

TRADITIONAL MARKETING IS FAILING YOUR TECH STARTUP

Why B2B Tech Startups Struggle to Find the Right Leads

Aater Suleman, Ali Hussain, Vishnu Priya
Vixul, Inc.

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Executive Summary

Emerging Technology & IT Services (ETS) startup founders often struggle to find new business. They use mass campaigns of ads, cold outreach, and generate bottomless content, but leads never make it to the funnel. The truth is, most tech startups are operating in a position of low truth with generic offers, which may be effective with referrals but yield poor results with strangers. This whitepaper will guide founders of B2B ETS startups in setting up Account-Based Marketing for a more effective lead generation strategy.

Account-Based Marketing (ABM) offers a more targeted approach for these specific tech services firms: instead of casting a wide net (through generic marketing campaigns), it identifies and engages with very specific high-value accounts with intent and highly personalized marketing. With the high-commitment nature of buying tech services, ABM enables you to build deeper relationships with fewer targets, resulting in greater deal value and allowing you to make inroads into your target customers.

This whitepaper gives you the tools to build an ABM approach into your sales and marketing by examining:

1. What is ABM, and how is it different from the traditional model of marketing?
2. How to implement an ABM strategy in your firm.
3. Guiding you through the tools, technology, and metrics in implementing your ABM strategy.

Emerging Tech/IT Services, or ETS, is a term coined by Vixul, defining it as: a specialized branch of **Professional Services** primarily focused on the adoption and management of **Emerging Technologies**. We define **Emerging Technologies** as technology platforms that are growing rapidly (at least **25% annually**). [1]

Checklist To Identify If You Are A Tech Services Firm:

Before you start going through this whitepaper, you can use this to help classify yourself as an ETS firm. ETS firms have been around for quite some time in the industry, but it has always been hard to identify them from traditional tech firms, which most tech services companies mistake as their own identity.

- My company builds or integrates solutions in emerging technology domains such as AI, automation, IoT, blockchain, advanced analytics, or cloud engineering.
- Our offerings are highly technical and not easily understood by general audiences.
- We don't sell off-the-shelf products, as most of our projects are customized for each client's unique infrastructure or business model.
- Every proposal or engagement requires a deep discovery phase to define the technical scope.
- Our ideal clients are limited to specific industries that truly understand or need our technology.
- Getting meetings with qualified prospects is difficult because few decision-makers understand what we do.

If your tech startup relates to most or all of these, then you are considered an ETS startup.

What is ABM?

Account-based Marketing, or **ABM**, was formalized and popularized in **2003** by Bev Burgess at the Information Technology Services Marketing Association (ITSMA) [2]. ABM involves identifying **high-value target accounts** and crafting **personalized campaigns** of specifically **curated content** to engage key stakeholders of those accounts. This style of marketing targets a smaller audience that has the potential to generate significant revenue once the lead is converted into a contact, and so each target account is treated as its own individual market [3]. ABM focuses on **building relationships** and **understanding** the unique challenges of each target account, rather than waiting for an opportunity to arise within the industry. It's an application of sales tactics to your marketing, as well as the application of marketing tactics to your sales.

Emerging Tech Services + ABM

Emerging Tech & IT Services Startup Challenges

Emerging Technology and IT services startups sell differently than most B2B product-centric startups. Deals are typically high-value, often starting in six figures, and require long sales cycles with input from multiple stakeholders.

Emerging technology is still new and perceived as risky due to it having various "unknown" outcomes. Customers often opt for the safer option, even if it may not completely solve their problem, as they choose the "tried and tested" generic tech services. [1], [4]

Unlike traditional tech services, the ideal customers of emerging tech services often don't understand the issues they are facing. As the root cause of the problems is unknown, they attempt to do damage control and find solutions within the industry that are not yet ready to provide expert, boutique solutions with non-traditional tech solutions. [1], [4]

Early-stage tech and IT services startups have limited resources and a larger trust gap that they need to fill with their potential customers. [1]

How ABM Solves ETS Startup Challenges

Senior engineers, managers, and executives all influence the buying decision, each with different concerns and incentives, making it critical to coordinate engagement with them and build relationships at an account level rather than treating stakeholders as isolated leads. [4]

An ABM strategy helps them by providing awareness of the available solution. Case studies offer clarity on the outcome, and the educational content the company provides gives them the ability to view themselves as experts in emerging technology. [1],[5]

ABM for ETS startups involves outreach with a significant educational component, helping clients understand the business problem the emerging technology aims to solve, how the technology addresses this problem, and how to manage the risks associated with implementing an emerging technology. This increases the sales cycle and builds a deeper relationship with the customer. [1]

ABM enables ETS startups to prioritize key accounts and align efforts across personas, building a deeper understanding of customer problems. [4]

Traditional Marketing VS. ABM

ABM flips the funnel. [6], [7]

Instead of chasing everyone, you identify only the companies that need exactly what you offer. Then you tailor your outreach to them. For ETS firms, this is ideal. Other things tech services can benefit from ABM are:

What ABM Strategy Entails

- **Niche Focus:** Positions specialized skills as a solution to complex problems, unlike mass-produced offerings from big tech.
- **Targeted Solutions:** Addresses specific buyer needs, focusing on high-intent accounts seeking particular fixes.
- **Personalized Messaging:** Communicates directly with prospects by aligning with their tech stack and industry needs, making the firm feel like a perfect fit.

ABM Strategy Outcomes

- **Shorter Sales Cycles:** Concentrates on accounts that require offered solutions, accelerating decision-making and improving ROI.
- **Sales & Marketing Alignment:** Encourages collaboration between teams to select accounts and close deals more effectively.
- **Efficient Targeting & Retention:** Cuts through market noise by accurately targeting the Ideal Customer Profile, enhancing customer engagement and retention.

- ABM identifies key accounts first and then proceeds to identify their pain points.
- You use your relationship with your internal champion to build relationships with other stakeholders in the organization. You help them understand the need and guide them in creating the opportunity.
- An ABM strategy helps you build long-term client relationships through targeted engagement, which not only secures stable customers but also uncovers new opportunities in the market over time.
- The traditional sales funnel continues to focus on getting connected with an internal champion.

ACCOUNT BASED MARKETING FUNNEL



TRADITIONAL SALES FUNNEL

Fig. 1. ABM VS. Traditional Marketing Funnel [6], [7]

The ABM Principles

Implementing ABM effectively requires a disciplined framework grounded in precision and collaboration. ABM's core principles are given below:

- 1. Clarity in ICP and Account Selection:** ABM begins with clarity. Defining the Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) based on firmographic, technographic, and use-case criteria, supported by real-time buying signals, ensures every marketing and sales effort targets accounts with genuine business potential.
- 2. Adaptable Strategy:** Not every account requires the same level of investment. A tiered ABM approach, spanning 1:1, 1:few, and 1:many engagement models, aligns the depth of personalization and outreach intensity with the account's strategic and revenue value. This will be discussed in detail in the next segment.
- 3. Signal-Based Prioritization:** Prioritization is data-driven. By combining third-party intent data, first-party website behavior, and CRM engagement insights, teams can intelligently sequence outreach and deliver the right message at the right time in the buyer's journey.
- 4. Ecosystem-Led Reach:** ABM extends beyond direct marketing. Engage with partners, communities, and category media to access otherwise hard-to-reach buyers.
- 5. Team Synchronization:** Clearly defined roles, cadences, and quality standards between marketing, sales, and other teams ensure consistent account coverage, timely follow-ups, and measurable accountability across the funnel.

Traditional Tech Services (TTS)	Emerging Tech and IT Services (ETS)
Customers want to solve a known problem while saving money and time	Customers want to solve an unknown problem through expert help and guidance
Marketing requires low investment, mainly in the brand and services	Marketing requires high investment, particularly in raising market awareness and thought leadership
Look for a contract expiration or a new project added to the roadmap for lead generation tactics	Lead generation involves understand intent through the marketing funnel and enter conversations to educate customers
Sales motion is led by RFPs, focused on engineering resources and their skill levels, often with personnel resumes	Sales motion is led by solution architects to design a solution, ETS startups are focused on consultive selling
Mainly used as a resell or lead sharing mechanism	Used as a source of credibility, a joint go-to-market is common

Table. 1. TTS VS. ETS Sales Motion [8]

Which Accounts to Invest In?

Before identifying which accounts you should be targeting for your ABM campaigns, you need to get everyone involved in the ABM implementation strategy on the same page for these:

1. **Objective:** What do you want to achieve from this ABM campaign? What are your priorities?
2. **Timeline:** Is this a short-term pilot program or a long-term adaptation to a new lead generation strategy?
3. **Budget:** Which phase is your ETS startup in (early, growth, or expanding), and how much can your ETS startup spend on the ABM strategy? [9]

This will help in the account selection process, as there will be more clarity on what your startup wants to achieve from the ABM campaign. Since different startups have different priorities, the criteria for everything from account evaluation to selection and finalization can change.

First, ask each team member to compile their own curated list of accounts that they believe are valuable. This will bring fresh perspectives across the board and new criteria to evaluate accounts that may not be present in your CRM. Then narrow the list down further based on:

1. **Ideal Customer Profile Fit:** How close does the target account match your ideal customer profile?
2. **Relationship:** What is the current status of the account relationship? Any common connections to leverage?
3. **Level of Investment:** How much is the account worth investing in? Which tier is the account holder in the company? Does building a long-term relationship appear fruitful based on the size of the company? What is the likelihood of the account being converted into a lead?
4. **Understanding the Customer Deeply:** What are the challenges your customer is facing? Is the company tech-savvy and interested in experimenting with emerging technology? Are there any significant events the company may be going through, such as mergers, acquisitions, or changes in leadership, which you can take advantage of? What is your customer's geography? Who are your customers' current suppliers and collaborators? What are their core capabilities as a company and their priorities? How is their work culture and politics? What is the customer's business model?
5. **Positioning:** Does the service your ETS startup provides directly address the problem the target account may be facing in their own company? Are there other competitors in the industry doing the same? What is the likelihood of you securing the deal? How is your service better compared to the competitors? Do you have any connections that can help you build trust with the target account?

Now **segment** the accounts into priority **tiers**: high-value, targeted accounts that require high team effort and investment, then accounts with less priority and moderate investment, and finally, the accounts that may take a while to warm up to the new, emerging tech solutions with minimal investment. [10]

Keep note that this process requires some high maintenance, as the team needs to review the list frequently to assess the campaign's success and adjust the investment and outreach program accordingly, without wasting resources on leads that do not enter the funnel within a specified timeframe.

- **Deep customer understanding** directly improves the **success** of an ABM strategy.
- Learning to interpret **intent** and **engagement signals** helps identify the right moment to **engage** with the customer.
- Strengthening **executive leadership outreach** can build trust faster with the customer.



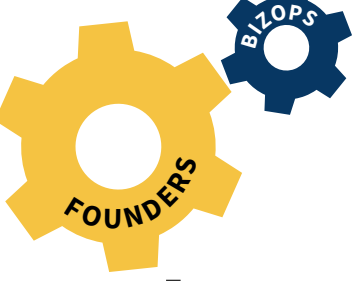
The Right Strategy For You

ABM is an adaptable strategy that perfectly fits ETS startups. You can adjust your resources and the manpower needed to attract the right targeted accounts. For this, ABM can largely be categorized into three main types, and depending on the kind of outcome you want, you can choose the strategy that works best for your startup.

- **Strategic ABM** (1:1, one-to-one): This is the most personalized form of ABM, as it focuses on a small number of high-value target accounts (often strategic enterprise clients or potential anchor customers) and treats them as a “market of one”. The marketing campaigns are highly personalized to these accounts. Ideal for early-stage or boutique tech services startups working to educate their potential customers about their niche solutions.
- **ABM Lite** (1:few, one-to-few): Also known as "Cluster ABM", the personalized campaigns are designed for targeted accounts that are grouped together in the same niche or those that share common pain points. This is suitable for growth-stage startups looking to expand in their industry vertical by targeting accounts in groups, with semi-personalized content, while efficiently managing resources.
- **Programmatic ABM** (1:many, one-to-many): Traditionally, Programmatic ABM meant reaching a broader audience through the use of modern technology (such as CRMs, AI, and other automated tools). Nowadays, this type of ABM is used to create personalized content for a broader audience in the tech market to create market awareness without being too resource-intensive. It is ideal for scaling emerging tech services startups.

Strategic ABM	ABM Lite	Programmatic ABM
Traditional “One-to-One” approach	“One-to-Few” approach	“One-to-Many” approach
Targets very niche accounts	Targets segmented accounts based on similar niches	Targets specific accounts at scale
Highly personalized content	Customized and repurposed content	Repurposed content
Accounts targeted: 70% existing & 30% new	Accounts targeted: 56% existing & 44% new	Accounts targeted: 51% existing & 49% new
Targets 5-10% of your pipeline (10+ accounts)	Targets 10–20% of your pipeline (50+ accounts)	Targets 70–80% of your pipeline (700+ accounts)
May be too resource-intensive for deal sizes under a million	Good to use for mid-sized deals	Good to use for deal sizes below \$250K
Long-term investment with best ROI	Moderate investment balancing personalization and broad reach	Cost-effective investment for larger account outreach
Sales & Marketing teams are strongly aligned	Sales & Marketing teams need to collaborate	Sales & Marketing teams utilize technology for outreach and content
Good for deepening client relationships	Good for finding opportunities and building relationships	Good for scaling and lead generation

Table. 2. Strategic ABM VS. ABM Lite VS. Programmatic ABM [5], [11]



The Organizational Blueprint

Here is a detailed breakdown of each department's contribution to the ABM strategy:

Marketing

- Develops industry-specific messaging, thought leadership, and content tailored to each account.
- Drives demand by showcasing the firm's expertise in solving niche tech challenges.
- Supports brand positioning within targeted ecosystems.



Sales

- Builds relationships with decision-makers in high-value accounts.
- Orchestrates outreach using insights from marketing, delivery, and leadership.
- Customizes offers and proposals around specific client needs.

Account Management

- Provides insights into past engagements or pilots with clients similar to the current one.
- Supports upselling and long-term account retention.
- Builds strategic trust post-sale, especially in managed or retained services models.



BizOps

- Ensures smooth coordination across account stages, from lead to onboarding.
- Tracks ABM effectiveness and aligns tools/data across teams.
- Builds shared dashboards and maintains clean CRM/account intelligence.

Delivery

- Bring credibility to pre-sales discussions with deep technical knowledge.
- Customizes demos, proofs of concept (PoCs), solution architecture, timelines, and feasibility assessments.
- Help create account-specific proposals that outline how the solution addresses niche pain points, reflecting realistic delivery capacity.

Founders

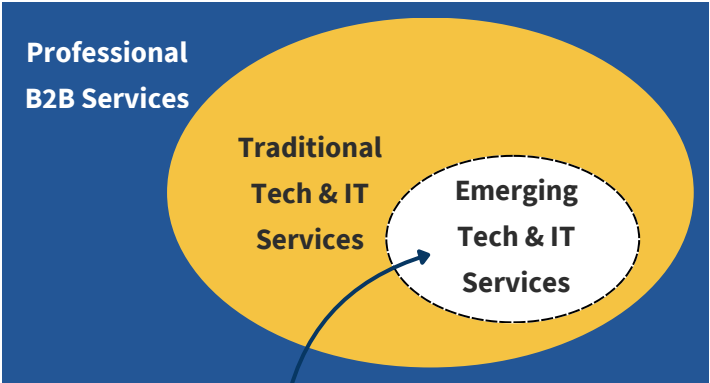
- Play a hands-on role in high-stakes relationship building.
- Engage C-suite executives at target firms, lending credibility and trust.
- Help shape long-term account strategies and negotiate specifically tailored deals for the clients. [12]



ABM Content

ABM content is categorized by intent, personalization, and buying stage.

- **Foundational Content:** Builds awareness and credibility. Examples include whitepapers with documented outcomes of the solutions your emerging tech and IT services provide, trend reports, analyst-style insights that you can document related to your services, videos or infographics that act as educational content for niche technologies, and executive one-pagers and elevator decks. Maintain consistent branding across all social media platforms and run ads that target the prospect specifically. Host webinars on topics that show your expertise on the emerging technology that you are using, and build an awareness of the potential that it has to solve the target customer's problems. You can reach out to the registered attendees through email and offer them important insights from the webinar, which will open the door for them to warm up to you and explain their problem to you. [9], [10], [13]
- **Middle-Funnel Content:** Demonstrates value alignment and use-case relevance to drive engagement with the targeted accounts. Examples include case studies tailored to similar industries, comparison guides, and solution briefs, along with personalized landing pages for each account by utilizing intent signals.
- **Late-Funnel Content:** Focuses on proof of solutions, potential partnership, and long-term impact for prospects in the conversion stage. Examples include highly tailored proposals and pilot solutions, workshops, demos, and "proof of value" engagements, as well as customer success stories.[13]
- **Ecosystem & Partner Content:** Extends reach through shared credibility to infiltrate niche markets where prospects tend to engage most. Examples include joint webinars or articles with ecosystem partners, as well as paid promotions at tech events. [9], [10]



Perfect landscape to implement ABM strategy

Fig. 2. ABM for ETS startups [1]

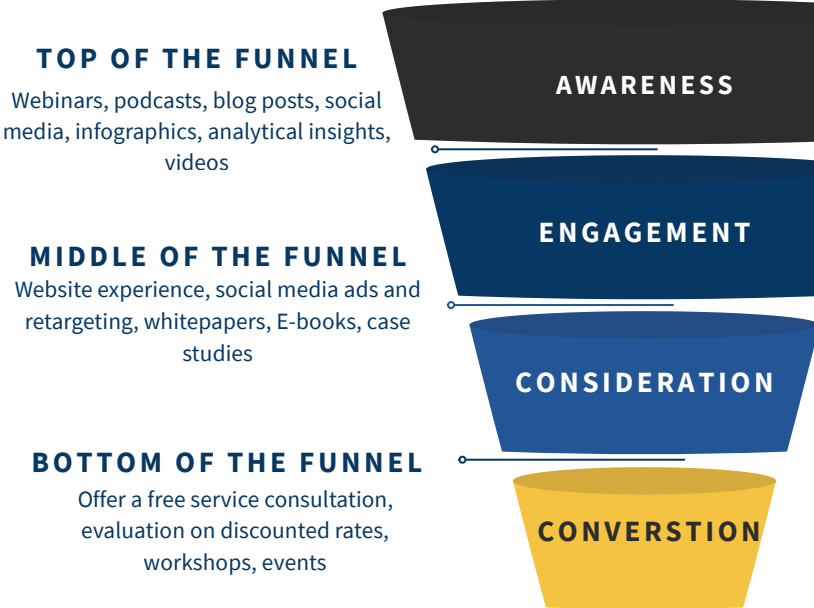


Fig. 3. TOFU, MOFU, BOFU Stages for ABM Content [13]

ABM Implementation Steps

1. Identify High-Value Target Accounts

Use follower analytics, CRM data, and past deal performance to define your Ideal Customer Profiles (ICPs). Accounts and marketing teams should work together effectively on this. These ICPs should align with your core offerings and proven strengths. For the validation of these target customer profiles, sales and delivery teams should offer insights.

2. Research Account Pain-Points

Go beyond firmographics. Account Management contributes real customer data and surfaces insights around key business challenges, their current tech stack, and vendor frustrations.

3. Segment and Prioritize Your List

Some accounts can be grouped and scaled, eliminating the need for one-on-one attention. Business operations tiers accounts by revenue potential and resource load, categorizing them by industry or vertical, size of the company, geography, and trigger events such as new funding, leadership changes, etc.

4. Develop Customized Campaigns

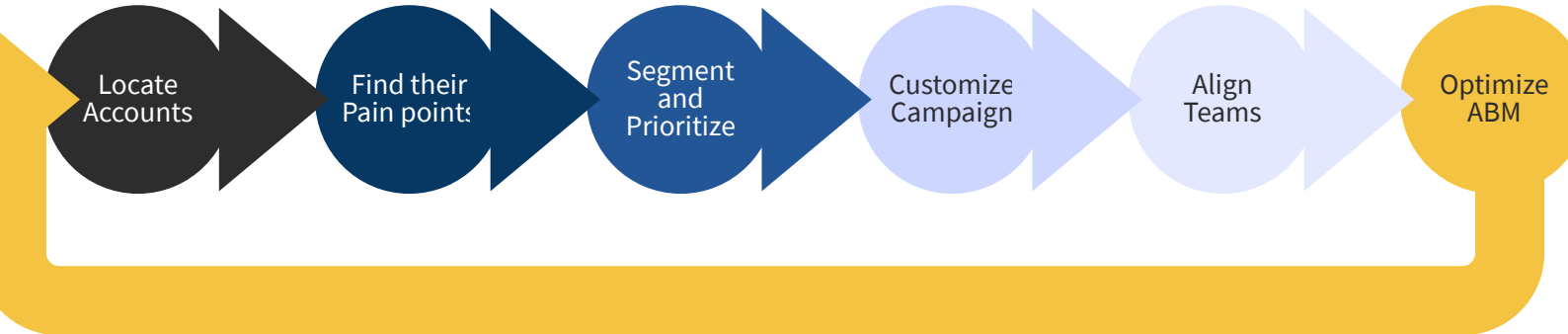
Marketing and Sales lead here, crafting content and outreach strategies using personalized email, custom landing pages, account-specific whitepapers, ABM-targeted ads, and technical case studies.

5. Align Teams with SLAs

BizOps drafts the SLA, and all teams acknowledge it with clear expectations such as lead handoff rules, engagement timelines, and shared KPIs.

6. Measure and Optimize ABM Results

BizOps and Account Management both track progress beyond top-of-funnel metrics that are account engagement over time, pipeline velocity, influenced revenue, expansion opportunities, and more. [12]



90-day Pilot Program for ABM

Before launching a full ABM program, run a pilot to validate market fit and optimize the strategy before scaling it.

Week 0-2:

Foundation

- ICP refinement: Define firmographics (industry, size, geolocation, etc.), technographics (what tech stack are your target accounts using for cloud, data infrastructure), problem/trigger events, and negative criteria.
- Account selection: Build the named account list (NAL) in priority order, and populate it with target accounts.
- Define roles: Confirm roles within teams, SLAs, cadences, and dashboards. Set target metrics (e.g., qualified meetings, opportunities, account progression, relationship with targeted account, revenue).
- Messaging and Content: Prepare outreach scheme for different stakeholders and create customized content assets. Review which accounts need priority in customized assets. The least prioritized target accounts get the least customized offers with semi-personalized messaging outreach, while high-priority TAs get carefully curated, personalized offers.

Week 3-4:

Reading Signals and Play Design

- Implement intent topics and urgency-based scoring thresholds, and integrate them into the CRM. Define the triggers for the target accounts and the CTAs for what the team needs to follow up on.
- Tiers: Create tiers for different outreach strategies and define metrics to move TAs through them. Also define move-up/move-down rules between tiers.
- Draft Tier 1 assets: 1:1 landing pages, targeted ads, executive email sequences, curated offers.
- Build Tier 2 assets: Create webinar campaigns, identify the topics they resonate with (e.g., "AI/ML Ops modernization for healthcare"), and frame the marketing with relevant content.
- Build Bottom Tier assets: Launch initial programmatic ads to with a light budget for a test run.

Week 5-6:

Launch Orchestration

- Sales team actions: Role-based outreach to 2–3 stakeholders per account, they must also have relevant insights into the accounts they are reaching out to.
- Account Management actions: Schedule discovery with defined meeting quality criteria; prepare validation assets (ROI hypothesis, tech architecture fit).
- Marketing actions: Publish cluster blog posts, run a webinar targeting Tier 2 TAs, and implement website personalization.
- Locate common partners: Market 1–2 assets with a strategic partner to expand reach in a certain group of TAs.

90-day Pilot Program for ABM

After the first 6 weeks of the pilot program, try to optimize each step and have regular meetings with the team.

Week 7–8:

Optimize and deepen personalization

- Move high-potential Tier 2 accounts to Tier 1 based on signal thresholds and predefined rules set by the team.
- Create tailored case studies or workshop invitations.
- Refine outreach, ads, and content based on early engagement and web activity.
- Test different messaging approaches to see what resonates most with stakeholders.
- Tighten SLAs: Shorten response times for Tier 1 signals and enforce the TA meeting quality check.
- Start building case studies or proof points from early conversations for credibility.

Week 9–10:

Scale what works

- Replicate top-performing campaigns in new target account groups/clusters.
- Expand outreach to include additional stakeholders such as managing directors and other C-tier members.
- Launch a second webinar or virtual roundtable featuring partner or customer advocates.
- Increase multi-channel engagement: email, social, ads, and content touchpoints.
- Begin coordinating account-level follow-ups across sales, marketing, and the company's executives involved in outreach to the highest-priority, top-tier target accounts.

Week 11–12:

Measure, Learn, Decide

- Review key metrics: number of opportunities created, win rate, deal cycle time, and depth of stakeholder engagement.
- Decide which target accounts or clusters to scale and which campaigns to pause or improve.
- Analyze failed prospects and their causes to establish benchmarks for slow-moving accounts before investing significant resources.
- Refine the ICP and update account tiers based on performance and signals.
- Document playbooks and SOPs for repeatable success in future ABM campaigns.
- Identify gaps in technology or content for the next phase of ABM strategy.

Accelerating ABM Using AI

As Emerging Technology Services startups push the boundaries of innovation, staying ahead in the AI adoption curve has also become a necessity. Failing to integrate AI effectively across internal teams could slow the growth trajectory and risk irrelevance in an ecosystem that is constantly evolving. In a market where niche, high-value solutions define your positioning, your firm must also reflect operational excellence.

For ETS firms, traditional marketing required numerous hours of creating content, running outreach campaigns, and nurturing leads across a wide funnel. Time and resources are often limited, making this model inefficient. But AI has completely changed the game by redefining what's possible.

What once took hours of manual research and customization can now happen in seconds. From personalized content generation to smarter distribution and full-cycle automation, AI empowers small teams to operate like enterprise giants. [14], [15]

AI Type	Core Purpose	Key Capabilities	Examples
Generative AI	Personalized content at scale	Text generation (outreach), landing pages, visuals	ChatGPT, Jasper, Copy.ai
AI Automation	Automate ABM workflows & outreach	Email sequencing, meeting scheduling, CRM updates, trigger-based workflows	Hubspot, Clay, Apollo.io, N8N, Zapier using AI Integrations
AI Analytics	Measure campaign impact & pipeline progression	Engagement tracking, attribution modeling, ROI calculation	Google Analytics, 6sense, Demandbase, Terminus
Predictive AI	Identify high-fit, in-market accounts	Intent signal monitoring, lead scoring, timing optimization	6sense, Demandbase
Conversation AI	Analyze calls & interactions	Transcription, objection detection, sentiment scoring, rep coaching	Fireflies.ai, Zoominfo
Agentic Agents	Act as autonomous ABM strategists & orchestrate workflows	Plan outreach, test campaigns, score accounts, trigger other AIs, adapt strategy in real time	Agentic ABX by Poexis Agentic ABM by iCustomer
Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG)	Combines knowledge retrieval with generative AI to generate more accurate, context-aware responses	Dynamically pulls information from internal documents, client data, or knowledge bases to create tailored proposals or outbound messages	Azure AI Services Suite
Robotic Process Automation (RPA)	Automates repetitive rule-based tasks	Speeds up CRM data entry and reporting	Metadata.io, 6sense

Lean Team Formula

ABM doesn't have to use up all the resources that you have, and it certainly doesn't have to be so complicated. A small team and some great automated tools can help you get started right this moment. In fact, you could have the right tech stack already functioning in your current marketing strategy.

- **Core:** CRM (e.g., HubSpot CRM or Salesforce), MAP (HubSpot Marketing Hub), intent provider (e.g., 6sense, Demandbase), website personalization (HubSpot CMS or similar).
- **Optional:** Data enrichment (Clearbit/ZoomInfo), orchestration (Salesloft/Outreach), chat (Drift/HubSpot), attribution (HubSpot/Google Analytics).

Note: Add tools only when a specific bottleneck is proven. ABM discipline > tech complexity.

Measurement and KPIs

Startups can measure ABM success by tracking performance across four key areas.

Relationships: This is an important metric that is often forgotten in ABM strategy. The bond must be analyzed to increase the chances of turning into a lead after attempts to engage and nurture it. [9], [10]

Reputation: This is the metric to measure the success in raising awareness of your solutions and emerging tech as well as the success in educating the customer, where they have the ability to understand the problem they are dealing with and they trust you to solve it. [9], [10]

Profile Fit: This measures how well your target accounts match your ICP. It also looks at tier coverage, or how many key decision-makers and buying roles you engage with in each account.

Customer Engagement: This evaluates how actively target accounts interact with your brand. It includes metrics such as account engagement score, the depth of stakeholder involvement, and the amount of content they consume, especially validation assets like case studies or whitepapers.

Progression Through Funnel: This tracks how accounts move through the pipeline. It includes whether accounts move up in priority tiers, the quality of meetings held, and how quickly they advance through deal stages.

Pipeline and Revenue: This focuses on tangible business outcomes. Key metrics include the number of qualified opportunities from target accounts, win rate, deal size, sales cycle length, and Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) payback, which measures how long it takes to recover the cost of acquiring a new customer.

The Dos and Dont's of ABM

Do This:

- **Define** your ICP precisely.

Build your Ideal Customer Profile using firmographic (industry, size), technographic (tools used), and intent data to ensure your outreach is relevant and targeted.

- **Align sales** and **marketing** early.

Success in ABM depends on shared goals, unified communication, and coordinated execution across both teams.

- **Start small**, scale smart.

Begin with a focused pilot, 10 to 20 high-value accounts, and expand once you've refined messaging, channels, and workflows.

- **Personalize** with purpose.

Tailor messaging, content, and offers to each account's context and stage in the buying journey. The quality of personalization matters more than the quantity.

- Use **intent** and **engagement signals**.

Leverage AI and data tools to identify when target accounts are actively researching your solutions and prioritize them.

- **Measure** and iterate.

Track key ABM metrics (fit, engagement, progression, and revenue impact) to refine your targeting and improve ROI over time.

Don't Do This:

- **Don't treat ABM** like traditional lead generation.

The goal isn't volume; it's value. Fewer, high-quality relationships are far more impactful.

- **Don't over-automate** without context.

Automation tools are powerful, but over-relying on them can make outreach feel robotic and impersonal.

- **Don't skip** the **research** phase.

ABM requires a deep understanding of your target accounts' challenges, decision-making structure, and buying triggers.

- **Don't ignore post-sale** engagement.

ABM doesn't end at the deal. Continued nurturing turns customers into advocates and long-term partners.

- **Don't chase vanity** metrics.

Page views and impressions don't always reflect true engagement or intent. Focus on metrics that show actual account progression.

- **Don't silo ABM** into marketing.

ABM is a company-wide approach. When only marketing drives it, it loses depth and long-term strategic value.

Appendix

ETS: Emerging Technology or IT Services, a term used at Vixul to refer to startups offering services in new and upcoming technologies, such as AI.

TTS: Traditional Tech Services

RFP: Request for proposal

PoC: Proof of concept

ICP: Ideal Customer Profile

CRM: Customer Relationship Management

TA: Target(ed) Account(s)

ROI: Return on Investment

RAG: Retrieval-Augmented Generation

RPA: Robotic Process Automation

NAL: Named Account List aligned to ICP tiers.

SLA: Service Level Agreement.

CAC: Customer Acquisition Cost; $CAC = \text{Cost of Sales} + \text{Cost of Marketing} / \text{New Customers Acquired}$

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ABOUT VIXUL

Vixul is a tech accelerator catered specifically towards Emerging Tech and IT services (ETS) early-stage startups operating in uncertain, high-stakes markets. We help founders navigate space in emerging technology markets and help them position themselves in the right niche to sell their services better than their competitors.

ETS founders often struggle to find the right tools, guides, mentors, and communities that understand their unique problems. At Vixul, we build ecosystems that thrive on emerging tech thought leaders, experts, and veterans to provide the support emerging tech entrepreneurs look for.

Visit the website for more information at www.vixul.com.