Category

Commercial Excellence

Account-Based Marketing & Strategic Account Management Playbook

A tiered ABM orchestration model paired with strategic account plans that turn your best accounts into your fastest-growing ones.

- Practitioner
- Advanced
- Workshop Ready

- Mithun A. Sridharan

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- 8 minute(s)

Overview

Tier target accounts into 1:1, 1:few, and 1:many programs, build whitespace-driven account plans for your top accounts, and orchestrate sales, marketing, and CS around each one as a pod.

How many accounts should be in our Tier 1 (1:1) program?

Enough that genuine personalization is possible, and no more. For most mid-market and enterprise B2B companies that's somewhere between 10 and 30 accounts — if your Tier 1 list is in the hundreds, it isn't actually a 1:1 program, and you should either shrink the list or reclassify it as Tier 2.

What's the difference between a whitespace map and a normal account plan?

A whitespace map specifically inventories every division, geography, or use case the account owns against what you've actually sold, to surface concrete expansion opportunities. A full account plan is broader — it includes the whitespace map as one component alongside goals, the relationship map, and the current quarter's specific plays.

How is Strategic Account Management different from regular Account Management?

Regular account management typically covers renewals and modest upsell for a broad book of accounts, often as one part of a rep's larger territory. Strategic Account Management is a dedicated, cross-functional investment — a named pod, an executive sponsor, and a whitespace-driven growth plan — reserved for the small number of accounts with genuinely

outsized strategic and revenue potential.

Who should be the executive sponsor for a Tier 1 account?

A senior leader (VP or above) who doesn't own the day-to-day commercial relationship, so their engagement reads as a genuine relationship investment rather than a sales push. Match seniority to the account's importance and give the sponsor a concrete quarterly touchpoint commitment, not just an honorary title.

How do we measure whether an ABM program is actually working, beyond pipeline generated?

Track ABM-influenced pipeline and win rate against a comparable non-ABM account set, but also track account penetration (number of products or divisions sold in) and relationship health (buying-committee breadth) over time — a program that generates pipeline but doesn't deepen penetration or reduce single-threaded risk is only solving part of the problem.

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Author

Mithun A. Sridharan Thought Leader

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