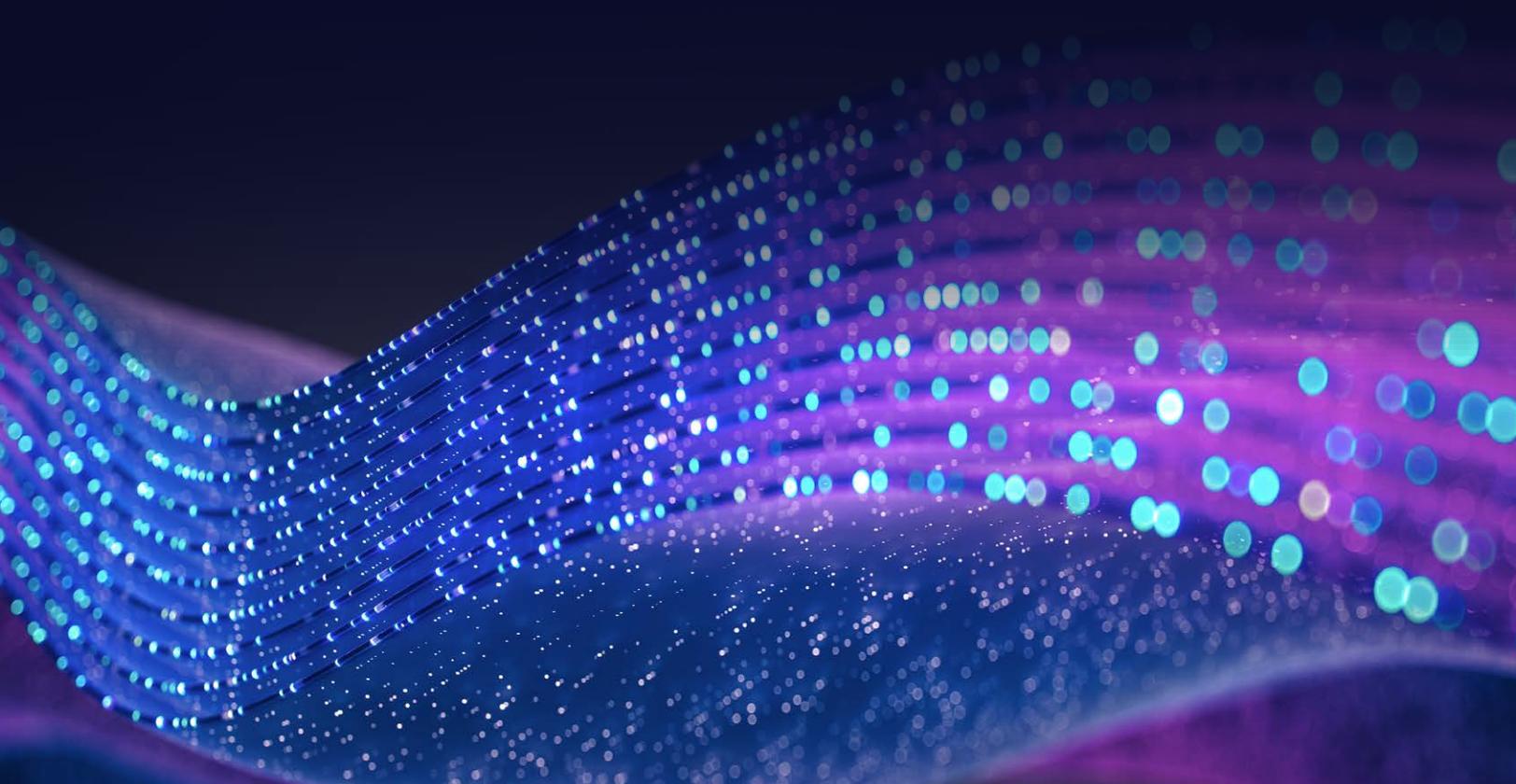


Point of View

Account-Based Marketing

Its Evolution in the Age of AI



Introduction

For years, Account-based Marketing (ABM) has been the go-to strategy for B2B organizations. But the reality is, many traditional ABM approaches no longer match the way buying actually happens today. Campaign cycles drag on, data sits in silos, and ‘personalization’ often amounts to nothing more than name-swapping. The result? Missed opportunities, fuzzy attribution, and too many deals slipping through the cracks.

Meanwhile, buying committees are growing larger and more fluid. Decision-making isn’t linear; it shifts in real-time as stakeholders move in and out of the process. This complexity demands a new playbook, one that adapts as quickly as the buyers themselves.

This is where Salesforce’s Agentforce ecosystem offers a real change. At the heart of it lies Data Cloud, serving as the connective tissue for all customer and account data. By ingesting real-time streams and continuously refreshing account profiles, it delivers a living, breathing view of your targets. This foundation makes it possible to segment with precision, build smarter predictive models, and fold in outside data sources without friction.

On top of that, Marketing Cloud (a part of Salesforce’s Agentforce ecosystem) has matured into a true orchestration engine. It enables AI-driven ABM strategies - journey design, dynamic content generation, and seamless cross-channel coordination. And with the introduction of Agentforce, the picture gets even more powerful: autonomous AI agents that can analyze buyer behavior, craft personalized messages, run campaigns, and fine-tune results without needing manual intervention at every step.

What emerges is not just greater efficiency, but an entirely new rhythm for ABM. Instead of static campaigns and lagging insights, organizations gain a system that is always-on, always-learning, and always-optimizing. In a world where buyer expectations change by the minute, this ability to adapt in real-time is no longer optional; it’s the new competitive edge.

The takeaway: ABM doesn’t have to feel outdated or out of sync with today’s B2B reality. With Salesforce’s Agentforce ecosystem, companies can move from rigid campaigns to fluid, responsive engagement, meeting buyers where they are, the moment they’re ready.

This next-generation ABM framework unlocks five key capabilities:



Unified account data: Real-time identity resolution and data consolidation across Customer Relationship Management (CRM), marketing, and digital channels provide a 360-degree view of each account.



Personalization at scale: AI-driven segmentation and content generation deliver highly tailored experiences based on industry, role, and buying stage.



Intelligent targeting: Instead of spreading effort across every possible lead, predictive analytics help teams zero in on the accounts most likely to convert. By focusing on the right opportunities at the right time, sales cycles move faster and marketing spend delivers stronger returns.



Sales marketing alignment: When both teams can see the same view of the account journey, collaboration feels less like a handoff and more like a partnership. Shared visibility makes it easier to qualify leads, avoid duplication, and keep the pipeline moving smoothly.



Continuous optimization: Real-time analytics and autonomous agents enable ongoing refinement of campaign strategies based on behavioral signals and outcomes.

In summary, Salesforce's Agentic ABM ecosystem empowers marketers to move beyond static campaigns and fragmented data, toward a future of real-time, personalized, and autonomous engagement, driving measurable impact across the entire customer journey.

The fundamental breakdown of traditional ABM

The static campaign trap

Traditional ABM operates on quarterly campaign cycles with predetermined messaging tracks. This approach has become counterproductive in today's market reality. Modern buying committees, averaging 10-15 stakeholders (influencers and decision makers) per B2B purchase decision, require dynamic engagement that responds to real-time behavioural signals and contextual triggers.

The biggest mistake many ABM strategies make is assuming that account engagement is neat and predictable. In reality, buyers interact across dozens of touchpoints, often in ways that don't follow a straight line. That makes it incredibly difficult to pinpoint which actions truly move the deal forward. Traditional systems don't provide the level of attribution needed to separate signal from noise, so teams end up making budget decisions based on surface-level metrics instead of the interactions that actually drive revenue.

Data fragmentation and attribution chaos

Most organizations still approach ABM with data scattered across too many places. Marketing automation, CRM systems, social listening tools, and website analytics all operate in silos, which means no one ever gets a complete picture of the account. It's no surprise, then, that nearly 40% of marketers¹ call data cleanliness one of their biggest challenges, given the fact that keeping databases accurate and current is harder than it looks.

This fragmentation shows up in a few critical ways:



The result is an ABM strategy that always feels a step behind the buyer instead of moving alongside them.

The personalization paradox

While traditional ABM set out to deliver personalization, in practice, it often ends up looking more like templating. Most programs still depend on simple demographic and firmographic segmentation, which produces content that feels 'personalized' in name only. The standard playbook grouping accounts into three to five tiers and mapping generic messaging tracks to each falls short of what's really needed. It rarely speaks to the unique concerns of individual stakeholders, especially within large and complex buying committees where every voice has a different priority.

The new expectations: Beyond traditional ABM

Real-time orchestration

Today's buyers expect the experience to move at their pace, not the company's. If a CMO is researching cybersecurity at two in the afternoon, they don't want to wait until next week's email blast to see something relevant; they expect timely, tailored information the same day. Meeting this expectation requires orchestration engines that can read behavioral cues, intent signals, and context in real-time and act on them instantly.

The new baseline looks like this:

- Split-second responses to high-intent behaviors, not lagging follow-ups
- Cross-channel coordination, so every touchpoint tells the same story.
- Predictive engagement that surfaces the right answer before the buyer even asks

Hyper-personalization at scale

Personalization has a tangible payoff: companies that get it right see up to 40% revenue gains.² But modern buyers know the difference between true relevance and surface-level tricks like dropping their first name in a subject line. What they expect is deeper: content that reflects their role, industry, company maturity, and exact point in the buying journey.

Delivering this consistently means harnessing AI engines that can process hundreds of data points per contact, generate content variations at scale, and ensure timely delivery based on each individual's engagement patterns.

Agentic intelligence in action

The most dramatic change ahead is the rise of autonomous AI agents. Unlike traditional automation, these agents don't just follow a script; they can interpret account context, recognize subtle buying signals, launch the right response, and refine their approach as outcomes unfold. In other words, they act as always-on teammates, running complex marketing workflows with a level of speed and adaptability no human team could match on its own.

Together, these shifts redefine what effective ABM looks like. Real-time orchestration, true personalization, and autonomous intelligence aren't 'nice to haves' anymore; they're the new foundation for engaging modern buyers and keeping pace with how decisions actually get made.

The technology stack revolution

Personalization engines: The new marketing brain

Today's personalization engines are a far cry from the old if-then logic trees of traditional marketing automation. Instead of rigid rules, they rely on machine learning models that can process countless data streams at once. That means they can:

- Recognize behavioral patterns to see how different stakeholders consume content and make decisions.
- Optimize timing by learning from past response patterns and identifying when engagement is most likely to land.
- Generate fresh content variations designed to resonate with specific buyer personas.
- Choose the right channel automatically, ensuring each stakeholder receives messages where they're most likely to engage.

Customer data platforms: The unified foundation

If personalization engines are the brain, Customer Data Platforms (CDPs) are the nervous system that feeds it. A modern CDP doesn't just store historical snapshots; it creates a real-time, unified view of every account by streaming data from multiple sources. With that foundation, teams can:

- Resolve identities across devices and touchpoints so every interaction ties back to the right profile.
- Score behaviors with complete engagement histories rather than partial glimpses.
- Aggregate intent signals from both first-party and third-party data.
- Apply predictive analytics to spot the accounts most likely to convert.

Agentic layers: Autonomous execution

Perhaps the most game-changing layer is the agentic one. This is where AI agents take over the heavy lifting, executing strategies independently while keeping humans in control of the broader direction. These agents can:

- Track account behavior across every digital touchpoint.
- Generate personalized content in real-time, shaped by context.
- Run campaigns across channels without constant manual input.
- Continuously learn and adjust to improve performance with every interaction.

Next-gen ABM with Salesforce

Real-time, personalized, and autonomous

Data Cloud: **The central nervous system**

At the heart of modern ABM is Salesforce Data Cloud. Think of it as the central nervous system, pulling signals from every corner of the ecosystem and stitching them into a living, continuously updated account profile. Unlike older approaches that depend on clunky batch updates or periodic syncs, Data Cloud works in real-time, streaming data from dozens of sources and turning it into something actionable.

Its strengths show up in several ways:

- Identity resolution that connects interactions across devices and touchpoints.
- Dynamic segmentation that shifts instantly as behaviors and intent signals change.
- Predictive modeling that surfaces high-propensity accounts and the best times to engage.
- Open integration with external sources, from intent providers to social platforms.

Marketing Cloud's **evolution**

Layered on top of that foundation is Marketing Cloud, which has grown far beyond its email marketing roots. Today, it's a full orchestration platform that puts autonomous AI agents to work to personalize and connect experiences across every touchpoint. The shift is dramatic:

- AI-driven journey design that adapts in the moment to how people behave.
- Dynamic content generation that scales personalization without watering it down.
- Cross-channel orchestration for email, social, ads, and even sales outreach to all move in sync.
- Continuous optimization through automated A/B testing that refines messages on the fly.

Agentforce in action

Bringing it all together is Agentforce. These AI agents act like always-on campaign managers, combining generative and predictive AI to plan, create, and fine-tune engagement strategies. With Agentforce, campaigns don't just run; they learn and adapt with every interaction.

Here's what they make possible:

- Deep analysis of account behavior to spot emerging opportunities.
- Content generation crafted to resonate with specific stakeholders.
- Automated campaign execution across multiple channels without manual oversight.
- Ongoing optimization based on what actually drives conversions.

Together, Data Cloud, Marketing Cloud, and Agentforce form a tightly connected ecosystem that shifts ABM from static campaigns to living, responsive strategies. Instead of chasing buyers with fragmented efforts, organizations gain the ability to anticipate needs, act in the moment, and continuously improve outcomes. It's not just a new toolset; it's a new operating model for how modern marketing gets done.

From data to decisions Salesforce's agentic approach to ABM:

Salesforce's agentic approach to ABM unlocks:

- **Unified and comprehensive account data:** A CDP platform helps consolidate customer and prospect data from multiple data sources like CRM, marketing, website, email, etc., into a single unified profile for each target account. This 360-degree view enables marketers to deeply understand account behaviors and preferences and plan next steps accordingly.
- **Enhanced personalization at scale:** CDP helps marketers with detailed segments based on industry, company size, engagement, behavioral data, etc. This helps marketers deliver highly personalized and tailored campaigns that are specific to an account.
- **Improved account prioritizing and targeting:** Using AI and advanced analytics, a CDP helps identify and prioritize high-potential accounts by analyzing intent signals, interactions, and account characteristics. This focus optimizes marketing and sales efforts, shortening sales cycles and increasing ROI.
- **Alignment of marketing and sales team:** By offering a shared view of account data and journey touchpoints, CDPs foster effective collaboration between marketing and sales, ensuring coordinated efforts and smoother lead qualification.
- **Deep insights and real-time optimization:** CDPs help marketers with actionable analytics and reporting to measure ABM campaign effectiveness. Marketers can continuously refine strategies based on data signals.

Conclusion

Account-Based Marketing has hit an inflection point. The old ways of drawn out campaign cycles, data stuck in silos, and ‘personalization’ that barely scratches the surface simply don’t match the speed or complexity of today’s buying process. Committees are larger, decisions shift in real-time, and organizations need a way of engaging that keeps up.

That’s where Salesforce’s Agentforce ecosystem comes in. With Data Cloud creating a dynamic, unified view of every account, Marketing Cloud orchestrating connected journeys, and AI agents responding in the moment, ABM evolves into something far more dynamic - always on, intelligent, and adaptive.

But let’s be clear: technology isn’t the finish line. The real differentiator will be execution. Companies that rethink their operating models, close the gap between sales and marketing, and build the muscle to let data and AI guide day-to-day decisions are the ones that will see the biggest impact.

Our next Point of View will take this forward, exploring how to make agentic ABM work in practice, and what it takes to move from vision to measurable business outcomes. Because the future of ABM won’t be defined by potential, it will be determined by how boldly we act on it.

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