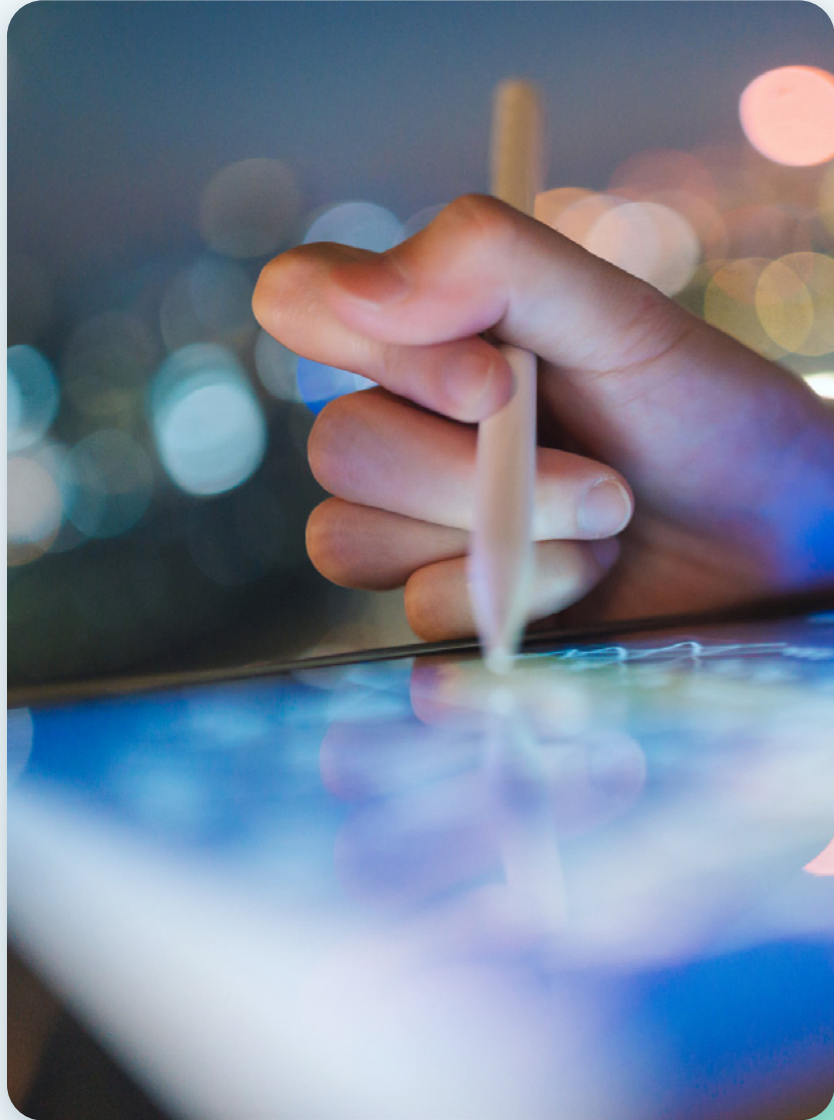




# 7 Steps to Building a Winning Account-Based Marketing Strategy



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# What is ABM & What Makes it Different?

**Account-based marketing (ABM) is a go-to-market (GTM) strategy based on account awareness where a seller identifies and engages with individual customer accounts.**

This strategy is very different from a lead-based, one-size-fits-all approach to prospective customers. An ABM strategy targets specific accounts with customized, personalized campaigns.

In non-ABM motions, marketers typically create content for relevant personas identified as their ideal customer profile (ICP). Then, as marketers capture leads, they match them to, and build out, accounts.

With an ABM motion, marketers begin by targeting accounts that fit their ICPs rather than attempting to reach specific personas.

ABM has been around since the early 2000s and is still a mainstream strategy among B2B organizations today.

**94%**

**ABM is employed by 94% of B2B Marketers.**

*(Terminus)*

**29%**

**29% of marketers focus their ABM strategies on targeting 101-500 accounts.**

*(Demand Gen Report)*

**18%**

**Top-performing B2B marketers allocate 18% of their budget to ABM.**

*(Salesforce)*



**“The idea of Account-based marketing is to get the right message to the right people at the right time. It’s connecting what they’re interested in and what makes them successful in their job.”**



*Hilary Carpio, Sr. Director, Growth Marketing, Snowflake  
The Account-Based Marketing Podcast*

# The Benefits of ABM

ABM's targeted approach is highly effective in driving engagement, closing deals, and building long-term relationships in B2B sales.

Some of the proven benefits of ABM include:



## Personalized Marketing Approach:

ABM allows for highly tailored marketing strategies that cater to the specific needs and pain points of individual accounts.



## Higher ROI:

By focusing on high-value accounts, ABM can yield a higher return on investment compared to broader marketing strategies. Resources are concentrated on accounts with the highest potential for revenue.



## Better Alignment Between Sales and Marketing:

ABM fosters better collaboration between sales and marketing teams. Both departments work together to identify target accounts, develop customized strategies, and engage key decision-makers.



## Shorter Sales Cycles:

Targeted efforts on high-value accounts often lead to shorter sales cycles. Personalized content and direct engagement can accelerate the decision-making process, as prospects receive relevant information quickly.



## Improved Customer Experience:

With ABM, prospects and customers receive a more personalized and relevant experience. Tailored content, messaging, and interactions ensure that the needs of each account are met effectively.



## Better Measurement and Analytics:

ABM provides clearer metrics and analytics. Since the focus is on a defined set of accounts, it is easier to track engagement, measure the impact of marketing efforts, and adjust strategies based on specific data points.

# What's in a Name — ABM, ABS, & ABX?

In B2B sales, Account-based marketing (ABM), Account-based selling (ABS), and Account-based experience (ABX) are all strategic approaches focusing on high-value accounts.

However, each has a distinct focus and methodology:

## ➤ Account-based Marketing (ABM)

In ABM, marketing creates personalized campaigns for individual accounts, working in close collaboration with the sales team. Content is highly personalized and customized in order to resonate with specific accounts. The goal is to engage key decision-makers within the target accounts.

## ➤ Account-based Selling (ABS)

ABS is a sales strategy that works hand-in-hand with ABM. ABS takes over the targeted accounts warmed up by ABM and develops them further to get to Closed/Won and new revenue.

ABS can also refer to account-based strategy, which is the unified, aligned marketing and sales strategy for working accounts. Account-based strategies are ABM and account-based selling rolled into one.

## ➤ Account-based Experience (ABX)

ABX represents account-based experience or account-based everything, depending on with whom you speak. ABX takes an account-based approach through marketing, sales, and customer success, to deliver a cohesive, personalized experience throughout the entire customer lifecycle.

Don't let the messy account-based alphabet soup trip you up. Going forward with an account-based motion comes down to some very basic, fundamental steps.

ABM is not a marketing initiative. It's also not a sales initiative.

It has been, is, and always will be a growth initiative!



**87%**

**87% of B2B marketers agree ABM delivers a higher ROI than other marketing activities.**

*(ITSMA)*



## **7 Steps to Building a Winning Account-Based Marketing Strategy**

# Step 1: Conduct a Diagnostic Assessment

The first step in designing and deploying a winning account-based motion is to conduct a diagnostic assessment of your current account-based efforts. Identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Your assessment should lean on quantitative and qualitative data from documentation, reports, and stakeholder interviews.

The assessment should result in a detailed analysis of the following ABM success criteria:

- ✓ Revenue team design
- ✓ Play execution
- ✓ Revenue tech stack
- ✓ Program orchestration
- ✓ Metrics and measurement



**Companies using ABM for at least one year realized a 10% increase in revenue, while 19% of companies reported revenue growth of over 30%.**

*(DemandBase)*

Conducting a diagnostic assessment is not only the first step, but is often the most difficult one too.

Your assessment should diagnose issues within your organization. Therefore, it's important to identify root causes of issues rather than symptoms. If you only treat symptoms without addressing underlying root causes, you'll miss opportunities to improve.





# Step 1: Conduct a Diagnostic Assessment (Cont.)

## Revenue Team Design

Evaluate if the various functional areas of your revenue team, namely marketing, sales, and customer success, are capable of determining and meeting customer needs. All functions must be aligned with regular meetings, metrics, and reports on your organization's customer segments.

Ensure your revenue team has, or can quickly develop, a target account list (see Step 2, below). You can't deploy account-based strategies without accounts.

## Play Execution

Assess your team's play execution to determine if marketing and sales have been able to successfully engage with members of the buying committees within accounts.

- Are the engagement tactics relevant?
- Do they facilitate a buying journey that moves prospects toward a buying decision?

## Revenue Tech Stack

Audit your tech stack to determine its ability to ingest and analyze buyer signals. Can your tech tools manage signals and surface high-priority signals when the time is optimal?

## Program Orchestration

Your tech stack should be able to automate sales and marketing plays to spur account engagement and facilitate the buyer journey.

## Metrics and Measurement

Finally, assess your organization's track record around measurement. Does your revenue team have the ability to develop full-funnel metrics that help drive target accounts quickly through their buying journeys?



**Companies deploying ABM generated 200% more revenue for their marketing efforts compared to those that don't.**

*(FlipMyFunnel)*

# Step 2: Align the Functions of Your Revenue Team

Alignment between marketing and sales is such an ongoing initiative in the business world that it's practically a cliché. It's mentioned so often, we tend not to listen to it. We also tend to think our teams are already aligned.

*Spoiler alert: in many cases, not so much.*



*(Salesforce)*

## Alignment is Temporary

In the best of circumstances, alignment is relatively temporary. Markets change and revenue teams have to adjust. Keeping sales and marketing operating in lockstep requires consistent care.

Misalignment stems from **four common challenges**:

### 1 Different Goals and Metrics:

Sales teams typically focus on short-term revenue targets and closing deals, while marketing teams often prioritize long-term brand building, lead generation, and nurturing.

In addition, marketing may focus on metrics like lead volume and website traffic, while sales prioritizes conversion rates and revenue. These differing objectives can create tension and misalignment.

### 2 Different Processes and Tools:

When sales and marketing teams use different processes, tools, or technologies, this creates inefficiencies and hinders collaboration. For example, using separate CRM and marketing automation platforms leads to data silos and inconsistent reporting.

### 3 Superficial Buy-in:

Many sales teams are skeptical about integrating ABM into their selling strategies. They may think ABM produces fewer leads. Other times, sales teams may have been burned by aborted ABM efforts that didn't produce results. Once bitten, twice shy.

Superficial buy-in from sales, marketing, or both, creates a lack of sustained alignment at every level. This issue makes it almost impossible for revenue leaders and the C-suite to implement and maintain a consistent, effective ABM motion.

### 4 Lack of Joint Planning and Strategy:

Without a unified strategy and collaborative planning, sales and marketing efforts can become fragmented. Joint planning sessions can help align goals, strategies, and tactics to ensure both teams are working towards common objectives.

# 3 Steps to Align Your Revenue Team

Use the following three steps to fully align your revenue team:

1

## Bring your sales, marketing and customer success teams into the ABM strategy from DAY ONE.

- Whether it's one meeting or multiple meetings, the entire team must acquire a top-down understanding of your company's ABM methodology, how it benefits the company and each team, and what their roles are to make it effective.
- Communicate how ABM enables functional teams to market, sell, and service smarter and more quickly.
- From the very beginning, ABM will require shared objectives, metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs).

2

## Train functional teams on the new ABM playbook.

- It's important your revenue team understands ABM is not the same old lead generation and scoring approach, but rather a sales influence methodology.
- At their roots, ABM motions nurture customers and measure behavior through brand engagement, all the while tracking sales intent.
- Shift your teams' mindset to a tech-driven approach using combined data to influence accounts, not just leads.

3

## Collaboratively execute upon your ABM strategy

- The alignment of functional teams at the beginning of an ABM motion is not a "set and forget" kind of deal.
- Weekly reports are essential for the heads of sales, marketing and customer success, along with their managerial teams, to analyze and evaluate engagement for target accounts.
- Each account will be different, and each will have opportunities to not only adjust and customize your engagement activities, but to coach up your team members as well.
- ABM is all about testing, learning, acting and repeating!

# Step 3: Identify Target Accounts

A logical place to start compiling a target account list is with your ICP. Your ICP is, in fact, important, but don't jump there right off the bat.

First, be very clear on your organizational goals for an ABM campaign. Obviously, growth is the top-level goal. But, drill down a little deeper into your growth goal.

Your objectives in deploying ABM will determine the framework for developing your target account list, and those objectives might include the following:

## ➤ Renewals, Upsells and Cross-sells:

If the revenue team has identified a large opportunity here, the target account list will consist of existing customers.

## ➤ New Logos as “Social Proof”:

Taking the step up to closing bigger enterprise-level deals often requires curating a client list of well-known brand names.

## ➤ Accelerating Existing Opportunities

If potentially lucrative deals are languishing in the pipeline, a campaign targeting existing opportunities at accounts can grease the wheels.

## ➤ Land and Expand:

Utilizing a strategy of closing one deal to establish a starting point for subsequent deals requires a targeted account list of companies with multiple business units and/or subsidiaries.

If the objective of your ABM strategy is to more aggressively grow new customers who are in your “best fit” category, that's where your ICP falls into play. However, resist the temptation to jump into your ICP blindly.

## Evaluate your ICP every year.

Your ICP is reflective of your current best customers. But, your marketplace is constantly changing, as is, perhaps, your company's offerings.

## Are your current best customers, and those prospective customers just like them, the best customers for next year and into the mid-term?

If yes, then no worries. If maybe not or no, then re-evaluate and redefine your ICP as necessary.

# Step 4: Create and Curate Content for Target Accounts

A pillar of account-based strategies is creating and delivering customized, personalized campaigns to a single account.

So, once you get your team aligned and processes in place, start producing tailored content and campaigns to spark engagement with your target accounts.

## ➤ Content Types:

Your content might very well run the full gamut for each account, from blog posts and solution briefs to eBooks, videos, events and more. Design content to play across both online and offline channels.

## ➤ Address Pain Points:

Your content should either address challenges and pain points that a specific account faces, or a specific obstacle or blocker your sales team is facing in facilitating the buyer journey and, ultimately, converting.

## ➤ Repurpose Content:

Look for opportunities to leverage the “good bones” of content. In many cases, 75-85 percent of a particular piece of content collateral might suit multiple accounts. Edit and refine the remaining parts to make it fit perfectly with your target audience.



**80%**

**80% of marketers who use video as part of their ABM strategy have seen an increase in engagement with target accounts.**

*(HubSpot)*

# Step 5: Develop ABM Playbooks

Critical to your ABM success is the creation of GTM playbooks with turn-by-turn directions so every customer-facing role has an exact process to follow. Then, of course, the revenue team needs to be trained according to their roles.

## ➤ What's in Your ABM Playbook?

Your ABM plays bring together two elements: (1) target accounts — complete with profiles of all the influencers, decision makers and budget holders, and (2) your best content.

## ➤ Identify the Best Channels:

Identify the best channels and timing to engage at every step of the process. This includes LinkedIn advertising, email marketing, direct mail, and targeted PPC ads. Then, plan and execute upon account-targeted, persona-specific campaigns.

## ➤ Build Relationships:

Importantly, look for ways to empower your sellers with content to assist in relationship building. As the buyer journey evolves, critical relationships will mature, allowing your sales team to gain insight into specific interests and needs. As a result, your ongoing content creation and curation will become even more hyper-focused!



## ➤ Tailor Messaging to the Account:

Your campaigns will undoubtedly share similarities, but each campaign should be tailored to a particular account. Every message and all related content that each individual in an account receives should look and feel as though it was created specifically for them.

## ➤ In Person Versus Digital:

With today's digital buyer journeys, much of your ABM playbook will encompass digital plays. However, in-person interactions should be included in playbooks as well, including account-specific events, particularly in the enterprise space, where it's beneficial to reach many vested stakeholders at one time.

# Step 6: Measure & Analyze

The long-term success of ABM initiatives is dependent on fully understanding performance in the marketplace.

**The primary reason ABM motions lose momentum, wither, and die is poor measurement,** particularly between the beginning of deployment and a significant number of Closed/Won opportunities.

## What Will You Measure?

**For micro-metrics,** measure and analyze everything your revenue tech stack will allow:

- Website visits
- Email opens and click throughs
- Downloads
- Events
- Meetings
- Lead scores
- Opportunities
- Closed/Won
- Closed/Lost

**For macro-metrics,** or big-picture metrics, evaluate the success of your ABM efforts by looking at:

- Revenue growth
- Deal size
- Conversion rates
- Pipeline growth
- Account retention and expansion
- Customer lifetime value

## How Often Should You Measure?

During the alignment phase of ABM, you developed shared metrics and KPIs. For micro-metrics, **revisit them weekly.**

Create easily accessible and transparent scorecards of shared analytics that keep your revenue team aware of all activities and engagement by account.

Macro-metrics are best analyzed quarterly.

# Step 7: Continuously Improve

ABM motions are ripe with learning opportunities.

By focusing on an account as a market of one, ABM campaigns typically touch a wide scope of personas at each target account. Your ABM efforts will deliver you wins. Yet, at the same time, you'll also experience losses. Concentrate on learning from both.

## ➤ Conduct Debriefs:

Don't wait until an account has moved to either Closed/Won or Closed/Lost to conduct a debrief. Continuously evaluate each account in your motion. In doing so, identify the strengths to leverage, not only within that particular account, but with similar accounts as well.

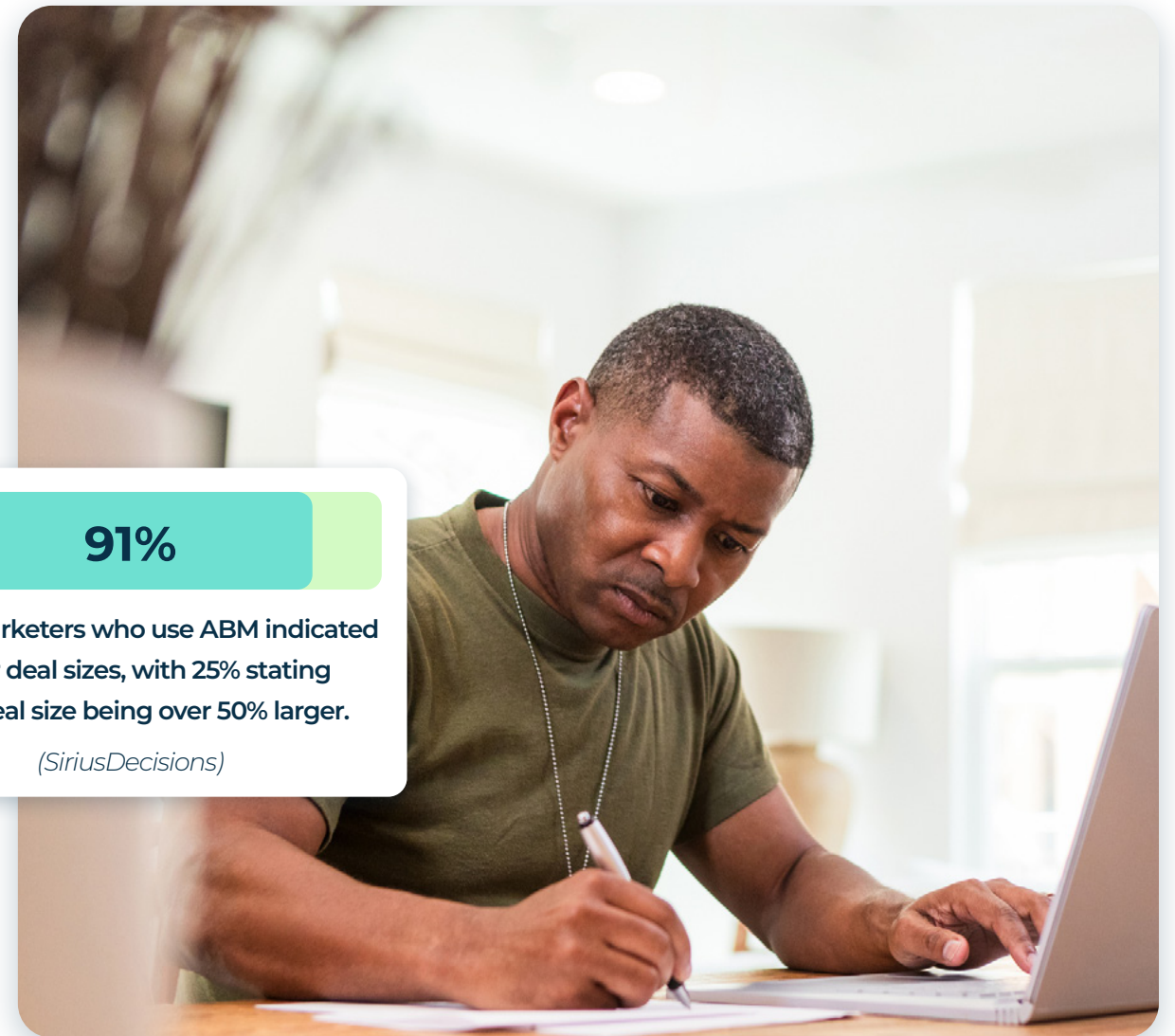
## ➤ What's Not Working?

Additionally, examine the engagement tactics that are not delivering expected results. Watch for warning signs that your ABM strategy is not working:

- Low engagement
- Stagnant or declining pipeline
- Poor conversion rates
- High customer acquisition costs
- Low retention and expansion rates
- Negative feedback from target accounts

What can you change midstream to create more positive results?

Experiment and test often. Build on success. Learn from shortcomings. Continuously improve.





# ABM is Here to Stay

There's no escaping it — ABM is here to stay.

In fact, ABM is so entrenched in GTM motions, some companies don't even call it ABM. To them, it's just business as usual.

ABM is a critical growth initiative that puts target accounts at the center of your GTM activities. ABM empowers marketing, sales and customer success teams to deliver personalized experiences across every singular touchpoint and branded interaction.

And, being data-driven and measurable, ABM allows you to manage your GTM process to deliver a higher return on investment (ROI).

An effective ABM motion establishes trust between your organization and its target audience. However, ABM also requires a high degree of revenue orchestration and alignment between teams.

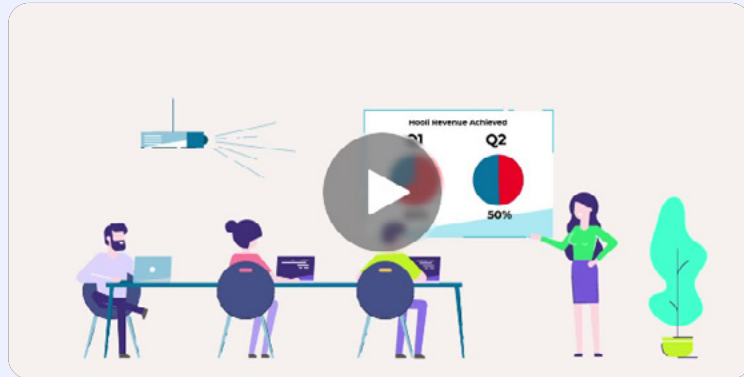
Follow your process, glean insights from your data and continuously improve.

Your customers and all your stakeholders, both external and internal, will notice!

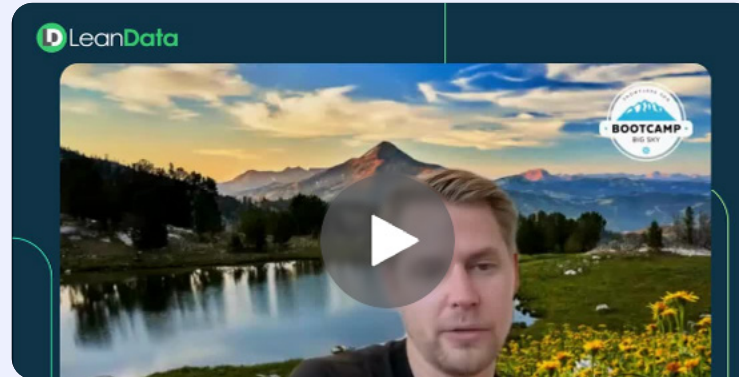


# Recommended Resources

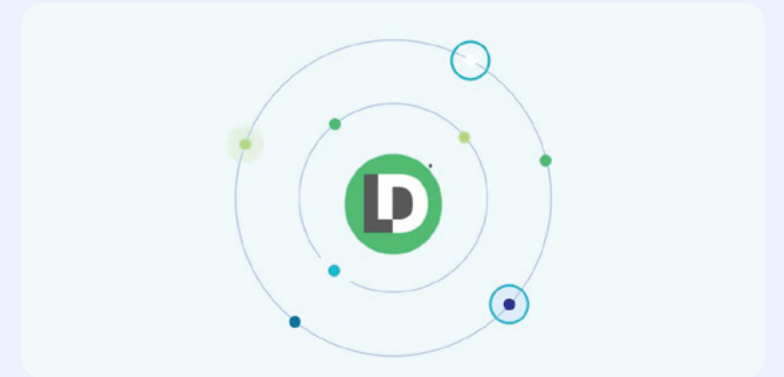
Check out these resources for even more practical insights for getting the most out of LeanData.



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Snowflake Scales Account Based Plays with LeanData Revenue Orchestration



LeanData Demo in 100 Seconds

## Get Started Today:

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[Request Demo](#)

## Why LeanData?

Today's growth leaders power their B2B selling with LeanData, the gold standard in modern revenue orchestration and an essential element of the modern RevTech stack. The LeanData Revenue Orchestration Platform, powered by No-Code Automation, simplifies and accelerates coordination of all the people, processes and plays needed to transform buyer signals into buying decisions.

LeanData is inspiring a global movement among its 1,000+ customers and community of 5,000+ OpsStars worldwide, empowering them with revenue operations excellence that translates into compelling buyer experiences and competitive advantage.