



The Account-Based Marketing Sales Funnel Guide

Your Detailed Guide to the
Account-Based Marketing Sales Funnel



INTRODUCTION

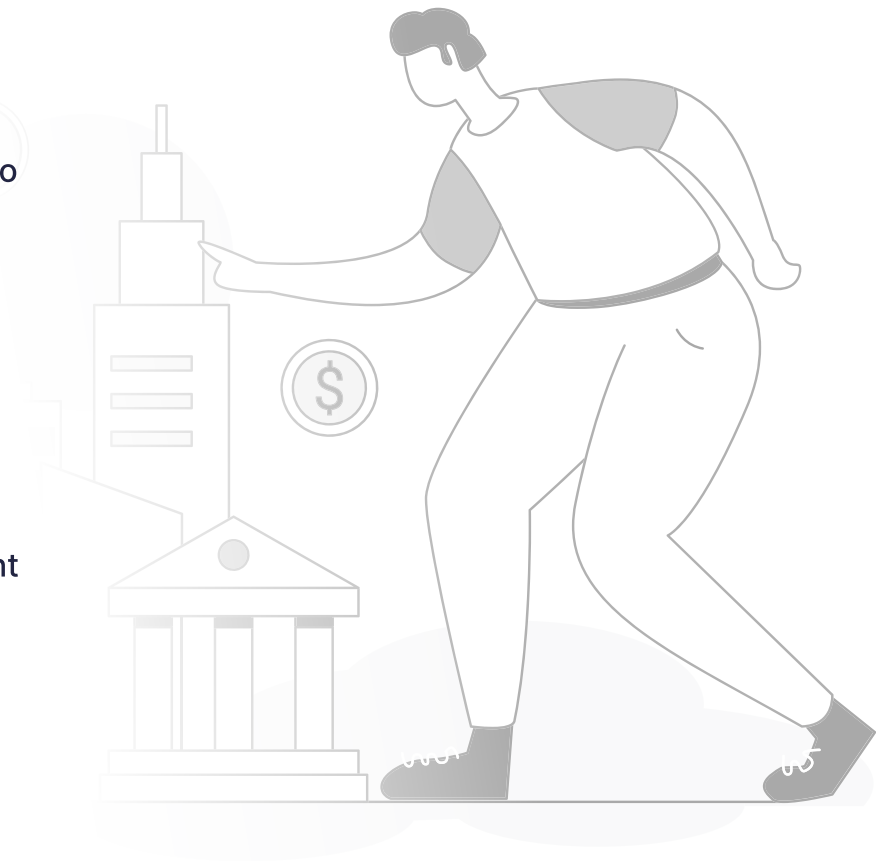
The world of B2B marketing has evolved rapidly in recent years, with Account-Based Marketing (ABM) emerging as a powerful strategy to drive growth and deliver exceptional customer experiences.

At xGrowth, we have discussed in detail the [benefits of Account-Based Marketing](#) and produced multiple resources, such as the ultimate [ABM strategy template](#) and the [Account Scoring Template](#), that you can use to accelerate its adoption in your firm.

We have also shared case studies and [Account-Based Marketing examples](#) that you can take inspiration from.

With ABM gaining prevalence, we believe that understanding its impact on the traditional sales and marketing funnel has become more important than ever. In this comprehensive guide, we will go beyond the traditional funnel and dive into the ABM sales funnel.

Apart from the basics, we will also cover advanced practical topics.



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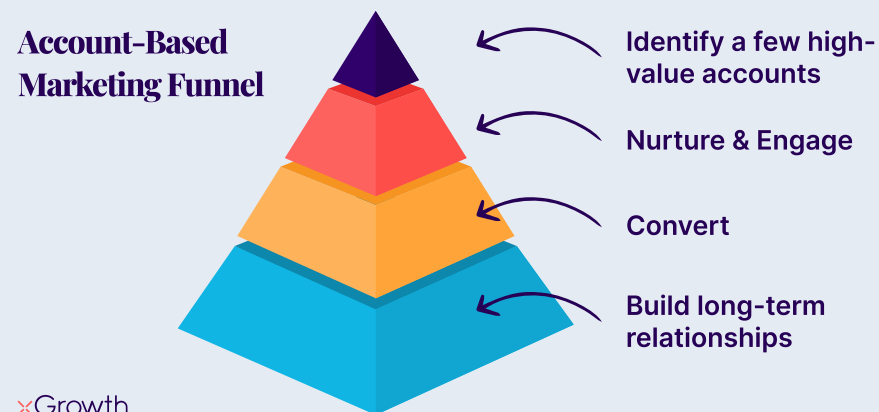
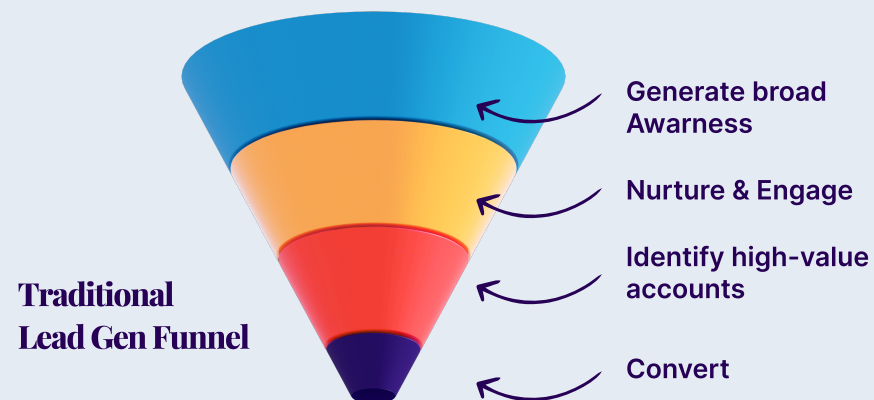
CHAPTER 01

What is the ABM Funnel?

Gone are the days when casting a wide net and hoping for the best was a viable strategy; arguably, it was never a great strategy to begin with. The ABM funnel mimics the key principles of Account-Based Marketing, i.e. identifying and targeting specific high-value accounts rather than a demand-generation style of attracting a large number of leads.

It essentially flips the traditional sales and marketing funnels.

Rather than starting with a broad audience and gradually narrowing the focus, the ABM funnel starts with a pinpointed target market or account and progressively broadens its strategies to engage and transform that target into a customer.



CHAPTER 02

How is the ABM Sales Funnel Different from Traditional Sales and Marketing Funnels?



To further understand other key differences between ABM and traditional funnels, let's revisit their definitions.

● Marketing Funnel

The marketing funnel focuses on building awareness of your brand and attracting potential customers. It has the following stages.

1. **Awareness**: Targeted marketing and ad campaigns are used to draw attention to your brand.
2. **Consideration**: Building relationships and creating a positive brand image with potential customers.
3. **Conversion**: Potential customers may become qualified leads. They might be directed to your website to make a purchase or handed off to the sales team.
4. **Loyalty**: Building a reputation that ensures customers keep coming back.

The marketing efforts and activities vary based on the stage. For instance, top-of-the-funnel activities might include search engine optimisation, pay-per-click advertising, and social media engagement.

For the conversion and loyalty stages, more targeted content and nurturing campaigns are used.



● Sales Funnel

The sales funnel represents the buyer's journey, starting from when they become aware of your business and leading up to the purchase.

1. **Awareness**: A qualified lead enters the sales funnel, being familiar with your brand but unaware of all the benefits.
2. **Interest**: Potential customers learn more about your brand and how it can address their needs.
3. **Decision**: Prospects understand the benefits of your company and might still be researching pricing and other options.
4. **Action**: Prospects are ready to make a purchase.
5. **Loyalty**: Customers who have made a purchase enter this stage. They might continue buying or recommend your business to others.

The sales activities also vary based on the stage. For instance, top-of-the-funnel activities might include sharing videos and inviting prospects to webinars or informational meetings. Middle-of-the-funnel activities could involve product demonstrations, while bottom-of-the-funnel activities focus on negotiations and finalising the sale.

● The ABM Funnel – It's the Best of Both Worlds

So, the marketing funnel focuses on attracting and nurturing potential customers, while the sales funnel focuses on converting those nurtured leads into buyers.

With the definitions out of the way, let's bring back the focus on ABM.

A foundational element of ABM is the seamless collaboration between sales and marketing. It's not just a nice-to-have; it's essential.

Recall our earlier point about the [Account-Based Marketing](#) funnel turning the traditional approach on its head. That's our first notable difference between the traditional and the new.

What's fascinating about this inversion is it inherently mandates that marketing and sales join forces from the outset. This is the second key difference. Think of the ABM funnel as the inverted traditional funnel, which is a combination of best practices from sales and marketing.

Finally, while traditional funnels incorporate a loyalty phase, they are predominantly concentrated on pre-sales.

The ABM sales funnel maintains a consistent focus throughout the entire customer journey. This is the third key difference.

This shift towards a more targeted approach allows businesses to conserve resources and marketing efforts by only targeting the most suitable accounts, ultimately leading to improved outcomes and customer loyalty.

CHAPTER 03

Building a Solid Foundation for the ABM Funnel



Before diving into the complexities of the ABM funnel, it is essential to lay a solid foundation.

Building a strong ABM foundation involves aligning sales and marketing teams, defining target accounts and developing an ideal customer profile (ICP) to ensure a successful ABM strategy.

In the following subsections, we will delve deeper into each of these critical components.

• Aligning Sales and Marketing Teams

Aligning the marketing and sales teams is crucial for a seamless customer experience and effective ABM implementation. Collaboration and communication are key, as both teams need to work together to ensure consistent messaging and interactions with target accounts.

To achieve this alignment, it is essential to establish clear goals, responsibilities, and performance metrics for both teams, as well as foster a culture of collaboration and information-sharing.

• Developing an Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)

Developing an ideal customer profile (ICP) is a fundamental element in constructing an ABM framework. An ICP helps you segment and select target accounts based on factors such as company size, industry, location and budget.

By defining your ICP, you can ensure that your marketing efforts are focused on the most relevant and high-potential accounts, ultimately leading to better results and increased efficiency.

You can create a list of ideal customers for an ABM campaign by analysing your current book of business.

During this exercise, look for the types of companies you have found success with and create a list accordingly.

Subsequently, the list should be narrowed down to identify the specific prospects that align with your ICP. This process not only helps you target the right accounts but also provides valuable insights into the characteristics and needs of your ideal customers, enabling you to tailor your marketing efforts accordingly.



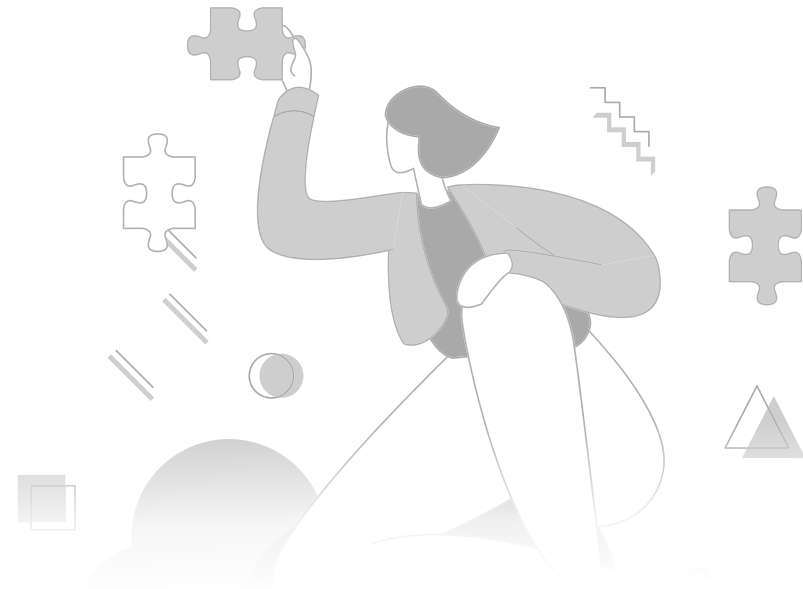
• Defining Target Accounts

Defining target accounts, including key accounts, is a critical step in building a successful ABM strategy. Identifying high-value accounts that have the potential to drive revenue and align with your business goals allows you to focus your marketing efforts on the most promising opportunities.

To select a target account for ABM, consider factors such as the alignment of qualified accounts with your ideal customer profile (ICP), the potential value and quality of the account, and the likelihood of successful conversion.

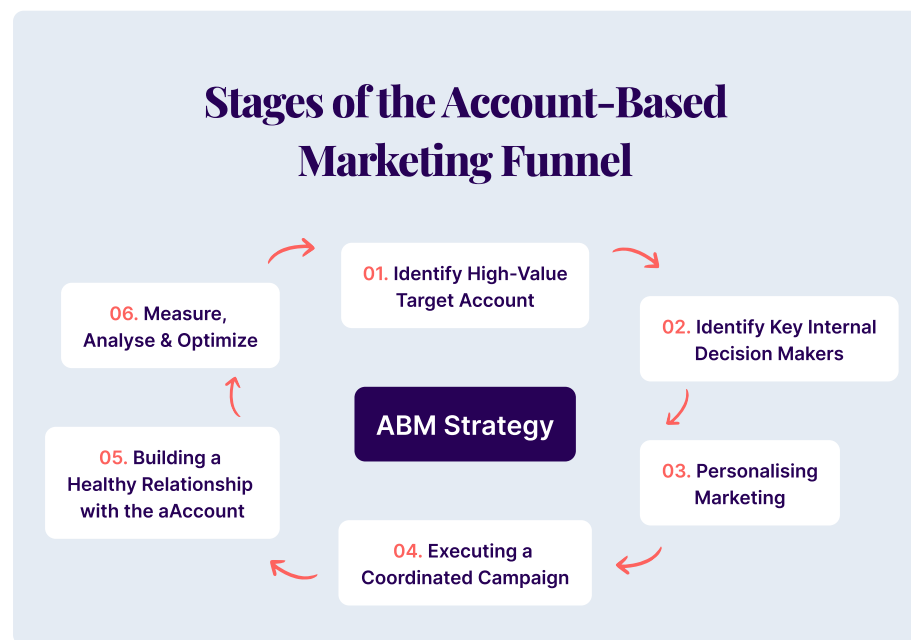
Research has indicated that 42% of organisations attempt to maintain their account list between 50 and 500 to support an ABM strategy with a targeted focus.

By narrowing down your target accounts to a manageable number, you can ensure that your sales and marketing teams are equipped to deliver personalised campaigns and tailored interactions, ultimately resulting in a higher rate of success.



CHAPTER 04

Stages of the Account-Based Marketing Funnel



Keeping in mind the foundations behind the ABM funnel, let's go through an example of a hypothetical CRM company FinTech CRM, that's looking to land some clients in the financial services space. We will see one of their hypothetical prospective customers United Singapore Bank, go through the stages of the ABM funnel.

Through this fictitious example, you will also get an understanding of what teams need to be involved and what potential ABM tactics need to be deployed based on the stage of each prospect.

● Identifying High-value Target Accounts

Situation: FinTech CRM's marketing team has identified a trend: mid to large-sized financial institutions are seeking more tailored CRM solutions, especially those that have recently undergone mergers or are expanding rapidly.

ABM Tactic: The sales and marketing teams collaborate to define their ideal customer profile (ICP). Using industry reports, LinkedIn research, and insights from the product team, they create a list of 50 potential target accounts that align with their criteria.

● Identifying Key Internal Decision Makers

Situation: FinTech CRM understands that within these financial institutions, multiple stakeholders influence the CRM selection process, from technology leaders to other top-tier executives in the operations and marketing departments.

ABM Tactic: The research and sales teams utilise tools like LinkedIn Navigator and ZoomInfo to identify key stakeholders within each target account. They focus on CTOs, CIOs, and Heads of Customer Relations to ensure a customised outreach to each of the target key accounts.

● Personalising Marketing

Situation: A bank on their target list, "United Singapore Bank," has recently acquired a smaller bank. They're facing challenges in integrating customer data from both entities.

ABM Tactic: The content and marketing teams craft a personalised content piece for "United Singapore Bank" titled "Streamlining Post-Merger Data Integration with FinTechCRM." They highlight features of their CRM that specifically address such challenges.

● Executing a Coordinated Campaign

Situation: "United Singapore Bank" has shown initial interest in the content piece and has engaged with it multiple times.

ABM Tactic: The marketing, sales, and customer success teams launch a coordinated campaign for "United Singapore Bank." This includes targeted LinkedIn ads, personalised email outreach from the sales team, and an invitation for a custom demo. The messaging emphasises FinTech CRM's expertise in the financial sector.

● Building a Healthy Relationship with the Account

Situation: "United Singapore Bank" signs up for a trial of FinTech CRM's solution. They're keen on understanding its full capabilities.

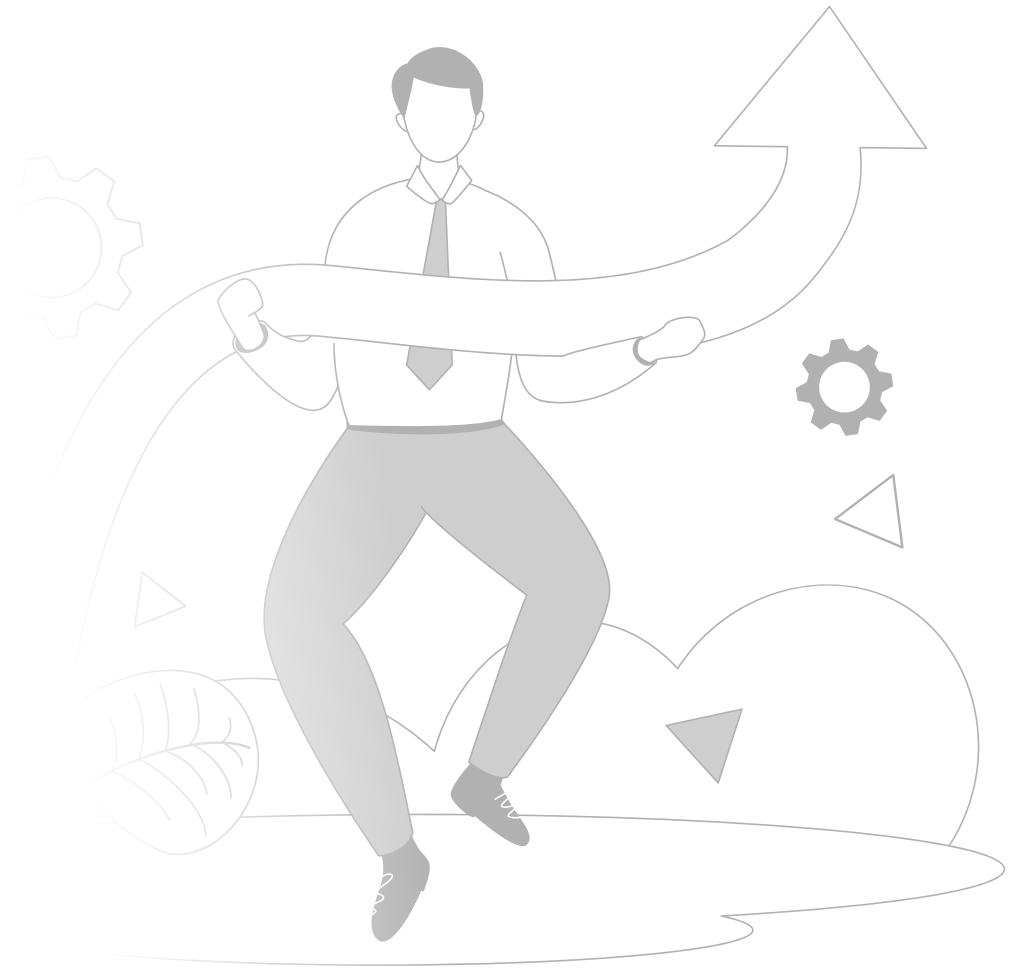
ABM Tactic: The customer success and sales teams ensure a smooth onboarding process. They schedule training sessions and webinars and provide dedicated support to "United Singapore Bank," ensuring they see the value in FinTech CRM's solution from the outset.

• Measure, Analyse and Optimise

Situation: After executing its ABM campaign, FinTech CRM wants to understand the effectiveness of its strategy and gather insights for future campaigns.

ABM Tactic: The analytics and marketing teams collaborate to measure engagement, conversion rates, and ROI for each target account. Insights reveal that custom demos have the highest conversion rate, prompting the team to prioritise them in future campaigns.

In this narrative, "United Singapore Bank's" journey through the ABM funnel showcases how FinTech CRM's various teams collaborate at each stage to ensure a tailored, effective approach that resonates with the target account.



CHAPTER 05

Implementing ABM Tactics Across the Funnel

We briefly talked about what stage of the ABM funnel should be addressed with what tactic in the last section. In this part of the guide, we will consolidate that learning.

Implementing ABM sales funnel tactics involves

- Creating personalised campaigns
- Engaging decision-makers and the buying committee
- Automating and scaling efforts

Personalised campaigns are crucial for capturing the attention of your target accounts and demonstrating the value of your product or service.

By engaging decision-makers and influencers through tailored interactions, you can foster interest and initiate dialogue.

Automation plays a significant role in the ABM funnel, as it enables businesses to scale their efforts and deliver personalised messages in the relevant context. Marketing automation platforms such as HubSpot or Marketo can be used to track and execute ABM campaigns, allowing you to streamline your sales process and focus on high-value activities.

If you want to know more about how you can use marketing automation to drive ABM success, check out one of our most popular articles [here](#).

While the above tactics are general, the below table also provides a more granular view on the tactics based on the style of ABM.

ABM Style/ABM Sales Funnel Stage	1:1 ABM (Strategic)	1:Few ABM (Scale)	1:Many ABM (Programmatic)
Identify	Deep research on target account	Segment research	Broad research
Engagement	Custom events/webinars	Segment-specific events/webinars	Automated marketing campaigns
	One-on-one meetings/workshops	Tailored interactions	Webinars/events targeting larger cohorts
Conversion	Tailored proposals/solutions	Solutions for common needs	Standardised solutions
	Personalised demos	Demos highlighting solutions	Automated demos with follow-ups
Expansion	Regular check-ins/account reviews	Check-ins tailored to segment	Automated check-ins
	Customised upsell/cross-sell	Upsell/cross-sell opportunities	Automated upsell/cross-sell

CHAPTER 06

Measuring the ABM Sales Funnel Success

Measuring success across each funnel stage is paramount. This challenge, often encountered, necessitates clear alignment with sales metrics and the integration of marketing automation and data capture tools.

A pivotal framework for evaluating ABM's effectiveness across each funnel stage is the "Three Rs" - Relationships, Reputation, and Revenue. In this section, we have taken our original stages in the ABM funnel diagram and mapped the 3R metrics that you can use as a good starting point.

Here are the metrics that you can use to evaluate the performance of your ABM sales funnel continuously.

● **ABM Relationship Metrics**

New Executives Contacted: Measures connections made with new stakeholders through ABM.

Target Stakeholders Engaged: Evaluates engagement levels of key account individuals with campaigns.

Meeting Frequency with Customers: Assesses regular interactions with existing clients.

Calls with Key Decision-Makers: Counts calls between sales reps and target stakeholders.

● **ABM Reputation Metrics**

Customer Advocacy Level: Tracks conversion of contacts into brand advocates.

NPS & Customer Satisfaction: Uses scores like NPS to gauge account satisfaction.

• ABM Revenue Metrics

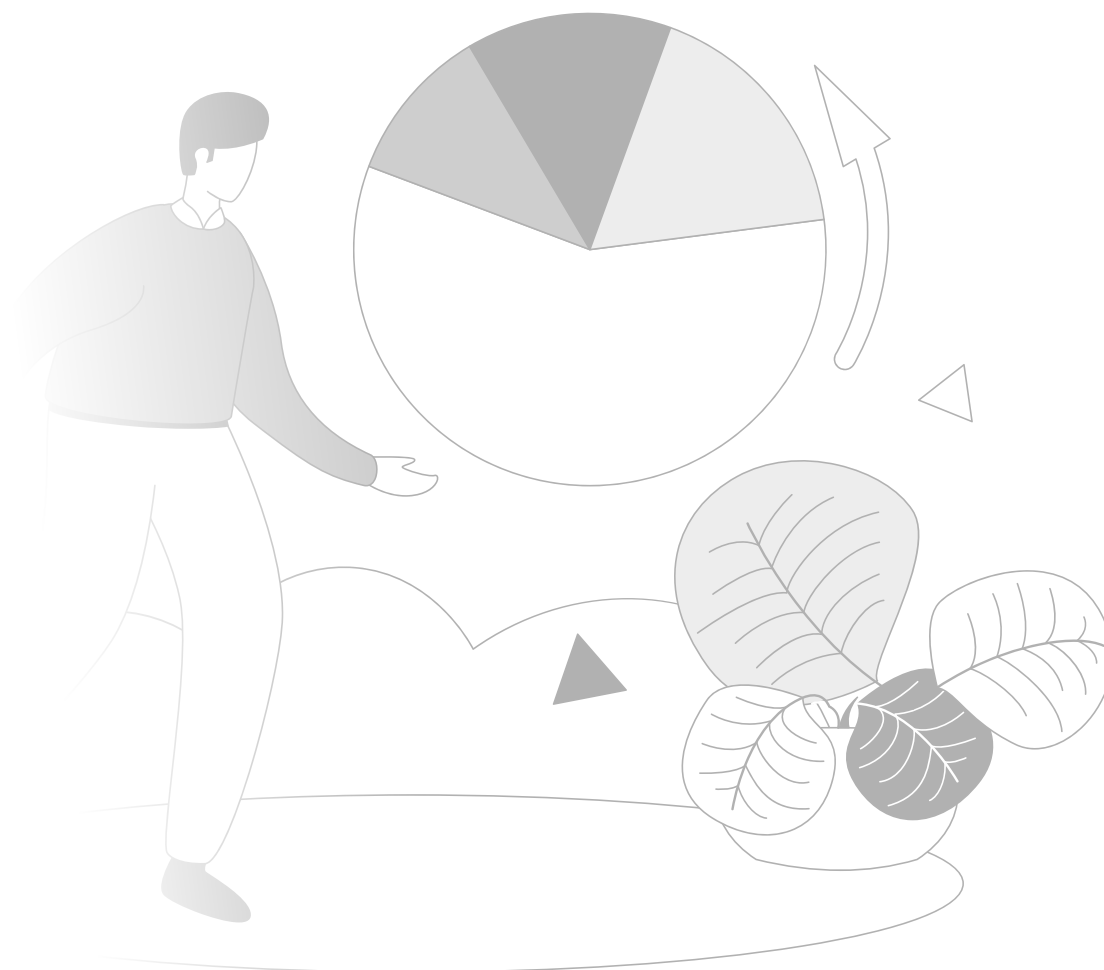
Deal Size: Evaluates the average size of deals closed.

Share of Wallet: Measures the budget percentage allocated to your services in a client's total spend.

Sales Velocity: Assesses the speed of sales, combining deal size and conversion rates.

These metrics help assess the effectiveness of ABM campaigns. For an in-depth dive into these metrics, check out our detailed piece [here](#).

The alignment of the above metrics with the ABM funnel stages and the Three Rs ensures a comprehensive evaluation of ABM strategies. This alignment not only measures the success of campaigns but also provides actionable insights for continuous improvement.



Conclusion

At xGrowth, we do believe that mastering the ABM sales funnel is critical for businesses looking to thrive in today's competitive B2B landscape. By building a solid ABM foundation, understanding the key components of the sales funnel, implementing effective tactics, and continuously measuring success, businesses can optimise their efforts and drive impressive results.

The journey to ABM sales funnel mastery may be challenging, but the rewards are well worth the effort. If you are looking for a team of ABM experts who have done this countless times and delivered remarkable results, contact us [here](#).