*

The strategies outlined in this book have served as a playbook for our ABM programme, with impressive results. Munn and Burgess are pioneers and thought leaders in the field of account-based marketing and I recommend their approach to any B2B marketing organization that wishes to build a tighter alliance between marketing, sales and their most strategic accounts.

David Hutchison, SVP and Head of Marketing, SAP North America

Finally, a thoughtful map to help all executives create an impactful account-focused approach in the increasingly complex world of marketing. *A Practitioner's Guide to Account-Based Marketing* is grounded in common sense and case-based advice; a must read.

Larry Weber, Chairman and CEO, Racepoint Global, and co-author of *The Digital Marketer*

This is a long overdue, go-to book that marketers can use to implement ABM in their organizations! Whether you practise Strategic, Lite or Programmatic ABM – or a combination of all three – ITSMA's seven-step process gives you a roadmap for how to understand accounts and use that understanding to execute highly relevant programmes across teams.

Jon Miller, CEO, Engagio

I recommend this book to anyone interested in creating mutual, sustainable value with their strategic accounts.

John Torrie, CEO UK and Asia, Sopra Steria

Bev Burgess with David Munn have written a must-read practical guide for anyone planning for ABM or indeed already on the journey. Read this book to avoid making the mistakes others have made and learn from the pioneers of ABM, with very practical insight from organizations that are really getting value from this approach.

Peter Lundie, Managing Partner, agent3

The proven techniques presented in this book drive innovation and the creation of new value for both companies in a strategic account relationship. As ABM is increasingly adopted in the US and India, I am excited to see what the wider impact will be on the economies of both countries.

Dr Mukesh Aghi, President, US-India Business Council

The competitive landscape for business marketers has become so crowded that account-based marketing is now a must for companies seeking to truly differentiate themselves with their most important customers and prospects. Given their deep knowledge, practical experience and pioneering role with ABM, Munn and Burgess are the perfect guides for this essential marketing strategy.

John Hall, Co-Founder, Influence & Co., and author of *Top of Mind*

As more and more people become interested in what ABM can do for their business, it's refreshing to see such a practical guide to this powerful, insight-led marketing strategy.

Paul Charmatz, SVP International, Avention OneSource Solutions

Having led the two award-winning ABM programmes at BT Global Services and CSC, I know this strategy produces great results. We partnered with Burgess and Munn on both programmes and they have captured all the critical ingredients for success in this comprehensive manifesto on ABM.

**Neil Blakesley, Principal, Consulting CMO and Former CMO, CSC,
and Vice President of Marketing, BT Global Services**

As CEO of the first and only specialist ABM agency I know what good account-based marketing looks like – and Burgess is one of the best in our field. Having witnessed her expertise firsthand, I'm delighted that Burgess has encapsulated this into a must-have read for anyone interested in ABM.

Alisha Lyndon, CEO, Momentum ABM

ABM is a critical marketing strategy for companies serious about putting clients at the heart of their firm to deliver differentiated value over the long term.

**Richard Grove, Global Director of Marketing, Business Development &
Communications, Allen & Overy LLP**

A definitive and groundbreaking book on account-based marketing, written by two of the leading practitioners in the field. This work is highly innovative and practical and provides a roadmap on how to develop lasting client relationships and maximize client lifetime value.

**Professor Adrian Payne, University of New South Wales Business School,
Visiting Professor, Cranfield School of Management**

If there's one person who can take credit for the current upsurge in interest in ABM, it has to be Bev Burgess. Her work to formalize, evangelize and galvanize the disparate people talking about and working in ABM has been inspirational and transformational – without her ABM wouldn't be the hot topic that it is today.

Joel Harrison, Editor-in-chief, B2B Marketing

Successful account-based marketing involves so much more than just repurposing existing marketing materials for your top accounts. Anyone can do that. If you truly want to differentiate your marketing from others', embrace the ABM tidal wave and learn how to do it the right way. This book is a great primer on how to create an effective and sustainable ABM programme, based on years of ITSMA research, experience and practitioner input.

John Lenzen, CMO, CareerBuilder

A Practitioner's Guide to Account-Based Marketing

Accelerating growth in strategic accounts

SECOND EDITION

Bev Burgess

Dave Munn



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CONTENTS

<i>About the authors</i>	xii
<i>Foreword</i>	xiv
<i>About this book</i>	xvii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xix

PART ONE

Setting up an account-based marketing programme 1

01 The essentials of account-based marketing 3

Why account-based marketing matters	3
Defining account-based marketing	7
The evolution of ABM to the next generation	10
Is ABM right for my organization?	18
Moving to a blended model	22
Case study: Driving strategic growth at ServiceNow	24
Your ABM checklist	26
Notes	27

02 Building the right foundations for account-based marketing 28

Taking the first steps	28
Case study: The keys to Red Hat's thriving ABM programme	29
Deciding what you want to achieve with ABM	32
Making the metrics count	35
Positioning ABM as a strategic business initiative	39
Creating the right framework for effective governance	42
Devoting sufficient resources to the programme	43
Your ABM checklist	45
Notes	45

03 Investing in the right tools and technologies 47

Challenges and opportunities of modern technology	47
Supporting ABM in individual accounts	49

Case study: Deepening engagements and accelerating growth among cold, dead and hostile accounts 52

Managing ABM programmes across accounts 59

Your ABM checklist 60

Note 60

04 Deciding which accounts to focus on 61

Not all accounts are equal 61

Defining the account selection process 63

Case study: ABM delivers 300 per cent growth for Snowflake, fuelling global expansion and category disruption 70

Your ABM checklist 73

Note 74

05 The ABM adoption model 75

A recognized approach 75

The prerequisites for ABM 79

The ABM programme roadmap 80

The seven dimensions of a successful ABM programme 83

Case study: Adapting ABM to ignite customer obsession at Fujitsu 88

Your ABM checklist 93

Notes 93

PART TWO

Account-based marketing step by step 95

06 Knowing what is driving the account 99

Where are you today? Where do you want to be? 99

ABM perception interviews 101

What is the account's context? 102

A note on how today's buyers buy 103

Information sources 104

Case study: 'Gold Dust': Mining value through insights at HPE 108

Your ABM checklist 116

Note 116

07 Playing to the client's needs 117

Changing your mindset 117

Developing the play 118

Prioritizing possible plays 121

Case study: Microsoft's 'Truths & Insights' game 123

Your ABM checklist 125

08 Mapping and profiling stakeholders 127

Understanding the decision-making unit 127

Building DMU stakeholder profiles 128

Case study: Interview: Lessons from online dating applied at Accenture 131

Mapping your stakeholders' wider networks 134

A note on segmentation 140

A note on stakeholder profiling for ABM lite and programmatic ABM 140

Your ABM checklist 142

Notes 143

09 Developing targeted value propositions 144

What is a value proposition? 144

What's wrong with most value propositions? 147

Three types of value propositions 147

The six elements in a targeted value proposition 150

Case study: O₂: ABM success with quantified financial value propositions 156

Test, test, test 161

Creating an elevator pitch 162

Creating a hierarchy of propositions 163

Your ABM checklist 164

10 Planning integrated sales and marketing campaigns 166

Ingredients of a successful ABM campaign 166

Setting your campaign objectives 167

Defining the audience for your campaigns 169

Creating personalized content 171

Designing an omnichannel campaign 180

Putting it all together in your campaign plan 180
Case study: Account-based ‘unmarketing’ at Infosys 183
Visualizing your campaign 193
Your ABM checklist 194
Notes 195

11 Executing integrated campaigns 196

Aligning marketing and sales 196
The role of the ABM-er on the account team in strategic ABM 201
Case study: The Qlik Infusion Programme 203
Project management: making sure things get done 205
The marketer as facilitator 207
Agile working 209
The politics of the account team 210
Your ABM checklist 210
Notes 211

12 Evaluating results and updating plans 212

Measuring the returns of ABM 212
A word on ROI in marketing 213
Finding the right metrics and defining the time frames 214
Objectives and metrics 215
Demonstrating interim success 220
Using metrics in the account team 222
Case study: Driving innovation with an automotive customer:
strategic ABM in practice 223
Using metrics with business leaders 225
Your ABM checklist 226
Notes 227

PART THREE

Developing your career as an account-based
marketer 229

13 The competencies you need to do account-based marketing 231

Your objectives 231
Your responsibilities 232

The competencies you need	233
Case study: Building a global ABM team at DXC Technology	245
Using and managing agency resources	248
Your ABM checklist	252

14 Managing your ABM career 254

Where do the best ABM-ers come from?	254
How does an ABM-er's salary compare with other marketing roles?	257
What is the best way to incentivize and reward an ABM-er?	257
How do ABM-ers stay fresh and avoid burnout?	259
Where next after ABM?	261
Your ABM checklist	276

<i>Index</i>	278
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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Bev Burgess is passionate about the critical role of marketing in business growth. Her specialism is the marketing and selling of business services, built through a combination of postgraduate study and 30 years' experience of both running and marketing service companies.

Bev's background includes senior roles at British Gas, Epson and Fujitsu. She has also run her own strategic marketing consultancy. Today Bev is an adviser to ITSMA's global ABM practice, delivering consulting and training to companies around the world that are designing, developing and implementing ABM programmes. Bev first developed this more focused marketing approach while managing director of ITSMA Europe in 2003.

Bev holds an MBA in strategic marketing and a BSc in business and ergonomics. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing and has served as an international trustee.

Her first book, *Marketing Technology as a Service*, was published by Wiley in 2010, exploring proven techniques to create value through services based on an infrastructure of technology. Her most recent, *Executive Engagement Strategies*, published by Kogan Page in 2020, explains how to have conversations and develop relationships that build B2B business.



Dave Munn is President and CEO of ITSMA (www.itsma.com), a research-based community for B2B marketing leaders that pioneered the ABM approach in the early 2000s. A tireless advocate and networker, Dave has spent the last 25 years bringing together marketers from top technology, communications and professional services firms to advance the theory and practice of B2B services and solutions marketing.

Since taking over leadership of ITSMA in 2001, Dave has broadened and deepened the company's research, consulting, training and community programmes in such essential and innovative aspects of marketing as ABM, executive engagement, thought leadership, solutions marketing, brand differentiation, buyer personas and customer success.

Prior to joining ITSMA in 1995, Dave held senior-level field positions with Oracle and Apple, and was a senior analyst at the Ledgeway Group, an innovative research firm that laid the foundation for the growth of technology services business research in the 1990s.

Dave holds a BA degree in Economics from Denison University and an MBA in marketing and strategy from Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

FOREWORD

Clients are now so complex, so large in scale, often in multiple market sectors and industries, with so many different internal groups and sources of power and influence that they are, effectively, markets in their own right. Being markets, they deserve to be treated with the full range of marketing disciplines: researched, sized and measured, segmented, opportunities identified, your services and products properly positioned for them, their different individual buyers analysed, organized into targets, connections made, as well as relationships built with a complete understanding of their cultures and multiple stakeholder influences. It seems daunting, yet larger and complex target and existing client companies and organizations nowadays require the same marketing analysis and management that would normally be applied to traditional market segments. Account-based marketing (ABM) is a way of addressing this opportunity and also of bridging the gap between traditional sales management and marketing.

ABM, at its core, is essentially treating individual accounts as markets in their own right and then acting with all the tools of marketing to position the company and its services ultimately to acquire a greater share of the client's business by improving your perception and reputation with the client and consequently earning their continuing loyalty.

I have seen ABM take shape as a distinct marketing discipline over the past decades. Having worked for seven major companies in seven different industries across three continents in 30 years, I have had many opportunities to observe and engage with local, national and international companies within different industries, and to get to understand both their consistent similarities as well as their unique differences.

During my time at one of these companies – Accenture – that served enormously complex clients globally, I realized that the business-to-business approach to traditional industry marketing was becoming limited. It was always going to be difficult to be seen as an 'industry expert' if the supplier company was not actually part of the same industry as the buyer company. Also, it was clear that, even within an industry sector, despite similar competitive dynamics, every industry player is different, with unique cultures, customer bases, personalities and challenges. Therefore, a much

deeper understanding of the client, a far more sophisticated segmentation, right down to the individual level, was needed rather than a simple analysis of ‘industry trends’ with product and service customization in order to uncover more opportunity.

My international work experience had given me an understanding and appreciation of the role that individual and national characteristics had played in major business events. Therefore, it seemed natural to me to apply this analysis of differences within a larger industry sector. It was going to be necessary to reorientate traditional ‘industry research’ towards understanding individual buyer clients within single companies and segmenting them accordingly.

Understanding the interconnections between individuals within the power structure of the buyer company and how they related to their target markets – and how all of this impacted the supplier company – is fascinating. After all, at the core of what at Accenture we called client-centric marketing, or what we now call account-based marketing, is deep research into how individuals react within institutions, and how both are affected by market dynamics and competition – and what opportunities this presents.

Another benefit: a large business-to-business company has to build its brand reputation client by client. It all begins with the individual client. ABM also represents a new way of changing perceptions of the supplier company with the buyer company. As such it is a new frontier in brand development beyond the traditional brand-building tools. Getting a fuller and deeper understanding of how a brand is perceived in the core client group is a rich learning experience and fundamental to all good brand strategies.

I have learned about ABM and the benefits it can bring throughout my work at Accenture and beyond, in my roles as global CMO at both Clifford Chance and JLL. Since those early days at Accenture, globalization has increased and there are few clients who are unaffected by forces larger than their domestic territory. We have all experienced this through the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, we have seen suppliers trying even harder to help their clients, often collaborating with them in creative ways, and using ABM methods to provide continuous insight into how clients were coping. This enabled them to develop new solutions and offers to support their clients, and to broaden and deepen existing relationships at the most senior levels.

As we were pioneering in the field, we had no general theory to draw upon, so I applaud Bev Burgess’s own pioneering work in developing ABM as a professional discipline, not just in writing this excellent book but also in

her consultancy work that has brought principles, a systematic framework, a methodology and multiple levels of professional development courses in ABM to a new generation of marketing professionals.

These new marketers can use the techniques of ABM, both to bridge the great divide between marketing and sales, and also to maximize their career potential. Indeed, the new generation of ABM experts can also benefit from the advanced uses of data gathering, analysis, automation and intelligent software to augment and extend the ABM method deeper and wider than ever before.

I would advise all practitioners to take advantage of the techniques included in this book, which sets out with great clarity the traditional and modern methods of ABM. However detailed the work involved, ABM-ers should always try to occupy the high ground of brand positioning, relationship development and revenue generation among their most important clients. This is worth emphasizing. ABM represents more than just a toolkit for short-term sales targets. It is more than just winning a greater percentage of clients' spend relative to competitors. It is about arranging your products and services into something valuable that is of long-term relevance and measurable in terms that the client understands. It is about reorganizing your company's universe to suit your clients' needs and perspectives rather than your own. This is what builds trust and long-term mutual value.

*Dr Charles Doyle,
Global Chief Marketing Officer,
Arup*

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Some years ago, one of the marketers attending an ITSMA event on a relatively new marketing strategy – account-based marketing, or ABM – came up at the end of the session and asked us a simple question. ‘Can you recommend a good book I can buy to learn more about how to do ABM in practice?’ The answer was no, we couldn’t, because no one had yet written a book on ABM – not even us! So, in 2017 we published the first edition of this book – *A Practitioner’s Guide to ABM*.

When that question was asked, ABM as a discipline was still new. Today there is more written online about ABM every day than there was in a year back then. It is revolutionizing the way we do business-to-business (B2B) marketing. The reason for all this ABM enthusiasm is simple. It works.

So now that everyone is getting interested in what ABM can do for them, it’s time to update the experience, research and case study examples that went into that first book, and create a second edition.

This book is for you if you have just heard the term ABM and want to find out more about it. It’s for you if your company has asked you to look into ABM and set up a pilot programme. And it’s for you if you’ve been working in ABM for a while but want to keep yourself fresh and embed your programme across your company.

In Part One we discuss the basics of ABM – what is driving its adoption and how it has evolved to the point where today there are three different types of ABM in use around the world. We look at the fundamentals to get in place as you get started with an ABM programme – objectives, positioning, governance, funding, metrics – and the all-important decision of which accounts to prioritize for ABM support. We take you through the technologies you can use to support your programme as it gets started and as it scales. And we look at how most companies move from exploring how ABM can fit, to experimenting with their first pilot accounts, through to expanding the number of accounts covered, to embedding ABM across their business.

In Part Two we look at how to do ABM on an individual strategic account. Working through ITSMA’s seven-step process, we explain how to start by building an in-depth understanding of the account and the key stakeholders within it. The insights from your analysis are used to decide where your best opportunities are for growth in the account and to map your own offers and solutions against your client’s issues.

Then, after identifying and profiling the decision makers and influencers for your solutions, we take you through the process of creating targeted and compelling value propositions for these key stakeholders. Next, we demonstrate how to build an integrated sales and marketing campaign for your account and to execute your campaign shoulder-to-shoulder with your sales colleagues. Finally, we offer some ideas for the metrics you can use to evaluate your ABM results and report your success.

Part Three of this book is focused on the skills and attributes you need to be a good account-based marketer. We introduce ITSMA's ABM competency model and discuss the profile of the typical ABM-er, highlighting both their strengths and their areas for development. We also look at how to manage the agency resources that you can use to access the specialist skills you may need for your ABM plan or to help you deliver ABM at scale. Our final chapter presents some ideas for managing your own ABM career, based on the collected wisdom of seven marketers working at the forefront of ABM today. A profile of each of our 'Magnificent Seven' is included to round off the book. Each one of them has a key piece of advice for you so that you can benefit from their experience and deliver results faster.

At the end of every chapter we provide you with a handy list of the key points for you to remember: your ABM checklist.

We recognize that ABM won't stand still once this book is written. So we encourage you to continue the conversation and your exploration of ABM with us at our events, or online at www.itsma.com, on LinkedIn or on Twitter (@ITSMA_B2B #ABM.) It is so great to be part of something this exciting, so please share your journey with us and help us to continue to shape the development of ABM as a professional discipline.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We have many people to thank for their help in writing this book.

First, thanks so much to Charles Doyle for working with us in the early days on the ABM concept and for coming with us on the journey right up to the present day. His Foreword sets the perfect tone for this book, and his invaluable advice continues as one of our ‘Magnificent Seven’ interviews with leading ABM practitioners in Chapter 14.

In a similar way, we also want to thank all those who have participated in our membership activities with ABM and have shared their perspectives and stories with us over the years to ensure that ABM continues to evolve successfully as a discipline. Some of your stories appear in this book as case studies. As a membership community, ITSMA is built on this collaborative development of new ideas and best practices.

In particular, we’d like to thank the members of our Global ABM Council for their ongoing contribution. Interviews with several of the members are featured in Chapter 14: Eileen Egan Cammarata at Red Hat, Eric Martin at SAP, Gemma Davies at ServiceNow and Navin Rammohan at Infosys. They join Charles Doyle in this impressive line-up. Our final members of the ‘Magnificent Seven’ and all-round ABM stars are Andrea Clatworthy at Fujitsu and Dorothea Gosling at DXC Technology. Thanks to you all!

Our colleagues at ITSMA have played a key role in the development of this book. Julie Schwartz, our SVP research and thought leadership, has run all of our ABM research studies and written many of our resulting publications on ABM. Jeff Sands, former VP and ABM practice co-leader for his many years involved in developing some of the models you see in this book. SVP consulting, Rob Leavitt, has helped to shape both the thinking and many of the articles that ITSMA has published on the topic. Louise Jefferson, a Senior Associate and member of the ABM practice helped with the research and development of the ABM Adoption Model featured in Chapter 5.

Our other associates who work with us on ABM projects also deserve a mention, since they too have debated and developed ABM thinking with us over the years. From Kathy Macchi (who helped with Chapter 3 on marketing tools and technology) and Lisa Dennis in the United States, through to Vincent Rousselet, Catherine Ahern and Gerry Davies in Europe. A special mention goes

to Sara Sheppard, who worked on the initial ABM discovery project with Bev back in 2003 and has been a sounding board for ideas ever since.

Finally, there are three people without whom this book simply would not have been published and to whom we are especially grateful. Laura Mazur, whose help with interviewing, drafting and editing was invaluable as the book took shape, and Kathy Hunter at ITSMA, who created all of the tables and figures you see in the book while delivering witty one-liners through the day to keep us going. Our final and warm thanks go to the publishers, Kogan Page, for commissioning this second edition of the book, and especially to Stephen Dunnell for his flexibility and support along the way.

*For my clients and colleagues, with thanks for your ongoing enthusiasm
and support.*

Bev

*For Dick Munn, with thanks for your wisdom, inspiration and passion
for marketing.*

Dave

