



# SALESFORCE DIPS ITS TOES INTO ABM

ANALYST

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## THE BOTTOM LINE

**Salesforce's new Einstein Account-Based Marketing (ABM) gives business to business (B2B) companies an end-to-end solution for targeting at the account level.** This release raises the bar for ABM providers, most of which do not offer both ABM and customer relationship management (CRM) capabilities on one platform. Nucleus predicts end-to-end solutions will deliver even greater benefits than point ABM solutions by reducing integration challenges and improving collaboration between sales and marketing.

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## OVERVIEW

In June, Salesforce announced its newest Marketing Cloud offering: Salesforce Einstein ABM. Einstein ABM positions Salesforce to compete with Act-On and Marketo in ABM – two marketing automation vendors that already offer ABM functionality – and brings customers that relied on third-party ABM applications further into the Salesforce fold.

## WHAT IS ABM?

Traditional marketing software is designed to target individual leads. For B2B companies, however, the individual is very infrequently the buyer, so they need to be able to measure an entire company's propensity to buy. Over the past few years, software solutions have emerged that are designed to fulfill this need. These ABM solutions automate and improve upon marketing at the account level, helping B2B

companies discern interest and engage accounts with targeted messaging across e-mail, mobile, social, and Web.

Targeting at the account level without ABM software is possible – in fact, companies have been using a conglomeration of CRM, marketing automation, and e-mail marketing tools to perform ABM for years – but it is highly manual and time consuming. Nucleus spoke with companies that switched from this manual approach to an ABM solution, and found that ABM applications can increase employee productivity and improve the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, increasing close rates, opportunity size, and average sale price. To accomplish the same business outcomes without ABM, customers said they would need to hire between one and five additional full-time employees (Nucleus Research, *r55 – Assessing account based marketing*, March 2017). As such, companies that implement ABM tend to experience a positive return on investment (ROI) relatively quickly.

## HOW IS EINSTEIN ABM DIFFERENT?

Einstein ABM's capabilities are much like those of lead-centric marketing automation tools, but oriented toward accounts. Einstein ABM enables companies to identify the right accounts to target, build account-based campaigns, deliver personalized messaging and content, determine interest level with predictive account scoring, equip sales and service teams with micro-marketing capabilities, and measure campaign performance.

The value of Einstein ABM goes beyond functionality, however. Salesforce is now one step closer to making itself a one-stop-shop for B2B enterprises. In addition to the benefits of ABM, customers will experience the benefits associated with an integrated, end-to-end solution. Some of these include:

- Elimination of integration challenges. Customers now have access to ABM capabilities on the same platform as their CRM, avoiding integration challenges, data syncing issues, and the need to manage relationships with multiple vendors. If customers choose to keep their subscriptions with third-party ABM applications, the AppExchange enables Einstein ABM's capabilities to be extended through integration with Engagio, Brightfunnel, Bizible, Full Circle Insights, Demandbase, 6sense, and other third-party ABM tools.
- Marketing-sales alignment. Using multiple systems can also cause problems across departments. With a point solution for ABM, marketing and sales teams are not always using the same tools. This makes collaborating more difficult and

can lead to data discrepancies and messaging inconsistencies. An end-to-end marketing solution gives sales and marketing access to the same data and enables them to work more cohesively, ultimately leading to a more streamlined customer experience.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Nucleus anticipates Einstein ABM will have high adoption rates by Salesforce's B2B enterprise customers who have been waiting for a more complete B2B marketing solution. Salesforce is later to the ABM game than many of its competitors in the marketing space, although most ABM competitors lack a robust CRM solution. This flexibility and its steadfast customer base has given Salesforce the luxury of taking its time to develop its ABM solution and crystallize its messaging. Einstein ABM will undoubtedly make what is already a competitive market even more fierce, as vendors that stressed ABM as a competitive advantage over Salesforce will need to re-evaluate their plan of attack. With Salesforce's price tag, stressing total cost of ownership (TCO) might be a good tactic for lower-cost vendors. However, with such a high number of large, B2B companies using Salesforce for CRM, Nucleus anticipates the release of Einstein ABM will stomp out some small ABM providers.