


 OMNITICS FIELD REPORT

THE STATE OF

ABM

2026–2027 

How AI rewired account-based marketing, why one-to-one finally scales to hundreds of accounts, and what to do about it before your competitors do.

WHY WE WROTE THIS

A field note, not a sales brochure.

Account-based marketing has spent a decade as the thing B2B teams were *about to* get serious about. In 2026 the waiting is over. ABM is no longer a pilot tucked inside the demand-gen budget. It is the default operating model for how serious B2B companies win named accounts. What changed is not the strategy. What changed is the cost of doing it well.

For most of ABM's history there was an iron tradeoff. You could go deep on a handful of accounts, or wide across many, but not both. Real one-to-one work, the kind that earns a meeting with a skeptical buyer, was rationed to the twenty or fifty accounts a team could research by hand. Everyone else got a lighter, blurrier version. AI has quietly dissolved that tradeoff, and most of this report is about what happens next.

We wrote this the way we work: skeptical of hype, interested in systems, allergic to vendor theatre. You will find the optimistic case for AI in ABM here, plus the parts the platform demos quietly leave out, including why a lot of AI outbound is making buyers trust you *less*, and why most of the intent data on the market is partly a reflection of your own activity. The goal is a clear-eyed picture you can act on, whether or not you ever talk to us.

Skeptical of hype, interested in systems, allergic to vendor theatre.

– THE OMNITICS TEAM

CONTENTS

What's inside

-	Executive summary	04
-	About the numbers in this report	05
01	The seven shifts at a glance	06
02	ABM in 2026: from experiment to operating system	07
03	The lead is dead. Long live the account.	08
04	Intent, honestly	10
05	The three engines of AI ABM	12
06	The personalization frontier: how one-to-one became a dial	14
07	What good looks like now	16
08	2026 to 2027: agentic, and overhyped	18

AI made relevance cheap. The teams that win make it count.

THE ONE-SENTENCE VERSION

AI did not make ABM easier to fake. It made real, one-to-one relevance **cheap enough to scale**. The teams that win in 2026 and 2027 have the **sharpest targeting and the fastest reaction to signal**, not the cleverest tools.

~80%

of B2B organizations now actively run ABM

DEMAND GEN REPORT

<1%

of MQLs ever become customers

FORRESTER

~26%

of intent signals become real opportunities

SALESOTION, 2026

\$0.8-1.2T

annual value GenAI could add to sales & marketing

MCKINSEY

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

01

Sharpen the target list

The ROI lives in tier one. Shorten the list until sales can name who owns every account.

02

React to signal faster

Time-to-touch beats signal volume. Reaching a warming account within an hour beats a day, three to one.

03

Own the “why now”

AI writes the sentence; it cannot invent the reason. That judgment is the human work that now matters most.

ABOUT THE NUMBERS

Where the figures come from, and how to read them.

The data here is drawn from public 2025 and 2026 research: the Demand Gen Report ABM benchmark; Demandbase and ForgeX state-of-ABM research; ITSMA and Momentum studies; Forrester's State of Business Buying and its 2026 predictions; Gartner survey and forecast data; McKinsey productivity estimates; and several large practitioner benchmark panels published in early 2026. Specific sources are named in the text and listed at the end.

● A NOTE ON VENDOR STATISTICS

Much of the published data on ABM and AI comes from companies that sell ABM and AI software. We have leaned toward figures that recur across independent sources, flagged single-source claims, and treated dramatic case-study numbers as directional rather than typical. Where a statistic exists mainly to sell its replacement, we say so.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Demand Gen Report

Demandbase · ForgeX

Forrester

Gartner

McKinsey

ITSMA · Momentum

Practitioner panels (1,400+ teams)

01

OMNITICS REPORT · CHAPTER 01

The seven shifts at a glance

If you read nothing else, read this. Seven changes are reshaping account-based marketing between now and 2027, each with a practical consequence for how you spend the next quarter.

1 ABM became the operating model

Roughly four in five B2B orgs run ABM. The boardroom question moved from whether it works to whether your list is short enough and your follow-up fast enough.

3 Intent is useful, quietly unreliable

Only about a quarter of signals become opportunities, and much third-party intent echoes your own activity. The edge is triangulating it and acting inside its half-life.

5 One-to-one became a dial, not a tier

The cost of a genuinely personalized touch collapsed. Depth is now a setting you choose per tier, governed by deal-size math, not a program type.

7 The next two years are agentic

Autonomous agents will run execution while humans run strategy, even as roughly 40% of agentic projects get scrapped first. Build the system, not the demo.

2 The single lead lost its meaning

Buying happens in committees of eleven or more over months, mostly before a rep is involved. One form fill from a junior researcher tells you almost nothing.

4 AI split ABM into three engines

Selection, signal, message. Each dissolves a bottleneck that used to cap scale. The danger is industrializing one engine while another is broken.

6 Relevance is the new scarcity

When a personalized-sounding email costs nothing, generic personalization becomes worthless. The defensible asset is being right about why you reach out now.

THE ONE-SENTENCE VERSION

AI did not make ABM easier to fake. It made real relevance **cheap enough to scale**. The teams that win have the sharpest targeting and the fastest reaction to signal, not the cleverest tools.

02 ABM in 2026: from experiment to operating system

Adoption is near-universal, satisfaction is high, and budgets keep moving toward focus. ABM stopped being a thing marketing tries and became the way revenue teams organize.

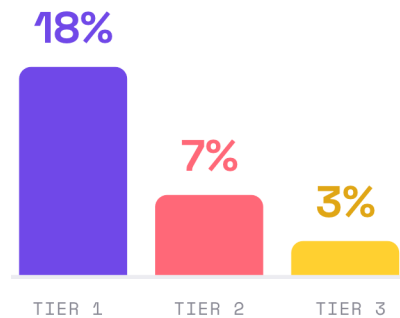
Adoption crossed the line

The clearest signal of maturity is that the argument is over. Close to eighty percent of organizations now run an ABM strategy, with most of the rest planning to add one. Buying groups are larger, cycles more complex, and the pressure to prove efficiency never lets up. In that environment, ABM is how teams create focus.

The gap is focused vs. unfocused

Headline returns are real but beside the point. What matters in 2026 is the gap *inside* ABM. Opportunity-creation rates fall sharply as you move from tier one to tier three, so the entire game is extending tier-one quality of attention to far more accounts.

OPPORTUNITY RATE BY TIER



Focus is not a nicety. It is most of the result.

EARLY-2026 PANEL · 1,400+ B2B TEAMS

~80%

of B2B organizations are actively running ABM

DEMAND GEN REPORT, 2026

85%

of programs meet, exceed, or greatly exceed expectations

DEMAND GEN REPORT, 2026

~29%

of marketing budget is allocated to ABM on average

AGGREGATED 2026 BENCHMARKS

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Stop debating *whether* to do ABM. The question is whether your tier-one list is short and your reaction to signal is fast.
- The ROI lives in tier one. The job is giving more accounts a tier-one experience.
- Budget is consolidating around focus. Spreading the same money thinner is the one move the data argues against.

03 The lead is dead. Long live the account.

The marketing-qualified lead was built for a world of forms and patient buyers. That world is gone, replaced by self-directed committees and signal-based selling.

Buying stopped looking like a funnel

The modern B2B purchase is a committee sport played mostly in private. Forrester puts the typical buying group at eleven to thirteen people and the process at six to eighteen months, with the large majority of it happening before a vendor is ever contacted. Buyers consult around seventeen sources before reaching out, and by the time a form gets filled, most have already built their shortlist.

11-13

people in the typical buying group

6-18

months in a typical sales cycle

~17

sources consulted before reaching out

80%+

of buying happens with no salesperson present

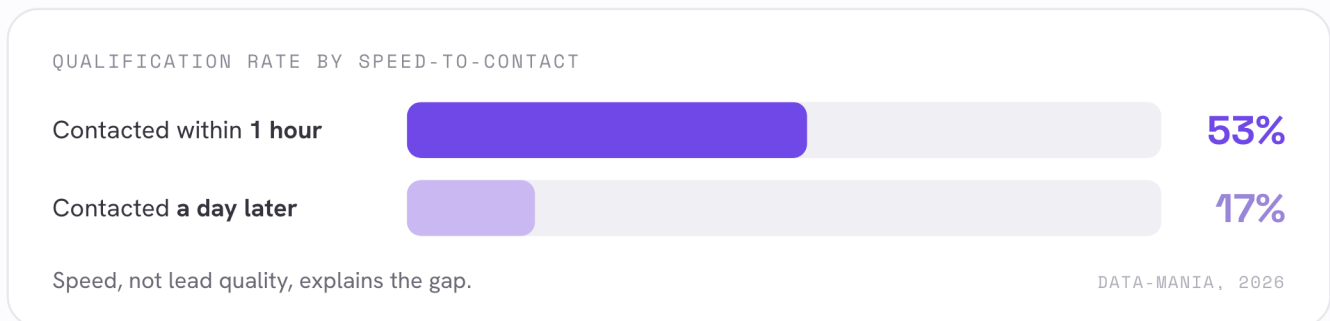
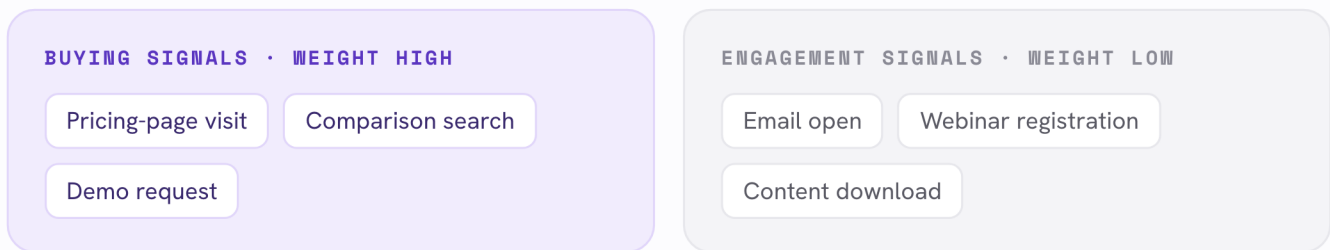
“Fewer than **one percent** of marketing-qualified leads ever become customers.”

FORRESTER

Against that backdrop the single lead is close to meaningless. The content downloads that make up the bulk of MQLs convert at **less than 2%**, and one widely cited figure puts it at more than **80% of buyers** having a preferred vendor in mind before they ever speak to sales.

Signal-based GTM is the replacement

Instead of waiting for a hand-raise, teams watch for evidence of timing (a funding round, a relevant new hire, a competitor switch, repeat visits to a pricing page) and route the account to a matching play. The cleanest distinction worth internalizing:

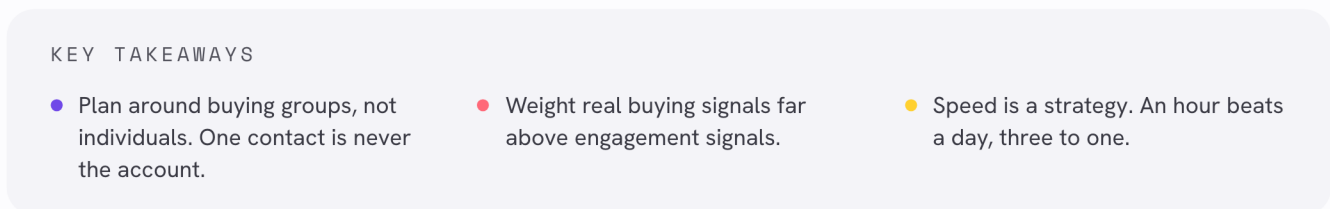


Where the story gets oversold

The death of the MQL has become its own industry, amplified by vendors whose revenue depends on selling the replacement. The useful move is demotion, not replacement: treat the MQL as a quiet internal indicator and judge marketing on pipeline at named accounts.

OUR POSITION

Don't throw away lead scoring and buy a new acronym. Demote the lead to a diagnostic; promote the account and its buying group to the unit you plan, personalize, and measure against.



04

OMNITICS REPORT · CHAPTER 04

Intent, honestly

Intent data is the fuel of modern ABM and one of its least examined assumptions. The three kinds of intent, the echo chamber that inflates them, and why the real edge is speed, not volume.

Three kinds of intent, not one

Declared intent

The account told you something true about timing, and said so to your face: a demo request, a pricing-page session, a reply that says “we’re evaluating this quarter.” Rare, first-party, and by far the most trustworthy.



Observed intent

Behavior you can see on your own property: repeat visits, content paths, document downloads from a known account. First-party, reliable, and underused by most teams.



Manufactured intent

The third-party feed: someone, somewhere, researched a topic adjacent to your category. Useful as a tiebreaker, dangerous as a trigger, and where most of the reliability problems live.



~26%

of intent signals ever turn into a real opportunity

SALESMOTION, 2026

87%

of B2B teams report struggling with unreliable intent signals

SALESMOTION, 2026

30%

of marketing leaders cite data-quality problems with intent data

GARTNER CMO SPEND SURVEY

🔁 THE ECHO CHAMBER: THE PREDICTION VALIDATES ITSELF

01

You receive an intent score on an account



02

You double down on outreach and ads



03

That activity generates engagement



04

Engagement feeds the vendor's model

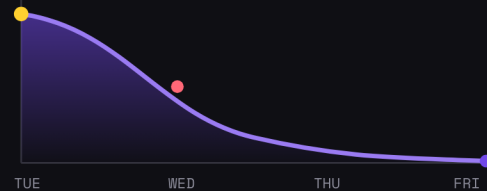
...which then reports the account as *even more in-market*. You did not detect demand so much as create a louder echo of your own effort and call it a discovery.

Triangulate, then race the half-life

One third-party topic spike means little. The same account showing a spike, plus two pricing-page visits, plus a newly hired VP in the relevant function, is a real pattern. Weight first-party signals highest; use third-party feeds to break ties.

Every signal decays from the moment it appears. The edge is not who buys the most intent data. It is who compresses the time between a signal appearing and a relevant human touch landing.

SIGNAL VALUE OVER TIME



Tuesday's pricing-page visitor is a different prospect by Friday.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

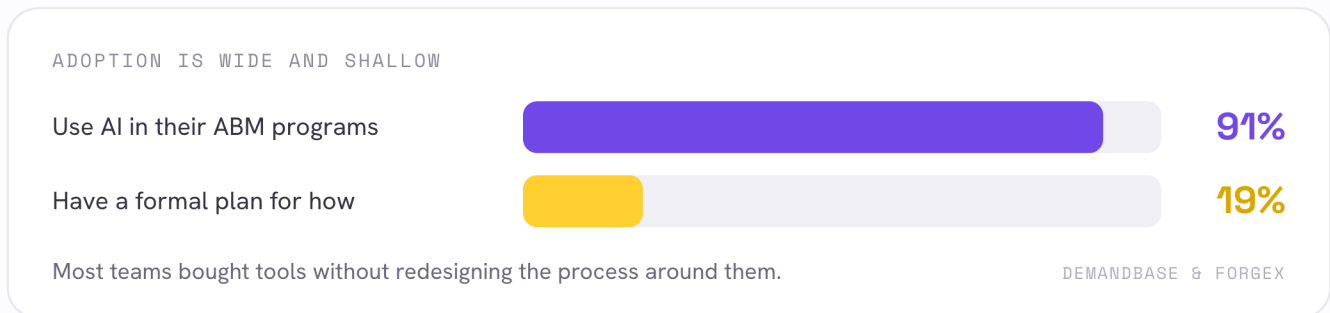
- Trust declared, then observed, then manufactured intent, in that order.
- Assume third-party intent partly echoes your own activity. Triangulate before you act.
- Win on speed. Time-to-touch beats signal volume almost every time.

05 The three engines of AI ABM

OMNITICS REPORT · CHAPTER 05

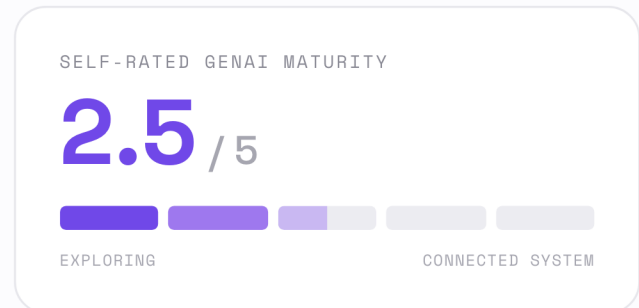
AI is not one thing you bolt onto ABM. It is three distinct engines that each dissolve a different bottleneck. Knowing which is which is the difference between leverage and industrialized noise.

<p>ENGINE 01</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Who</p> <p>The Selection engine</p> <p>Predictive models trained on your closed-won and closed-lost history score which accounts are worth attention, reading hundreds of fit and timing variables at once.</p> <hr/> <p>DISSOLVES</p> <p>The list-building bottleneck</p>	<p>ENGINE 02</p> <p style="text-align: right;">When</p> <p>The Signal engine</p> <p>Language models read unstructured text across the open web, search behavior, hiring, and news, and turn it into timing. This is the engine behind “the account is researching a topic.”</p> <hr/> <p>DISSOLVES</p> <p>The monitoring bottleneck</p>	<p>ENGINE 03</p> <p style="text-align: right;">What</p> <p>The Message engine</p> <p>Generative models draft the outreach: first lines, emails, landing-page variants, ad copy. It removes the cap that historically limited one-to-one work to however many accounts a human could write for.</p> <hr/> <p>DISSOLVES</p> <p>The production bottleneck</p>
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The maturity gap is the opportunity

Adoption is near-universal and shallow. Marketers rate their own generative-AI maturity at roughly two and a half out of five, with most still running limited pilots or merely exploring. That gap is not embarrassing. It is the opening. The next twelve to twenty-four months belong to the teams that move from scattered tool use to a connected system where selection, signal, and message feed one another.



THE TRAP TO AVOID

The most expensive mistake in AI ABM is buying a powerful Message engine while your Selection engine is garbage. Perfect generative copy aimed at the wrong accounts is just **faster, more fluent irrelevance**. Fix selection first, instrument signal second, and only then let the message engine off the leash. AI amplifies the system you already have.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Name your engines. Selection picks who, signal reads when, message drafts what.
- Sequence the build: selection, then signal, then message. Never the reverse.
- Universal but shallow adoption means a connected system is still a real edge, at least for now.

06 The personalization frontier: how one-to-one became a dial

This is the heart of it. For most of ABM's life, deep personalization was rationed to a few dozen accounts. AI did not just speed that up. It changed the shape of what is possible, turning one-to-one from a program type into a setting.

The old world had a cliff THE TRADEOFF: DEPTH OR BREADTH

PRECISION ABM · 1:1 & 1:FEW

10-50 accounts

Deep, hand-crafted work that drove real impact, but capped by human hours.

DEPTH: HIGH

PROGRAMMATIC ABM · 1:MANY

100s-1,000s

Data and automation reached many accounts, with thin, segment-level personalization.

DEPTH: LOW

What AI actually changed

It pushed the frontier out by an order of magnitude or two, and changed the cliff into a slope you can position yourself on. When the cost of a personalized touch collapses, the binding constraint moves from production to judgment.

ACCOUNT BRIEF

a-day → **minutes**

a tier-one-grade brief, now compiled by a workflow with a human adding judgment

KEYPLAY, VIA CXL

60-PAGE CAMPAIGN

weeks → **90 min**

a personalized ABM campaign that was previously weeks of design, copy and dev

PRISMIC / VITRONIC

ONE PROGRAM

~2,000

personalized emails and microsite pages for a single program, each account-specific

TOFU

PERSONALIZATION DEPTH: A DIAL YOU SET PER TIER



Tier 3 · programmatic + inbound

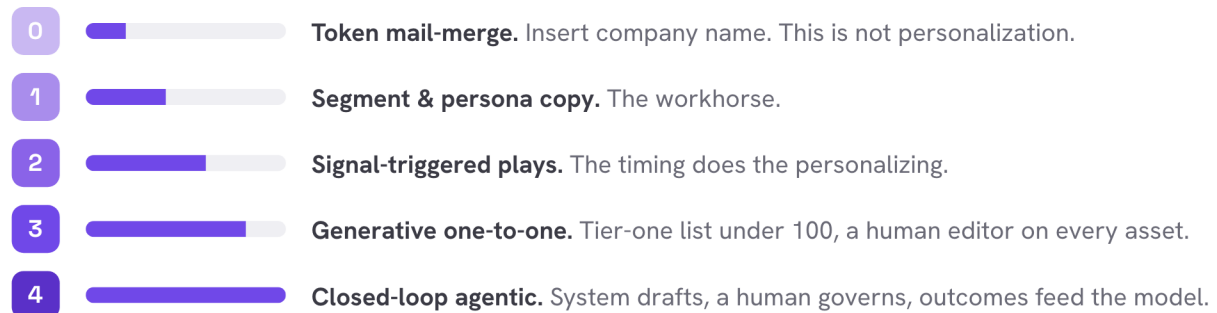
Tier 2 · signal-based 1:few

Tier 1 · full one-to-one

“One-to-one is no longer a tier you graduate accounts into. It is **a dial you set per tier**, governed by deal-size math.”

THE OMNITICS VIEW

THE SCALED ONE-TO-ONE MATURITY LADDER



Most teams believe they are at Stage 3. Audit honestly and most are at Stage 0 or 1.

RELEVANCE IS THE NEW SCARCITY

As the cost of a personalized-sounding message falls toward zero, generic personalization becomes worthless, even faintly insulting. The scarce, defensible asset is being right about *why you are reaching out now*. AI can write the sentence. It cannot invent the reason.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The 1:1-vs-1:many choice is dead. Depth is a dial set per tier.
- The constraint moved from production to judgment, from the writer to the editor.
- Generic personalization is now a liability. “Why now” is the only moat.

07 OMNITICS REPORT · CHAPTER 07 What good looks like now

Enough theory. This is the operating model we would stand up today: how to tier with AI, how to run the signal-to-message loop, and the handful of metrics that survive a finance review.

The scaled one-to-one operating model



↳ A CLOSED LOOP: EACH PART FEEDS THE NEXT, JUDGED ON PIPELINE AT NAMED ACCOUNTS

Tier with a model, refresh it often

Score every candidate on fit and live signal. Keep tier one brutally short: under a hundred, ideally far fewer. If sales can't name who owns each account, it is a mailing list, not a tier.

Run the signal-to-message loop

Sense the signal, interpret why-now, compose a relevant message, act inside the half-life, learn. The differentiator is compressing the time from sense to act.

Reserve depth, automate the rest

Full one-to-one for tier one with a human editor on every asset. Signal-triggered one-to-few for tier two. Programmatic and inbound for tier three.

Keep one shared scoreboard

Sales and marketing on different dashboards is how whose-lead-was-that arguments are born. One account scoreboard, reviewed together on a fixed cadence, is itself an ABM asset.

Metrics that survive a CFO REPORT IN FUNNEL ORDER, AGAINST A BASELINE

Coverage Do we have contacts and a live play for every target account?

Engagement Are the right people interacting: visits, replies, meetings?

Meetings First meetings with named accounts: the cleanest mid-funnel signal.

Pipeline Open pipeline at target accounts vs. a holdout or historical baseline.

Win & size Targeted accounts should close more often, and bigger, than untargeted ones.

THE START-THIS-WEEK VERSION

You do not need a platform to begin. Pull your last twenty closed-won deals and write the ICP they prove. Pick fifteen tier-one accounts with sales in the room. Build a real account brief on five of them, using AI for the research, then reach out with a reason, not a template. Instrument one thing: **how fast you react when an account shows a buying signal**. That is a real ABM pilot, and it costs nothing but attention.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Wire four parts together: select, sense, compose, measure. A tool is not a system.
- Reserve true one-to-one for a sub-hundred tier-one list. Automate everything below it.
- Measure accounts in funnel order against a baseline, and never claim every dollar.

08

OMNITICS REPORT · CHAPTER 08

2026 to 2027: agentic, and overhyped

Autonomous agents running execution, sales and marketing merging under one intelligence layer, and a loud correction as roughly half the agentic projects fail first. Both the promise and the hype are real.

The execution layer goes autonomous

The clear direction is agentic GTM: autonomous agents that ingest signals, decide who to contact and what to say, act across channels, and learn, with humans operating the strategy layer above them. The execution layer (list building, sequencing, ad ops, first-draft content) is being compressed. The strategy layer (ICP definition, narrative, orchestration, relationships) is being amplified.

60%

of brands expected to use agentic AI for one-to-one interactions by 2028

GARTNER

>40%

of agentic AI projects expected to be cancelled by the end of 2027

GARTNER

**\$0.8–
1.2T**

estimated annual value GenAI could add in sales and marketing

MCKINSEY

“This marks the **end of channel-based marketing** as we know it.”

GARTNER

And the correction nobody is pricing in

The first wave of replace-your-team AI largely failed, and failed loudly. Tools that pitched fully autonomous AI sales reps automated volume without solving judgment, and AI cold email at scale damaged deliverability badly enough that some adopters churned out within a quarter. Watch for *agent washing*: vendors rebranding old chatbots as agentic. Only a small number offer genuine autonomy today.

THE BIFURCATION AHEAD: EVERYONE HAS THE SAME MODELS

BUILD THE SYSTEM

Clean account data, fast signal reaction, reserved human judgment on the why-now call.

Enters the back half of the decade compounding.

RUN THE DEMOS

Impressive tooling, no connected system underneath, no data discipline.

Faces a capability gap that gets more expensive every quarter.

A CONVERGENCE WORTH WATCHING

Your target accounts increasingly research your category by asking AI assistants, not just searching Google. Whether you appear in those answers is now part of whether your ABM works. Account-based marketing and AI-era search visibility are becoming the same fight on two fronts: reaching the buying group directly, and being the answer when they ask a machine about you.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Agents run execution while humans run strategy. Plan the division of labor now.
- Expect a loud failure wave. Watch for agent washing; demand evidence, not a label.
- The moat is your system and data, not the model everyone shares. Build, don't demo.

HOW WE WOULD BUILD THIS FOR YOU

We build the system this report describes, inside your accounts.

The advantage in ABM has moved from having tools to operating a system, and from producing personalization to being right about why now. That is a systems problem and a judgment problem, which happens to be exactly the kind of work we do. We build the four parts as one connected engine:

Scoring model

Surfaces the accounts worth your team's time.

Signal layer

Weights first-party intent highest, reacts inside the half-life.

Message system

Reserves true one-to-one for the tier that earns it.

Account measurement

Survives a finance review.

We build it inside your accounts, document all of it, and hand it over. **You own the engine, not a dependency.**

Book a strategy call omniticshq.com

Thirty minutes, no pitch deck. Bring your top accounts and you leave with a plan either way.

SELECTED SOURCES & FURTHER READING

For your own digging

Figures are paraphrased from public 2025 and 2026 research. Key sources are listed below.

- 01 Demand Gen Report: 2026 Account-Based Marketing Benchmark Survey.
- 02 Demandbase & ForgeX: State of ABM research; Demandbase, *AI in Account-Based Marketing*.
- 03 Forrester: 2024 State of Business Buying, and 2026 B2B predictions (buying groups, MQL sufficiency, agentic ecosystems).
- 04 Gartner: CMO Spend Survey and forecasts on agentic AI (one-to-one by 2028; cancellation rate by 2027; agent washing).
- 05 McKinsey: generative-AI productivity estimates for sales and marketing.
- 06 ITSMA & Momentum: ABM investment and ROI studies.
- 07 Ehrenberg-Bass Institute & the LinkedIn B2B Institute: the 95-5 rule on in-market buyers.
- 08 Influ2: 2026 account-based marketing statistics (contact-level ABM, hyper-personalization adoption).
- 09 Early-2026 practitioner benchmark panels covering 1,400+ B2B teams (tier engagement and opportunity-creation rates).
- 10 Salesmotion 2026 intent-data reliability (via LeadGenius); Data-Mania 2026 speed-to-lead benchmarks.
- 11 Keyplay (via CXL) & Agent3 on precision vs. scaled ABM; Tofu, Mutiny & Prismic on generative personalization at scale.
- 12 Practitioner analysis on AI SDRs and deliverability (the limits of replace-your-team automation).

The frameworks in this report (the three engines, the personalization frontier, the scaled one-to-one maturity ladder, and the signal half-life) are ours to share and yours to use. External statistics belong to their respective researchers and are paraphrased here with attribution.

Build the system. Govern the agents. Keep a human on the reason you reach out.

Omnitics is a full-funnel B2B growth agency. We engineer revenue systems (ABM, automation, cold email, AI-era SEO, and CRM operations) as one connected engine, built inside your accounts and owned by your team.

START WITH A FREE 12-POINT GROWTH AUDIT

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