

What's Working In Demand Generation In 2024

Practitioners Revamping ABM
& Content Strategies With A
GTM & Personalization Focus

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Introduction

Marketers, take a deep breath and channel your inner da Vinci, Michelangelo or Botticelli: The ABM & Content Renaissance is upon us. According to the “[2024 Demand Generation Benchmark Survey](#),” 57% of respondents plan to allocate more budget to ABM initiatives throughout the year, while 54% pointed to content marketing investments. For reference, just 46% pointed to ABM and 43% to content in 2023. This strategic rebirth is primarily fueled by one key factor — content overload.

“When we were hunkered down during Covid-19, we became content-consumption machines in our personal and professional lives,” said Steve Armenti, VP of Revenue Marketing at [DigitalOcean](#), during his [B2B Marketing Exchange](#) (#B2BMX) keynote. “This created a false positive signal to the brands and marketers targeting us, so they created more content because they thought their buyers were hungry for more. But then life went back to normal, and now we have this content surplus — and it has alienated our buyers.”

To put that alienation into perspective, **54% of B2B buyers** said they are overwhelmed by the amount of content available, meaning marketers have to power down their content machines and focus more on building strong intent data strategies that enable hyper personalization and targeting.

But fret not: Practitioners have big plans (aka budgets) to revamp their demand gen strategies:



27% anticipate increases between **1%** and **10%**



26% plan to increase their budgets by more than **11%**



25% indicated they'll keep their budgets the same

Throughout this report, we'll analyze where/how organizations are investing that budget to restructure their demand strategies, with a specific focus on the role ABM and content will play. Leveraging unique insights from *Demand Gen Report's* recently released research, we'll uncover:

- How practitioners are tapping into hyper-personalization through deeper segmentation, dynamic content personalization and leveraging technology like AI and chatbots for real-time engagement;
- The role of data-driven intent targeting in understanding where customers are in their buying journey and what they're actively searching for;
- How ABM and ABX are moving beyond targeting high-value accounts and leveraging multichannel engagement and virtual events to create immersive experiences that nurture relationships across decision-makers within target accounts;
- The steps needed to incorporate emotional storytelling, interactive formats like video and audio and even humor into B2B strategies; and
- The AI-powered tools that are starting to make a real impact on B2B demand generation.



Uncovering The Next Phase Of ABM Through Intent

One of the main drivers behind ABM's rebirth rests on the increased prioritization orgs are putting toward account-based strategies throughout 2024 — but there's a caveat. With 45% of marketers planning to test/deploy better account-based marketing and 49% desiring better sales and marketing alignment around go-to-market (GTM) initiatives, experts are suggesting practitioners combine the two. Armenti spoke to the power of account-based GTM, which he defined as a strategic, long-term approach to entering a market through advanced targeting that helps all departments better understand an account's decision-making process.

"This is a long-term initiative — not a campaign," he explained. "There are some prerequisites you need to come to grips and reality with: First, you need to become highly cross functional with the entire GTM team, and then you need a deep understanding of your ideal customer profile (ICP). The third is understanding the capabilities needed to become account-focused (aka cleaning up your CRM), and the fourth is creating agile content."

In his #B2BMX Campfire session, Mason Cosby, Founder of ABM agency [Scrappy ABM](#), dove deeper into the role alignment plays in successful account-based GTM strategies. He noted that to promote cross-functionality, marketers need to allow other teams to feel like they're in control and equip them with the necessary tools.

"You can't just go to your sales team and tell them that you're building a new ABM program, because they'll just Google the term and get a bunch of information that sounds really complicated," said Cosby. Instead, he shared his "Four D" framework of building account-based GTM plays, which include:

- **Data**, a summary of the target, messaging, positioning, personas, product and any input that impacts the content and targeting of the activation play;
- **Distribution**, which are defined strategies, tactics and channels for how the data is then distributed to the target audience;
- **Destination**, which consists of the "what" and "where" that data and distribution push prospects to, whether it's pages, content, conversion points or desired outcomes; and
- **Direction**, which are the conversion points or paths that are established to better track target direction and outcomes for the activation play, such as forms, CTAs and demos.

Proof Point:

When Honeywell spun-off its residential technology business into a separate, stand-alone company called **Resideo**, it wanted to position the new brand as the go-to for powering the connected home with smart technology. To help update their strategy, the team partnered with **Data Axle**, a provider of data-driven marketing solutions, to leverage data and develop a strategy that would boost demand by marketing to end consumers. Through the partnership, Resideo saw:

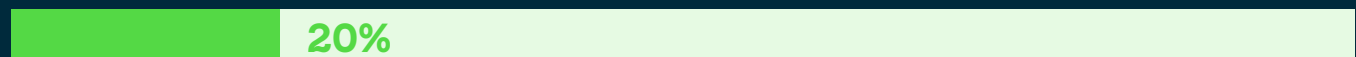
Increase in activations



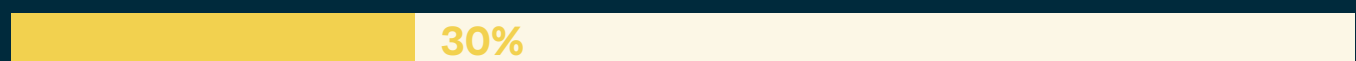
Lift in new product activations by existing users



Customer base growth



Revenue increase from retained customers



OPTIMIZING YOUR DEMAND GENERATION STRATEGIES WITH KEY CUSTOMERS & PROSPECTS



A Q&A with Ken Stout, Senior Vice President of **Data Axle**.



Demand Gen Report: *In the realm of B2B lead generation, many experts emphasize the importance of content. In fact, according to the Content Marketing Institute, 73% of B2B marketers use content marketing as an integral part of their demand generation strategy. Can you share your insights on why content is considered “king” in this industry, and what types of content are currently proving most effective?*

Ken Stout: Content plays a pivotal role in B2B demand generation as it serves to educate, engage and build trust with potential customers. Quality content positions a company as an industry authority, attracting prospects seeking valuable insights. Interactive content — such as webinars, podcasts and more — is now part of the omnichannel mix, as it provides a more immersive and personalized experience.

Being able to create content that resonates with your audience isn't easy — it requires a deep bench of knowledge on your audience, what they want to know and which channels they are responsive to. That's where data comes into play: Marketers need to have a depth and breadth of well-organized, highly accurate data that they can pull from to best serve their audiences.

You also need to consider the buying group. As more stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process, companies need to make sure they are creating content for everyone involved. In the past, companies only had to worry about one buyer, but that's not the case anymore: We have different and disparate entities, such as HR, operations, procurement, etc., and can scale anywhere from 10-20 people involved. Looking at an investment and having content that speaks to their different goals for the product is imperative. The first cohort of Gen Z are now moving into management, and they digest content in different ways.

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DGR: With younger generations rising in the corporate hierarchy, how should B2B marketers adapt their strategies to resonate with this demographic? What specific marketing approaches have proven successful in capturing the attention of younger professionals?

Stout: Younger professionals value authenticity, transparency and personalized experiences. B2B marketers should leverage social media platforms, especially those favored by younger generations, to share authentic behind-the-scenes content, employee stories and company culture. Interactive and visually appealing content, such as infographics and short videos, tends to resonate well. Additionally, incorporating social responsibility and sustainability into marketing messages aligns with the values that many younger professionals prioritize.

Emphasizing mobile content and exploring technologies like augmented reality can enhance engagement. Moreover, personalized communication and a focus on building long-term relationships rather than just transactional interactions will be crucial as younger professionals value authenticity and genuine connections.

DGR: If a B2B marketer approached you and asked you for one tip on how to build revenue, what would you tell them?

Stout: Our industry is changing every day, every minute. It's imperative to be in full alignment with the customer-facing teams on the frontlines. Understanding customers' priorities, organizational cultures, challenges and opportunities and the needs of all stakeholders involved is crucial. Successful demand generation starts with a deep understanding of your audience, which means having the right data about your customers and the ability to analyze that data and identify common attributes across your most valuable customer segments.

Gaining a deep understanding of your audiences has three key components:

1. Identifying your highest-value customers based on the products they buy, industries they represent, company size, revenue, geography and other factors, which serves as the basis for your ideal customer profile;
2. Analyzing your current pipeline and recent wins to identify emerging trends, map the customer journey and understand your customers' purchase cycle; and
3. Understanding your buyers by performing an analysis of the decision-makers, influencers and users of your products and services at your top accounts.



DGR: *In terms of demand gen planning, what do you see as the key differences in priorities and challenges for small and mid-sized marketers compared to their enterprise counterparts?*

Stout: No matter what kind of company you are, the point of all of this is to exceed expectations and yield growth. In the end, we are all working towards the same goal. At Data Axle, we partner with all kinds of companies, and we've seen many strategies and tactics both sides can learn from each other.

Small and mid-sized marketers often face resource constraints, making efficiency and cost-effectiveness critical. While enterprise marketers may have larger budgets, they may be locked into legacy systems or are more risk averse. Whereas some of the smaller businesses can leverage agility and creativity, we've seen them build out new models of customer profiles, enabling niche targeting and powerful personalized outreach.

“Successful demand generation starts with a deep understanding of your audience.”

KEN STOUT, DATA AXLE



Infusing Qualitative & Quantitative Data Sets

The best way to increase personalization is to take the insights straight from prospects and customers' mouths, which requires a strong intent data strategy. As 63% of marketers plan to allocate their budgets toward intent-data and data management, 38% plan to use that capital to increase personalized and customized buyer experiences.

But in her #B2BMX keynote, Ann Handley, Chief Content Officer of [MarketingProfs](#), warned practitioners that they can't "coerce" this first-party data out of customers through tactics such as forced sign-ups. Instead, she spoke to the power of re-thinking customer engagement to create content that makes prospects proactively reach out.

"We're over-indexing on the short-term pipeline, and not thinking enough long term or those emotional connections that we're building," she continued. "The first step is to build relationships; not audiences. And most importantly, we must invite the elephant into the room: How do we talk about the things no one else is talking about?"

With that foundation in place, DigitalOcean's Armenti added that practitioners need to go into their CRMs to understand their target buyer's history, which includes historical sales activity, reading the call notes, understanding pain points and knowing their workload, amongst others. He noted that this will help marketers identify patterns of what's working for their prospects and customers and build a more "sophisticated" data-driven process from there.

Proof Point:

[Save the Children](#) was challenged with creating a timely and effective onboarding program while still maintaining high data quality standards. The non-profit brought in Data Axle to audit their current process and determine where the gaps are and where the opportunities lie. With the results, Data Axle created an on-demand data cleansing process — Smart Match. Through the partnership, Data Axle appended 50% of the profiles in Save the Children's house file with additional data and increased full names from 9% of profiles and addresses to 30%.

Increasing Personalization & Emotional Storytelling

With a slew of data insights in-hand, marketers then need to wield that information to craft content and campaigns that directly address customers' concerns. **Dan Gingiss**, an international keynote speaker and customer experience coach, suggested practitioners can create content that resonates with audiences by infusing it with their own first-party insights.

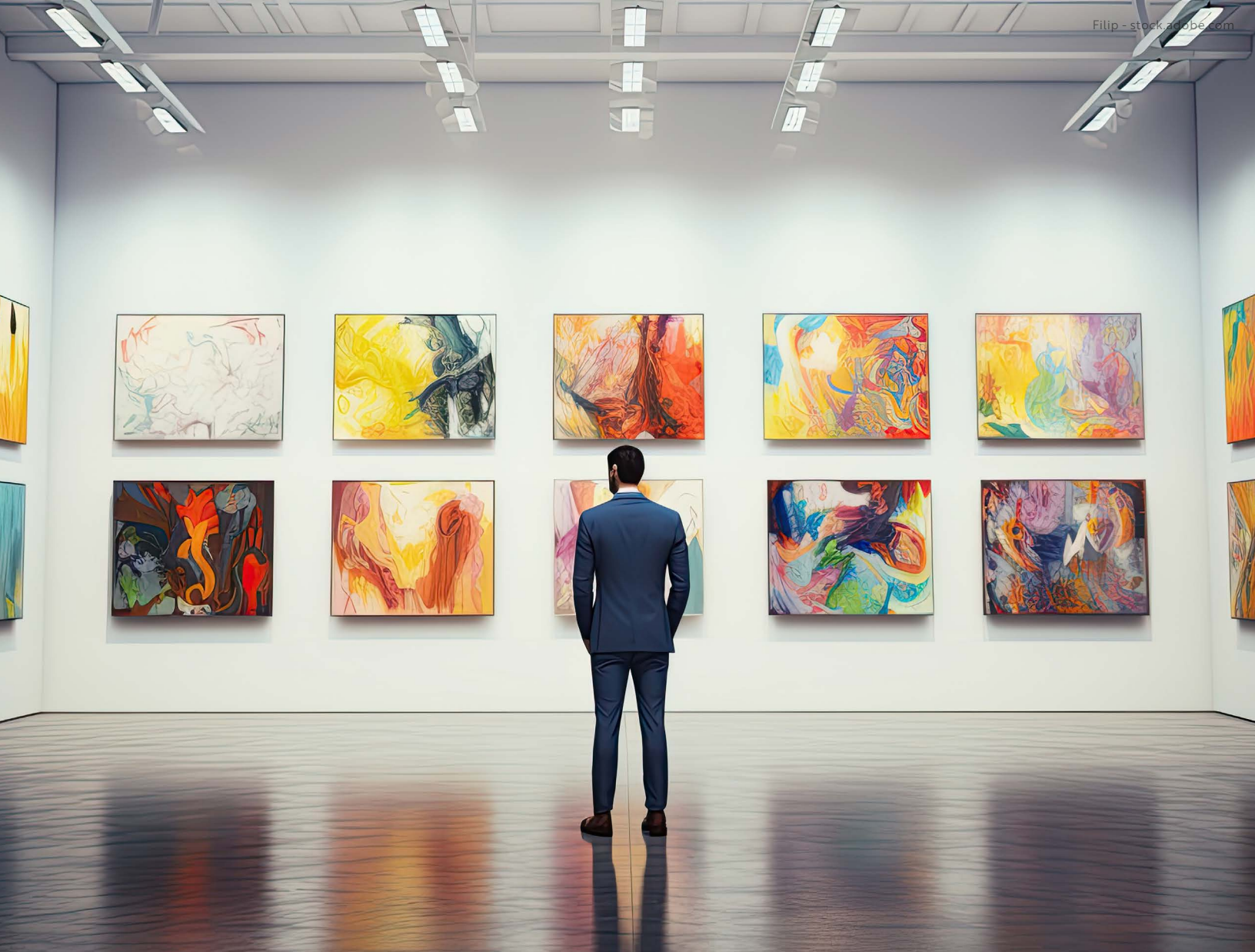
"You need to become a customer of your own business, so fill out a form, register for something on your website or even 'forget' your password," said Gingiss. "As consumers, you'll notice the things that are annoying. So, you must turn it around and become a customer of your own brand, and that's how you'll find extraordinary opportunities."

While Gingiss admitted that it often feels time- or money-intensive to innovate or adapt marketing strategies, he continued that practitioners don't have to do anything elaborate or over the top; instead, he noted they can engage audiences by creating immersive content that evokes emotions.

"Immersivity is about creating an experience people feel in their bones, because that's how we remember things," he explained. "Most of all, you need to appeal to one of the five senses or emotions — if you think back to all the memories you have of being a child, most of them will come back to an emotional moment or something you can smell, taste, see or touch."

Proof Point:

Lorena Fortuna, Digital Marketing Team Lead — CPG for Adobe, wanted to generate awareness among both new and existing markets while improving reach within their target audience. She decided to partner with **Bython**, a provider of demand generation solutions, to help revamp their offerings and, with the partnership in place, Adobe looks forward to surpassing its pacing goals and expanding its reach within the target market.



Conclusion

While da Vinci and other great artists used paint brushes and chisels, modern marketers will use CRMs and personal experiences to craft successful demand generation programs. To properly engage and sustain customers, the human element of marketing is all too clear.

"We need to show our humanity and show up as people," said Handley. "We love data, and we love talking about data, and technology, and tools. Those are fantastic, but ultimately our job as marketers is to show up authentically and connect to the people who matter to us."



Data Axle is a leader in augmented intelligence. We improve business performance through data solutions and omnichannel marketing services, enabling our clients to acquire, grow and retain their customers more efficiently and effectively, and enhance their platforms, products, and customer insights.

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Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multichannel demand generation efforts.

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