

What the Future May Hold for Account-Based Marketing

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We're all heavily entrenched in account-based marketing (ABM) as a marketing species, but as usual, we're also a savvy bunch that wants to know what wave of marketing might be next. We have our eyes on the future, because our industry has been accelerating at warp speed for the last decade, and we don't want to miss out on anything new and improved. Therefore, what should we expect after the novelty of ABM and ABX wears off and the industry evolves again?

Is it account-based experience (ABX), which is already catching on fast? Or could it be a yet-to-be-defined ABM 2.0? Or perhaps it'll be a newbie, like account-based strategy (ABS), that picks up steam? Okay, just kidding on that one. Let me be clear and say that ABS is not a new acronym that anyone needs in their life, and we don't want to pile on acronyms just for acronyms' sake – but I digress.

In all seriousness, though, it's perfectly valid and smart to wonder what's next. So, let's explore what all this means and where ABM is truly headed, so you can be prepared.

Related: [The Rise of Account-Based Marketing](#)

ABM vs. ABX

Some people still get confused between ABM and ABX, so I'm going to help you differentiate between them. Here's how I like to think of these two: They're related members of the same family – but ABM speaks more to the planning stages of

your marketing. It's about identifying the right accounts and preparing to engage potential buyers.

ABM is a mindset shift from the old way of practicing marketing, where we tried to cram as many leads into the top of our funnel as possible and hope for a solid return. ABM means you're strategically choosing the opposite – you're getting extremely focused and only targeting your very best-fit accounts in order to achieve even better ROI. It's quite literally quality over quantity, and it's proving to be incredibly effective.

ABX, on the flip side, is like the older sibling who graduated from ABM high school. They've got the planning and general execution down; now, they're heading off to the big, bright world of the buyer experience. ABX is all about crafting campaigns and an end-to-end journey, with ABM as the foundation, that serves and respects buyers' wants and needs. ABX delivers ABM, but on buyers' terms and based on their preferences. It's even more sophisticated and effective than ABM on its own.

Related: Account-Based Marketing Isn't Going Away. Here's Why.

ABM 2.0? ABS?

The next wave of ABM could be called ABM 2.0 or, as I joked above, ABS (which could either stand for something predictable like account-based strategy or more on the nose, like Additional BS – just workshopping here). Or we could stop focusing on naming things and coining new acronyms. In my opinion, it's more important to think of the "why" and "how" of where we go from here, rather than what the destination is called.

So, *why*? Why will we one day soon graduate from ABX and move into the next chapter of the ABM story? First of all, B2B buyer behavior and expectations are fluid and will continue to

change. ABX largely came about because buyers were evolving to be much savvier than they've been in years past and more protective of their time and their privacy. With these changes, but no changes to ABM, the strategy would've become less and less effective over time. As buyers change, marketing must also change to meet them.

Second, technology will keep adapting to meet these evolving behaviors and expectations. Today, we're all plugging in different software-based elements of a well-rounded marketing strategy and mostly getting unprecedented results. But there is still a lot of disparate tech and disconnected efforts going on, which can drag even the most strategic efforts down. If you look toward the horizon, I believe we'll see more, really deep integrations between all these different platforms. All the segmented pieces and parts of ABM and ABX today will be together, under one roof.

Now that we've covered the "why," it's time to consider the "how" of going from ABM and ABX to the future. *How* this next wave will come about is by honoring the underlying mindset that is foundational to all these acronyms. This **account-based mindset** is what will continue and will be the basis for the future of ABM and ABX.

Focusing on this approach keeps marketers' minds on buyers' preferences and continues moving the B2B world toward better marketing, better customer satisfaction and better results. And that's all that really matters, whatever you want to call it.

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