

11 PERSONALIZATION TACTICS TO BOOST YOUR ABM

*Learn the personalization tips and tricks
that are critical to implementing
account-based marketing*

WHY PERSONALIZATION MATTERS IN ACCOUNT-BASED MARKETING

Account-Based Marketing (ABM) is a coordinated approach between Marketing, Sales, and Customer Success to target named accounts with highly-segmented, personalized content and campaigns, using effective plays that cater to entire buying committees.

ABM is meant to **individually** engage key decision makers and influencers involved in a purchasing process at a targeted account. But the people who make up these buying committees have become increasingly difficult to engage. That's partly because very few decision makers will accept a cold call or unsolicited query unless it has proven relevance, and emailing a targeted individual the wrong message or serving them content that doesn't address their needs, can make a poor first (and last) impression.

Yet capturing and holding the attention of these targets is the absolute lifeblood of any ABM program, which means marketers are on the hook to deliver **high levels of personalization** to make those 1:1 engagements effective.

In this guide, we'll provide **11 solid and proven tactics** for infusing effective personalization into ABM. We'll also look at how your choice of a web content management (WCM) platform can have a profound impact on how well you're able to implement personalization, and what to look for from an ABM-friendly WCM.

*Global communications giant CenturyLink saw a **30% increase in web traffic** from key accounts after implementing a personalization strategy as part of ABM. On a smaller scale, tech startup Mendix saw a **10% lift** in content downloads and reduced its home page **bounce rate drop by 6%** after instituting personalization.*

Source: DemandGen

1. DEVELOP AN AGILE CONTENT LIBRARY FOR YOUR SALES TEAM TO LEVERAGE

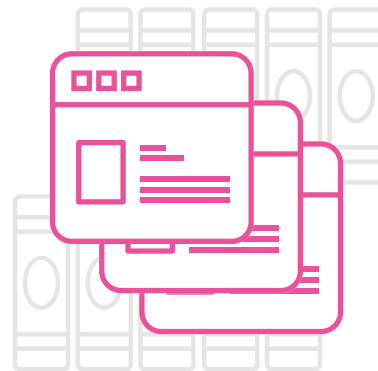
Since content is the backbone of ABM, generating it is a big agenda item that must be approached strategically. Before wading too deeply into the content creation pool, think about developing content in such a way that it can be applied to multiple accounts.

Furthermore, successful ABM content begins by ensuring that marketing and sales have aligned goals. Doing so is the only way to develop relevant messaging that engages specific, high-value companies and audiences at the right time in the buyer's journey.

This starts with intensive planning. That's because your content campaigns must be:

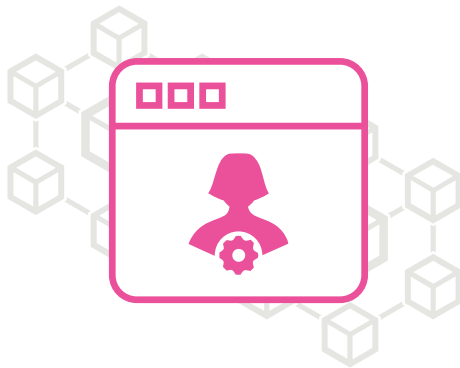
- A collaboration between marketing and sales where each account is looked at based on where it is in the sales process.
- Developed to deliver real resonance and value to your ABM targets.
- Made up of a range of elements that can be quickly personalized to nurture individual ABM stakeholders at different points in the sales funnel.
- Is evergreen enough to be durable, or can be readily updated to maintain relevance.
- Written in a way that makes it possible to easily replace select copy to create multiple versions that can be used for different accounts and industries.

A word about metrics: In ABM, you're not measuring success according to how many companies you connect with, it's about the number of engaged and interested companies you connect with. This extends to content, too. If your blog views or download numbers are flat, that matters less than the composition and quality of the audience; if you're getting increasing views by ABM targets, that's a win.



2. PERSONALIZE SECTIONS OF YOUR WEBSITE TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO A COMPANY'S CHALLENGES

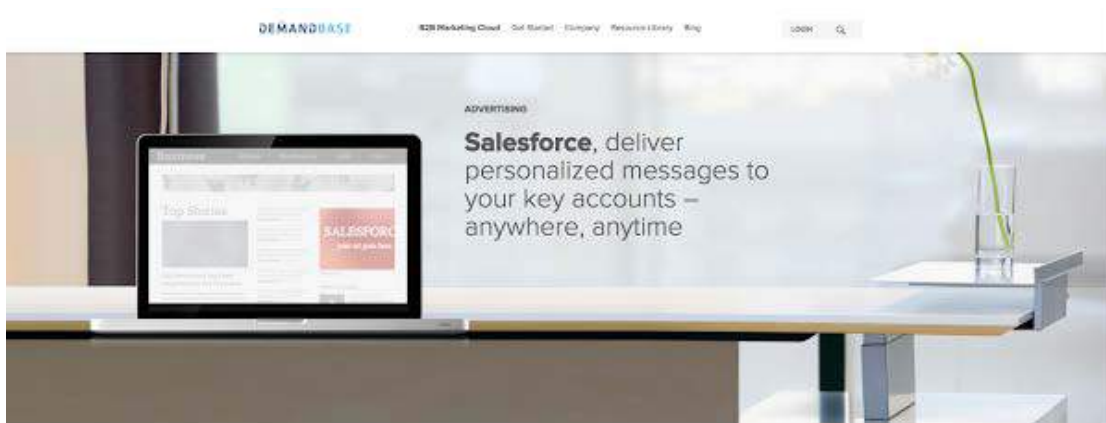
Depending on the tools they have access to, marketers can target accounts and individuals using criteria like company name, industry, customer status, department, job title and so on, by personalizing web content that meets their needs.



Some third-party platforms capture data from advertising and website traffic, then integrate it with a marketing automation and/or CRM system to measure activity at the account level. One instance would be Demandbase, which uses the visitor's network IP address, eliminating the need for storing cookies on the prospect's device.

Reverse IP lookup is the most common data source for site-based ABM, allowing a marketer to immediately recognize a visitor from a specific company or industry. If you know a visitor is from Account A, you can personalize sections of your website to speak directly to their company's challenges, their profession, or industry.

Here's one example of how Demandbase customizes a message to a visitor they know works at Salesforce:



Aside from Demandbase, there are other ways of collecting data to personalize experiences on your site:

Data providers: Companies can append account data to your known database to give you additional personalization abilities.

Campaign engagement: Identifying trends in campaign engagement can provide insight into what problems a company is facing based on the messaging and content that seems to be resonating.

Onsite behavior/intent: Tracking how your visitors browse or search your site, what they download, or even how much time they spend on a page can provide insights to help customize future content.

3. USE PROGRESSIVE PROFILING TO GAIN MORE INTEL

Every time a prospect visits your website or other digital touchpoint, it's an opportunity to capture more data that can eventually help you build a meaningful connection.

A great way to do this is by utilizing **progressive form fields**, where a visitor fills out a few additional fields every time they download new content. It works like this: the first time a visitor comes to your website and downloads content, they answer a few basic questions - their name, company, and email address, for example.

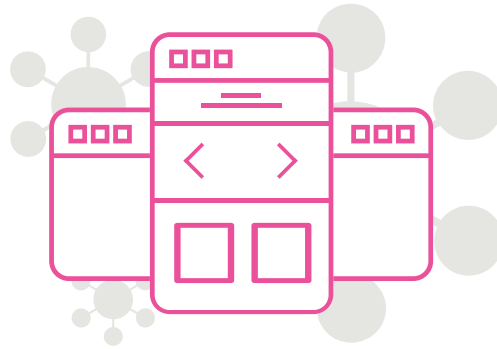
Then for each subsequent visit the same user makes to your site, using a dynamic form new fields appear on gated content, tempting the visitor (who's already shown their willingness to opt-in) to add more information about themselves. As their demographic data deepens, you can pair it with behavior data to increase insight into their individual interests and needs.

Previously, marketers would create different forms to balance the number of form fields with the value of the offer: the more valuable the content, the more information you could ask from your visitor. Progressive forms can simplify this engagement, but there are cautions to keep in mind:

- **Don't go overboard:** At some point, prospects will refuse to fill out a form entirely. Getting more data may be tempting, but people will only give up so much. It's great to have someone engage multiple times, but when they do, it might be time to have a real conversation rather than asking for more.
- **A form developed for one persona may not work for everyone else:** You'll want to create different progressive forms that contain different questions based on persona, or avoid getting overly specific to the point where it's inapplicable for some.

4. CREATE PERSONALIZED ACCOUNT-SPECIFIC LANDING PAGES

When visitors land on your site as the result of a campaign you are running on another channel, make sure the landing page they're directed to is specific to the account's needs. You've steered them to your content using targeted ads or sponsored social media posts based on what you know about them, so customize the landing page experience to match the expectations that have been created.



Some best practices to follow in constructing personalized landing pages?

- Have the landing page reinforce the relevance and value of the content for that particular individual and company.
- Make sure the look-and-feel of your campaign, brand, content and landing page are aligned.
- Integrate your messaging with the referral source: the page's content should have continuity with the messaging they've already seen.
- Have a thumbnail of the content or message you're promoting on the site's home page or even on sidebars throughout the site, so your visitor will still see it even if they navigate away from the landing page.
- A/B test your landing pages to see which versions drive better conversion rates.

5. FOLLOW UP CONSUMED CONTENT WITH MORE CONTENT

Once somebody from a targeted account has downloaded and/or consumed a piece of content, maximize the engagement by promoting additional resources that are catered to their persona.



Taking it a step further, you could also consider optimizing what's recommended next according to where the account is in your conversion funnel. The type of language you use to pique interest in a "thought leadership" white paper about a general challenge is different from what you'll want to say about a problem-solving/how-to/technical guide you offer as a follow-up.

Another consideration? Whether or not you want the follow-up content to be exclusive to leads who have already obtained earlier content. "No part 2 until they've read part 1," in other words. That'll obviously affect the messaging you use at different points along their content-consumption path, but can help to create a flowing storyline that's linear.

6. REMEMBER THEM!

Once someone from a target account has visited your website and entered their contact info, be sure to address them by name on return visits.

People want to be recognized and receive a personalized user experience almost without exception. The success of personalization in B2B programs is well-proven, and it's axiomatic across digital marketing:

- A recent report from Accenture showed that personalized calls-to-action convert 42% better than non-personalized ones. (Source: Hubspot)

How do you use name personalization on a website?

- Download and confirmation pages are an effective and logical place to use a target's name.

7. RETARGET CONTACTS ON OTHER SITES THEY VISIT

Once they leave your site, there's no reason not to continue the dialogue with an ABM target. By setting up a retargeting campaign, you can follow them around on other sites they visit with ads that feature messaging crafted just for them.

Platforms like Kwanzoo and AdRoll specialize in retargeting for ABM, so the data you capture on eligible prospects can be put to good use away from your own website and email efforts.

Some of the benefits?

- Keeps your brand top of mind in your prospect's head even when they're not on your website or even thinking about your product.
- Greater prospect engagement, because personalized content delivers higher engagement than generic banner ads.
- Retargeted customers are **70% more likely to complete a sale** than non-retargeted customers. (Source: behavioraltargeting.biz)
- An increase in top-of-funnel leads from people who visited your website in the past but have not yet completed a form, and may now be ready to.

One caveat? Too much of a good thing isn't good. Seeing themselves "tracked" relentlessly across the web by a marketer can be a major annoyance for anyone, so exercise good judgment – and test, test, test!

8. USE DIRECT MAIL AND INCLUDE A PURL THAT DIRECTS TO A PERSONALIZED LANDING PAGE

A key tenet of ABM is connecting with prospects on multiple channels. As a result, direct mail is making a marketing comeback. That's because it can create a more tangible experience not possible through digital media alone. But direct mail works best when it's part of an integrated campaign. So, it should always lead to a digital action or touchpoint.



To help measure the effectiveness of your direct mail campaigns, use a PURL. These are personalized URLs, each unique, that send the recipient to a landing page or microsite where the content, of course, is customized to your target's needs.

Marketers can easily track results and ROI when ABM targets go to PURLs from direct mail, which has been a channel that was difficult to track effectively in the past. Companies like PFL can even integrate with marketing automation systems to trigger targeted direct mail pieces at certain points in the buyer's journey.

PURLs offer multiple benefits:

- Judging effectiveness and calculating ROI on direct mail programs.
- Giving an account an offer has been customized just for them.
- Tracking the recipient's onsite behavior to provide rich insights that can be immediately applied to content personalization and retargeting.

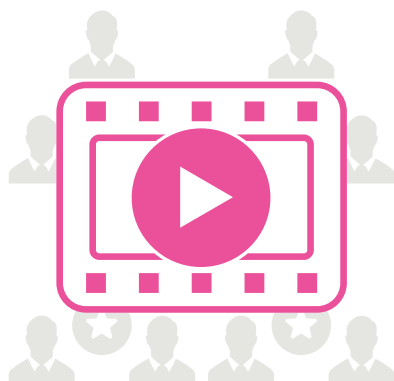
9. CREATE PERSONALIZED VIDEOS FOR TARGETED PROSPECTS

Video works well at engaging any audience, and if you're mounting an ABM program, personalized video messages are going to be especially effective. Why?

- Over 75% of Fortune 500 executives are viewing online video, and 65% of senior execs have visited a vendor's website after viewing a video. (Source: Forbes Insights)
- 48% of B2B buyers use their smartphone to watch video, so you can connect while people are away from their desk. (Source: Digital Commerce 360)
- More than 70% of B2B buyers view video product demonstrations before making a purchase. (Source: Rocketwheel)

Does it work?

- Marketers say B2B video accounts for a "very high" quantity of leads, and 92% cite videos as their most used content for demand gen programs. (Source: Act-On)
- A video on a B2B landing page can increase conversion by 80%. (Source: Vidyard)
- 46% of B2B technology buyers will purchase a product or service after viewing video content. (Source: Hubspot)



One of the biggest reasons video works? Execs, especially at senior levels, are time-pressed. So, delivering content in a quick, to-the-point video – again, **personalized** to their individual and company needs – is a more attractive consumption option for them.

Once they've viewed your video, you longer-format video or downloadable content that goes into greater depth. They may check it out themselves or forward it to another person in the purchase decision chain.

10. BUILD SMARTER PERSONAS

If you've collected quality data, it's important you use it to build the best possible set of personas for your ABM targets within the accounts you'd like to penetrate.

Note that we said personas. Considering there are multiple people involved in a typical B2B buying process, you need to build personas that account for the ones who are key to that process.

“The number of people involved in B2B solutions purchases has climbed from an average of 5.4 two years ago, to 6.8 today, and these stakeholders come from a lengthening roster of roles, functions, and geographies.”

“The New B2B Sales Imperative” Harvard Business Review. 21 Feb. 2017

One of the founding experts in persona development, Tony Zambito, suggests a three-pronged model for effectively using personas in ABM:

1. Start by building an **Ideal Company Persona** that dives deeply into the drivers that motivate a category and the companies within it, with a focus on goals, behaviors, processes, language and other factors, helping define the right target accounts that are the best opportunities for your ABM.
2. Next, create an **Ideal Buyer Persona** in the relevant buying center of that account by determining who the influencers, stakeholders and approvers are you need to engage. Each account can have its own unique path to purchase, so by drilling down and identifying these roles and their needs, you gain real traction in knowing who to target, and how to target them.
3. The **Ideal User Persona** is something that's often forgotten, but it's crucial. Who, at the targeted account, will be the practitioner using the product or service you'd like to sell? By going beyond focusing on just the buyer team to understand the users' needs and pain points, you're able to create a more effective selling message for buyers because you're demonstrating a better understanding of their business and the human factors involved.

Other important points about creating and using ABM personas?

- **Don't overdo it:** Crafting too many personas can result in diminishing returns. Consider consolidating if similarities arise.
- **Keep them updated:** At the pace of change in most organizations and industries, you need to revisit your personas on a regular basis to make sure they're current. Ideally, though, you're using a more cost-effective solution to keep them updated in real time, such as an **A.I.-powered insight platform.**

"An efficient and effective marketing strategy for organizational buyers must be aimed at specific individuals who have authority and responsibility for buying decisions, not at some broad conception of the 'organization,' for individuals, not organizations, make organizational buying decisions."

Organizational Buying Behavior by Frederick E. Webster, Jr. and Yoram Wind, 1972

11. APPLY AI TO ABM

If a marketer can solve many of the challenges we've mentioned -- collating good data, engaging targets with the right content at the right time, building and continuously updating personas in real time, going beyond job titles to identify the right targets -- then their ABM program can be effective.

The problem lies within the costs involved in accomplishing ABM personalization. Human-built personas and manual targeting have served ABM in the past, but the time and dollar costs involved have also prevented ABM from being executed at scale across multiple key accounts.

As **Peter Isaacson of Demandbase** puts it,

The problem is that while delivering that white-glove experience to 10 accounts is feasible, it gets harder when we have a target account list of 500 or 1,000.

Machine learning platforms designed for ABM have sprung up from multiple vendors over the past few years. Their advantages?

- They can build more complete, 360 degree profiles of ABM targeted companies and buyers by organizing and analyzing vast amounts of data from many sources: CRM databases, third-party sources, and social media, to name a few.
- Personas built by these A.I.s reflect up-to-date data, and -- just as importantly -- are updated continually in real time with new data.
- By integrating with ad and content delivery platforms, personalized content can be automatically delivered to ABM targets via prioritized channels at specific times that ensure greater engagement.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR ABM: CHOOSING THE RIGHT DIGITAL EXPERIENCE PLATFORM

Because your ABM campaigns will drive your target accounts to your website, you'll need a platform that makes it easy to personalize the experience once they get there. To do so, consider a Digital Experience Management (DXM) system that empowers your marketing team to manage your on-site ABM initiatives and personalization tactics with minimal reliance on your IT department.

What to look for in an ABM-capable Digital Experience Management system

- **Landing page personalization** will play a big role in shaping your interactions with prospective accounts, so your platform needs to offer non-technical marketers the ability to build landing pages and personalize messages on them.
- **The ability to rapidly publish content without coding**, expedite workflows, facilitate collaboration and provide oversight and reporting will enable you to react quickly and shift gears accordingly, a critical success factor in ABM.
- **Guided search functionality** can tailor a visitor's search for maximum relevance, and help you get the content you want them to consume front and center.
- A built-in **digital asset management (DAM)** repository provides a place to store personalizable content and deploy it across multiple channels in varying formats, all while delivering brand consistency and a faultless user experience.
- The ability to **monitor and ensure legal compliance** that may vary by country (or even state or industry) on a market-by-market basis is key for enterprise companies targeting accounts in multiple states or countries.
- A native **Digital Quality Management (DQM)** tool that detects and helps correct errors and issues like misspellings, broken links, and broken images ensures your messaging is always professional and flawless.

- The ability to **integrate flawlessly** (and without laborious development work) with your existing platforms and ABM-specific ones, as well as your marketing automation and CRM.
- **Personalization features** that enable you to deliver messaging based on audience attributes that may be **explicit** (based on information directly provided by users), implicit (based on behavior) or **augmented** (explicit and implicit, with 3rd party data layered on for a more complete profile).
- **Easy-to-build code-free forms** for collecting visitor data and doing progressive profiling that can help inform your ABM campaigns and get your ABM targets to opt-in to receive email correspondence from you.
- A **SaaS platform**, providing all the cost, reliability and ease-of-adoption benefits therein.
- Exhaustive **analytics in real time**, so tracking and refining performance can be done with ease.

Ensuring your ABM content is effective

ABM is a massive investment for companies, of both money and human resources, underscoring the importance of making a strong first impression (and second, third, and so on).

Misspellings, broken links, and accessibility issues can quickly and irreparably compromise your audience's trust not just in your content, but in your entire brand. When you're pushing different custom variations of content out and building unique landing pages for each account, manually QA'ing them can be a huge undertaking. It's easy to overlook issues, especially when you're working with distributed teams or multiple content editors.

To ensure your messaging is error-free, choose an automated **Digital Quality Management** tool that is either built-in or can be integrated with your web content management system, and can scan pages pre- and post-publication, to flag errors, inconsistencies and violations.

SUMMARY

ABM offers huge upsides to marketers who can put it into practice, especially if they're able to do so at scale. These 11 tactics are some of the most proven and effective. But it's by no means an exhaustive list.

To learn more about how Crownpeak's Digital Experience Management (DXM) and Digital Quality Management (DQM) products can help get your ABM program off the ground, contact Crownpeak.



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Founded in January 2001, Crownpeak was the first company to offer web content management through a SaaS solution. Today, leading brands trust Crownpeak's cloud-first Digital Experience Management (DXM) platform to quickly and easily create, deploy and optimize customer experiences across digital touchpoints at scale.

Crownpeak provides a complete solution for DXM featuring content management, personalization, search and hosting, in addition to fully integrated Digital Quality Management (DQM) to ensure brand integrity and meet compliance requirements. More than 200 customers rely on Crownpeak to deliver engaging experiences that delight customers, promote loyalty and deliver results.