



# The CMO's Guide to Smarter ABM

Data-First Strategies for Maximum ROI

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# The ABM Challenge for CMOs

Marketing teams are expected to do more with less. And the pressure is greater than ever.

Charged with generating pipeline, proving ROI, and building top-tier brands, marketing leaders must execute sophisticated marketing strategies — all with fewer resources, tighter budgets, and rising complexity in buyer behavior.

Add in fragmented tech stacks and static account-based marketing (ABM) platforms that only exacerbate sales and marketing misalignment, and the situation becomes even more complicated.

That's why it's little surprise that [93% of CMOs surveyed by PwC](#) find it challenging to position marketing as a growth driver, and 75% say their budget is likely to be cut before other departments.

How can CMOs win in this environment? Those who adopt a data-first, intelligence-driven, and AI-powered approach to ABM will come out ahead.

This guide outlines a smarter way forward: building a unified, AI-powered ABM solution grounded in real-time signals and the industry's most complete data foundation.

# What Traditional ABM Gets Wrong

Many marketing leaders are realizing that traditional ABM tools simply don't live up to expectations. Legacy ABM platforms promised precision, but delivered fragmentation.

Their overreliance on limited signals and outdated datasets leaves marketers struggling to identify true in-market buyers, deliver personalized content at scale, and prove value to stakeholders.

You've probably experienced some of the effects yourself:

- Stale or third-party-only data means you find out about buyer intent after key decisions have already been made.
- Campaign insights and sales activities live in separate silos, making alignment nearly impossible.
- Incomplete or outdated firmographic data means not every account targeted is actually a good fit, leading to wasted time, money, and effort.



## Platform Limitations

Most legacy ABM platforms simply repackage broad-based demand generation under the ABM label. What may look like ABM on the surface is really just more of the same “spray and pray” approach as you dig deeper — blasting lightly targeted messages to a list of accounts, all without any intelligence to inform timing, messaging, or next best actions.

Worse, these platforms give minimal visibility into what actually works. Engagement metrics are limited or siloed. Buyer behavior is inferred rather than observed. And when it comes time to hand leads over to sales, marketers are left scrambling to pull together actionable insights.

## The Impact on CMOs

The stakes for CMOs, who are tasked with driving pipeline and proving ROI, are high. The consequences ripple across teams and revenue goals.

- **Wasted budget:** Marketing dollars get spent on accounts that never convert because marketing is too broad or mistimed.
- **Low sales confidence:** When sales teams receive leads without context or clear signs of buyer intent, they disengage, causing friction and lost sales.
- **Stalled scale:** Without reliable, real-time insights and full-funnel visibility, it's almost impossible to identify what's working and replicate it across campaigns.

For the modern CMO, this status quo is unsustainable.

# The Smarter Path: Intelligence-First ABM

Intelligence-first ABM flips the traditional script.

Where traditional ABM is reactive, intelligence-first ABM is predictive. Static lists and lagging signals are replaced with a dynamic engine that surfaces real-time buyer activity and prioritizes action based on meaningful data.

This is ABM built for how buyers actually behave.

## What is Intelligence-First ABM?

Intelligence-first ABM replaces static targeting and delayed insights with always-on buyer intelligence. Rather than relying on gut instinct or outdated lists, it leverages live signals to continuously detect and prioritize accounts that are actively in-market.

Intelligence-first ABM is built on:

- AI-surfaced signals based on actual buying behavior, not guesswork
- Dynamic segmentation and scoring that adapts as your audience's behavior changes
- A central, unified data foundation that connects sales and marketing activity

## Key Capabilities

Make intelligence-first ABM actionable by combining ZoomInfo Marketing and ZoomInfo Copilot. Core features and capabilities include:

- Buying committee detection that uncovers and tracks the real decision-makers and influencers behind every opportunity
- AI-generated recommendations that guide your teams on what to say and when
- Multisignal orchestration that layers firmographic, technographic, behavioral, and intent data into a signal-coordinated strategy.

This level of coordinated intelligence ensures that every campaign is aligned with real buyer activity and every handoff to sales comes with the right context.

## Benefits of Intelligence-First ABM

For CMOs under pressure to drive results with leaner teams and tighter budgets, intelligence-first ABM delivers:

- Hyper-targeted, relevant campaigns that reflect real-time activity, not stale personas
- Predictive prioritization of high-converting accounts, reducing wasted spend
- A continuous feedback loop across marketing and sales that keeps both teams aligned on pipeline, timing, and outcomes.

Think of it as not just a better way to do ABM, but as the new standard to win as a revenue team in a data-driven world.

# The ABM Evolution

## Traditional ABM

- Stale, third-party-only intent signals that arrive too late to influence decisions
- Static account lists updated infrequently or based on assumptions
- Sales & marketing misalignment with siloed systems and limited visibility
- “Spray and pray” messaging disguised as personalized campaigns
- Limited engagement tracking and lagging performance insights
- Low sales confidence in leads due to missing context and handoff chaos
- High waste, unclear ROI with generic attribution reporting



## Intelligence-First ABM with ZoomInfo

- Real-time, multisignal intelligence capturing firmographic, technographic, behavioral, and intent data
- Dynamic audience development that updates continuously based on live buyer activity
- Unified GTM platform with shared dashboards, goals, and signals
- AI-driven recommendations for what to say, when, and to who
- Signal-to-sale orchestration with full-funnel visibility and real-time feedback loops
- Context-rich sales activation with prioritized outreach flows in Copilot
- Increased ROI through precise targeting and pipeline alignment

# Alignment Through Data: Bridging Sales & Marketing

ABM only works when sales and marketing work together. But for most CMOs, alignment is more aspiration than reality.

Without shared visibility, agreed-upon signals, or a common view of the buyer journey, your efforts become fragmented, and the impact of your ABM suffers.

## The GTM Disconnect

Here's the root of the problem: marketing and sales frequently operate in silos, with separate systems, different definitions of success, and poor visibility into each other's priorities.

The disconnect leads to:

- Low sales confidence in marketing-generated leads
- Disjointed follow-up that erodes buyer trust
- Siloed reporting that makes ROI difficult to prove

It's a recipe for inefficiency, underperformance, and stalled pipeline growth.

## The Power of Connected Intelligence

Alignment between sales and marketing leads to agility. CMOs get marketing plans that stick, sales gets qualified pipeline, and the business grows. So how do you get that alignment? It starts with data unity, a core principle of intelligence-first ABM.

When sales and marketing work from the same source of truth, they drive:

- Faster handoffs
- Full-funnel visibility
- Shared metrics

Using a Go-to-Market Intelligence Platform for ABM connects the dots, creating a shared, intelligence-driven foundation that keeps both teams aligned from day one. When sales and marketing are aimed at the same targets and working from the same signals, it's easy to drive pipeline together.

“

We're able to craft messages that resonate with our target audiences and market to people who are actually interested in what we offer. It was very easy to set up, and knowing that the automation and engine is working for us is really exciting.”



**Nadine Sarraf**  
CMO, Prodoscore

# ZoomInfo Marketing + Copilot in Action

Unlike most ABM tools that simply activate existing accounts, ZoomInfo helps you target the right buyers, at the right time, with the right message — maximizing conversions and eliminating waste.

Our GTM Data Universe gives you an end-to-end view of your market, enriched with real-time intent signals, AI-powered lead scoring, and deep buyer insights. This fuels dynamic audience development and precise segmentation so you can focus your spend where it matters most.

Pairing ZoomInfo Marketing with our AI-fueled Copilot creates a full-funnel growth engine. You can run advertising, marketing emails, and sales engagement campaigns in parallel, all driven by a single, unified dataset.

54% 

**Increased  
Pipeline  
ROI with  
ZoomInfo**

## A Better Approach: AI-Driven ABM, Powered by the Best B2B Data

You already know you can trust ZoomInfo to deliver the industry's most advanced GTM Intelligence: the fusion of highest-quality B2B data, dynamic buying signals, and AI-powered account insights.

With ZoomInfo Marketing and Copilot, you can turn intelligence into action:

- **Real-Time Audience Development:** Identify and segment in-market accounts before your competitors, using technographic, firmographic, and behavioral signals.
- **AI-Powered Precision Targeting:** Focus your budget on accounts that are ready to buy.
- **Seamless Sales & Marketing Alignment:** Execute campaigns and measure pipeline on a single platform that connects both teams.
- **Unmatched Market Validation:** ZoomInfo was named a Leader in the 2024 Gartner Magic Quadrant for ABM Platforms and the Forrester Wave for Intent Data and Marketing & Sales Data.

## How It Works: From Signal to Sale

Here's how it all flows together for a seamless ABM process.

ZoomInfo Marketing identifies and engages your highest-potential accounts — dynamically and across multiple advertising channels— to increase engagement signals and grow pipeline.

Copilot picks up those signals and translates them into action. It guides them with prioritized insights, recommended next steps, and outreach workflows, all based on shared intelligence.

ZoomInfo Marketing sparks engagement. Copilot activates the opportunity. You capture the win.

The result? You get a truly integrated system where creation, action, and conversion are all seamlessly connected.

# Checklist: Is Your Platform Ready for Modern ABM?

As you evaluate your ABM platform — or search for a new one — follow this checklist.

## Data and Intelligence

- ✓ Real-time, first- and third-party signal coverage
- ✓ Dynamic audience segmentation and scoring
- ✓ Integrated contact, company, and buyer intent data

## Execution and Orchestration

- ✓ AI-guided campaign and sales activation
- ✓ Built-in orchestration across email, display, and social
- ✓ Live alerts and automated workflows

## Measurement and Alignment

- ✓ Shared dashboards and GTM attribution metrics
- ✓ Native integration with CRM and MAP
- ✓ Seamless sales handoff

# The ABM Playbook for CMOs Who Win

Smarter ABM starts with a smarter data foundation and shared intelligence across platforms. CMOs who prioritize real-time, signal-based intelligence, unified data and alignment, and AI-powered orchestration at scale will win bigger and faster.

It's time to move beyond outdated ABM tools and embrace a smarter, intelligence-first approach. Maximize your ROI with ZoomInfo Marketing and Copilot.

“

**With Go-to-Market Intelligence, we've achieved a significant boost in marketing campaign performance – the kind of results you only get by leveraging real-time insights to understand and connect with your audience.”**



**Tommie O'Brien**  
CSO, Semrush

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