

ABM in 2026: Giving Sales the "Who" Behind the "What"

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What you can leave with today

01 Working people vs accounts

02 Influencing the entire buyer group

03 Creating actionable data for sales

Marketing targets accounts. Sales sells to people.

Unless marketing adapts, the marketing↔sales handoff will always be broken - and ABM investment will always be inefficient.

"We invested in ABM. We know which accounts are in-market. But our SDRs still don't know who to call."

The reality in most ABM programs today.

01

Account engagement scores are far from buying-group reality

Aggregated intent data hides who inside the account is actually engaging - and what they care about.

02

Sales can't prioritise the unknown

Without contact-level signals, every person in the buying group looks equally cold to the SDR.

03

The handoff is broken by design

Marketing measures accounts. Sales outreaches contacts. The gap between these two is where pipeline stalls.

Account-level signals hide the buyers.

Traditional ABM platforms collapse buying-group behaviour into account-level averages. Sales is left guessing.

WHAT MOST ABM PLATFORMS GIVE SALES

Account X **IN-MARKET**

VP of IT

VP of RevOps

CRO

CISO

All equally "warm" to Sales

01

SDRs reach out blind

No signal on who showed intent, what content they engaged, or how warm they actually are.

02

Outreach is generic

Without contact-level intel, personalisation is guesswork - and buyers notice immediately.

03

Pipeline stalls mid-funnel

You can't progress accounts when you don't know which stakeholder to unblock next.

B2B buying is messy. By design.

Source: Influ2 · ABM That Starts With People Report

66%

of B2B buyers change their priorities during the buying process

The journey doesn't follow a straight line. Stakeholders shift priorities, budgets get cut, champions move on. Static account targeting can't adapt.

6-10

stakeholders involved in a typical enterprise purchase

Each with different priorities, different objections, and different influence. Targeting the account doesn't reach all of them.

38%

of deals derailed by stakeholders marketing never engaged

IT, Security, Finance - often invisible in ABM campaigns, but capable of blocking the deal at the last moment. You need to reach them first.

THE REALITY

Being known by one person is not enough.

You are 20x more likely to be bought when everyone in the buying group knows you on Day One.

THE HIDDEN BUYER PROBLEM

Legal, Finance and Procurement have a powerful voice in the buying group.

Being known only by the champion - or the recommending function - is not enough to close the deal. The hidden buyers can veto it.

Source: LinkedIn, Bain & Company

20x

more likely to be bought

when the entire buying group
knows you on Day One

Implication: ABM is not about reaching more people - it is about making sure every stakeholder with blocking power already knows you before Sales arrives.

Marketing has two jobs in ABM. Most programs only do one.

JOB 1

Target the right people.

- Identify all personas in the buying group
- Map each persona to the right narrative angle
- Match creative to each stakeholder's concern

Most ABM programs do this.



JOB 2

Generate engagement data.

- Capture who engaged, with what, and when
- Surface contact-level or persona-level signals into the CRM
- Enable SDRs to outreach with context, not guesswork

But most ABM programs skip this.

Most ABM programs stop after Job 1. That's why the handoff is broken.

Build the buying group.

Map the narrative.

Different personas have different angles. Each needs its own messaging track - because the CFO's concern is not the VP of Eng's concern.

ECONOMIC BUYER

CMO / VP Marketing

Angle: Pipeline efficiency & ROI

- Marketing-sourced pipeline
- Sales cycle acceleration
- ABM spend justification

CHAMPION

Demand Gen Manager

Angle: Operational control

- Better SDR prioritisation
- Contact-level reporting
- CRM-native workflows

TECHNICAL EVAL

Marketing Ops / RevOps

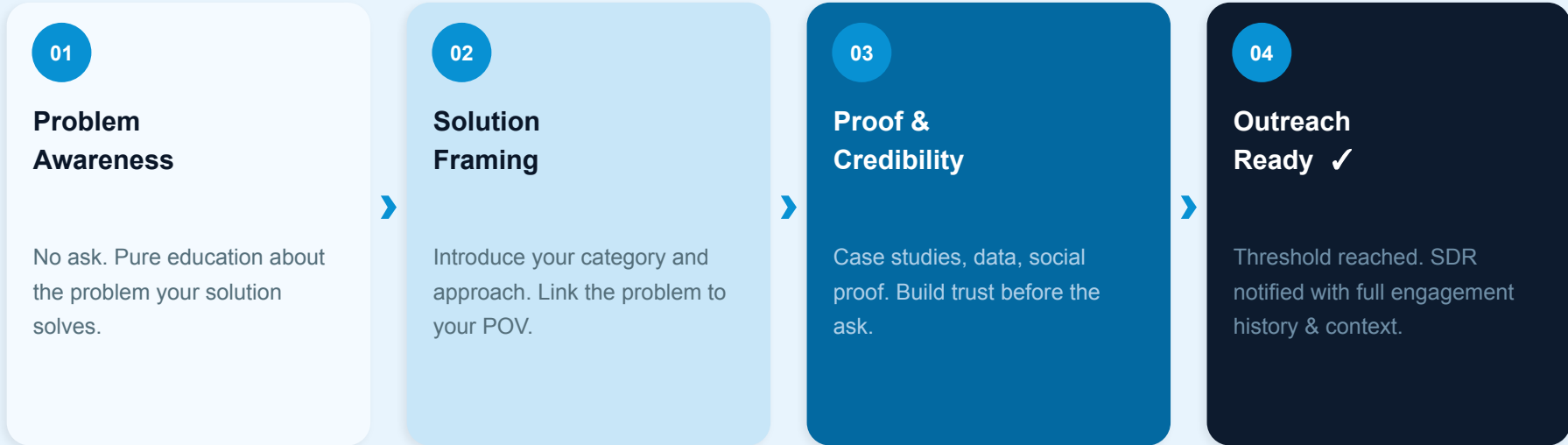
Angle: Data integrity & scale

- Clean identity resolution
- HubSpot / Salesforce sync
- Privacy & freq. capping

Contact-level targeting makes this possible - you're advertising to Jane at Account X, not to Account X.

Warm the prospect before Sales says hello.

Sequential creative journeys ensure each buying group member has seen the full narrative before SDR outreach begins.



Key insight: Buying group members with 15+ ad impressions showed **1.66x higher pipeline conversion** than cold baseline. - Influ2 Report

Who marketing warmed. Who Sales should call.

Impressions and clicks collected at the contact level and surfaced in Salesforce or HubSpot - the cleanest possible marketing-to-sales handoff.

WITHOUT CONTACT-LEVEL ABM

What Sales sees in the CRM:

Account X - IN-MARKET

5 contacts in buying group

No per-person engagement data

SDR picks a contact at random

Cold outreach. Low conversion.



WITH CONTACT-LEVEL ABM

What Sales sees in the CRM:

Jane Smith, VP Eng - 132 impressions, 3 clicks

Saw: Problem + Solution Proof content

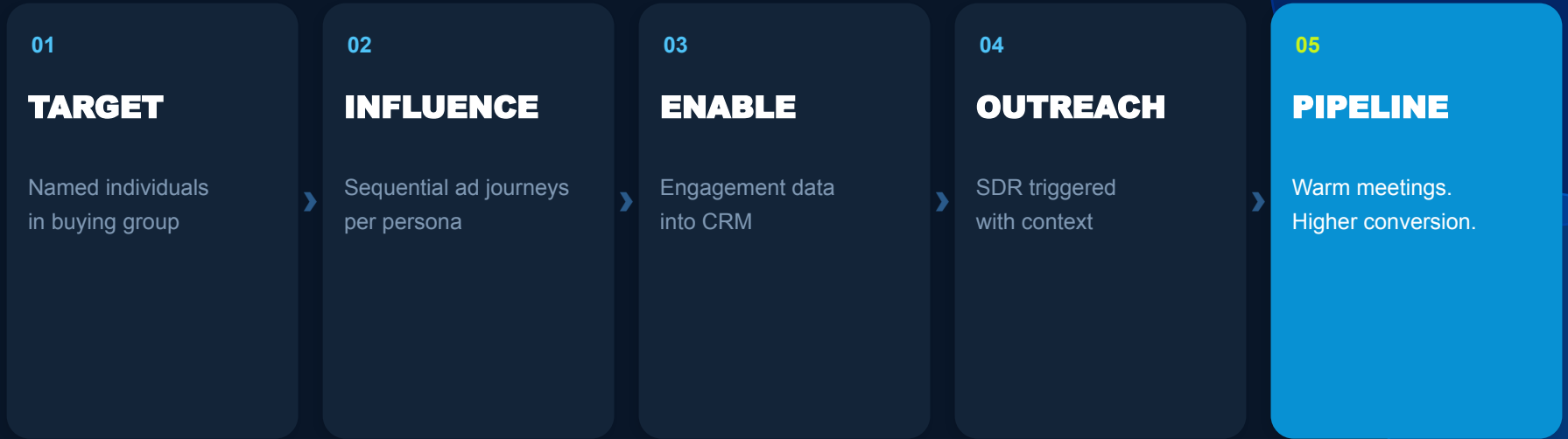
Last engagement: 3 days ago

SDR Trigger: ACTIVE - reach out now

Warm. Prioritised. Contextualised.

The cycle is complete. Marketing targeted, influenced, and enabled Sales.

Most ABM stops at targeting. This closes the loop.



↑ Most ABM stops here

The numbers back it up.

source: [Influ2 Report: ABM Starts With People](#)

1.74x

higher booked meeting conversion

for engaged contacts vs cold outreach alone

1.66x

higher pipeline conversion

when buying group members had 15+ ad impressions

2.18x

higher pipeline conversion

for buying groups with at least 1 ad click

What we see happens when marketing closes the loop.

Source: VertoDigital Portfolio Agency Data

77%

Increase in cold outreach meetings booked

Contact-level ad exposure directly influenced SDR meeting conversion rates across 3 named-account programs.

40%

More pipeline per outreach attempt

When Influ2 influenced the contact with ad aircover before and during outreach - pipeline per attempt increased.

Four things to do on Wednesday morning.

01 Audit your current ABM data flow

Ask ops: where does impression and click data go after an ABM ad runs? Is it stuck in the ABM platforms or does it reach SDR dashboards, widgets, notification systems?

02 Persona<>Content Mapping

Is your content mapped to each persona across the named accounts. Get the ABM owner or the agency to report to you on the ad narrative across each persona.

03 Define your outreach trigger criteria

What does 'warm enough' look like? Set a threshold - e.g. 15+ impressions + 1 click - that automatically notifies the SDR. Make it explicit and work out an SLA with the SDR team for contacting the warm prospects

04 Identify your highest-priority accounts

Pick 20–50 accounts where ABM intelligence is needed beyond the account level so you can help you SDR team engage. These become the pilot cohort for your first program. Prompt your ABM partner for a persona-level or contact-level strategy.

Thank you. Questions?

Speakers:

Ivailo Shipochki · Partner, Head of Growth · VertoDigital

Anna Tsymbalist · Head of ABM · Inlu2

Paul Green · Director, Growth & AI Solutions · VertoDigital

Engagement intent follow-up

Signal

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Marketing can create a strong pipeline for... See more

Focus your marketing and sales on the same prospects



INFLU2

INFLU2.COM
Get 2.26x more pipeline [Learn More](#)

Like Comment Share

Sales email subject and body align with the ad the prospect engaged with

Follow-Up

1-50 of 2,619

Get marketing and sales on the same page **External** **Inbox** **Salesforce Emails/Tracked successfully**

Helen Dutko
to

Hi Mary,

Aligning marketing and sales on the same prospects is one of the biggest challenges SDR leaders face. I'm betting you've experienced it at

You have a target list of accounts you want to target, but you're not getting the support you need from marketing to engage them. Or worse, there's no communication between marketing and sales about who to target.

We've solved those problems (and more) at Influ2. If you're interested in solving them for Acme Co (and doubling your pipeline) I'd love to connect to show you how we can make it happen. You can use this link to select a time.

Thank you

Helen Dutko | Sales Development Representative

Content intent follow-up

Signal



Melinda Byrne

Vice President of Sales, Financial Institutions at Surescripts

Checked out content at [forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com) about Account Based Marketing

Interested in optimizing LinkedIn ad performance.

Today



Follow-Up



Viktoria Dehtiarova

to Melinda ▾

9:14 AM (8 hours ago)



Hi Melinda,

A lot of the ABM coverage in places like Forbes focuses on “accounts showing intent.”
The reality? Deals don’t happen at the account level - they happen when the right people lean in.

That’s where Influ2 helps. We surface intent at the contact-level, so sales isn’t left guessing which of the 20 stakeholders actually cares. Is ABM something you’re doubling down on at Surescripts right now?

Search intent follow-up

INFLU2

Signal



Influ2 team

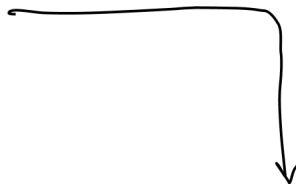
to you ▾

9:14 AM (8 hours ago)



Melinda from Surescripts just searched for “6sense”. Indicated competitor interest, evaluating other ABM vendors.

[Check Inlu2 Signals Center to get more details.](#)



Follow-Up



Viktoria Dehtiarova

to Melinda ▾

9:14 AM (8 hours ago)



Hi Melinda,

Most ABM platforms stop at the account level - which is why teams still struggle to turn “intent” into real pipeline.

Influ2 takes a different approach: Signals tied to **people**, not just companies. Clarity across ads, search, and social in one view. Sales enabled instantly with names, roles, and context in CRM + Slack.

That’s why our customers see 2-4× higher conversion from outbound - because they finally know who to reach out to. Is this the kind of visibility you’d want from an ABM platform?

Social intent follow-up

INFLU2



Influ2 Signals Center 10:16 AM

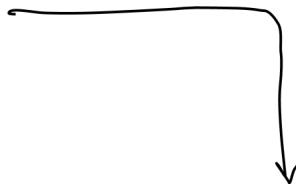
Hey, you've got a new social signal!

Melinda Byrne Posted about aligning marketing goals with growth metrics and balancing short-term succes.

Title: Vice President of Sales

Account: Surescripts

Signal



Follow-Up



Viktoria Dehtiarova

to Melinda

9:14 AM (8 hours ago)



Hi Melinda,

Saw your post about aligning marketing goals with growth - balancing short-term wins with long-term strategy & how it isn't always easy.

One challenge we hear often: it's hard to **prove** which activities (like paid ads) actually drive pipeline, especially at the contact level.

Curious - do you think more visibility into **who's** engaging could help bridge that gap?