trueInfluence®

QUICK START GUIDE TO Intent-Based Marketing

CONTENTS

Since the beginning of B2B marketing as we know it, marketers have struggled with the question of how to get in front of the right prospects at the precise moment they're ready to buy. For decades, the only solution was to use firmographic data (company size, industry, geographic footprint, etc.) which unfortunately offered no insights into whether the target would be ready to buy today, next quarter, next year, … or ever.

Things improved somewhat when technographic data came on the scene. By finding out which tools, technologies, and applications a company used, marketers could gain deeper insights into what they buy, how they operate, and what they might be looking to do next. Technographics offered more advanced clues as to which businesses might be a good fit, but still gave no intelligence regarding where targets might be in the buyer's journey.

Then along came predictive analytics, providing further improvement by predicting buying activity based on past experience through the use of algorithms and mathematical models. As useful as this approach could be in improving targeting for likely prospects based on a lookalike model, getting in front of those prospects at the right time — when they were actually in market for the solution in question — still involved a large amount of guessing. The result was a great deal of time and energy wasted on uninterested prospects while many of the good ones slipped away.

Along the way, B2B marketers acquired advanced tools that helped them make better strategic use of the data available to them. Customer relationship management (CRM) solutions allowed them to track relationship-building interactions with current and prospective customers across platforms. Marketing automation platforms (MAPs) let them automate routine tasks and build custom, personalized campaigns that run automatically when triggered by a specific action. And sales engagement platforms consolidated communication, content, and analytics tools to help sales teams maximize their productivity. All these tools are useful, but only as valuable as the data that goes into them. If that data is missing a vital component — the target's level of interest and position in the buyer's journey — even the most advanced marketing stack can only take you so far.

According to a recent survey by HubSpot, B2B marketers' top challenge is generating traffic and leads, followed by proving the ROI of marketing activities.

Source: 2017 State of Inbound Report

Today, thanks to advances in artificial intelligence and other technologies, marketers have a new strategic weapon in their arsenal: intent data. By monitoring online activity around topics related to their products, marketers can identify previously unknown prospects and track behaviors within the organizations that are already on their radars. They can find out which problems prospective customers are looking to solve, how they're looking to solve them, and which solutions they might be considering. They can see spikes in activity that indicate a warm lead has suddenly become hot. And they can spin this intelligence into personalized marketing and sales actions to place themselves in the ideal position when the customer begins showing signs they are ready to buy.

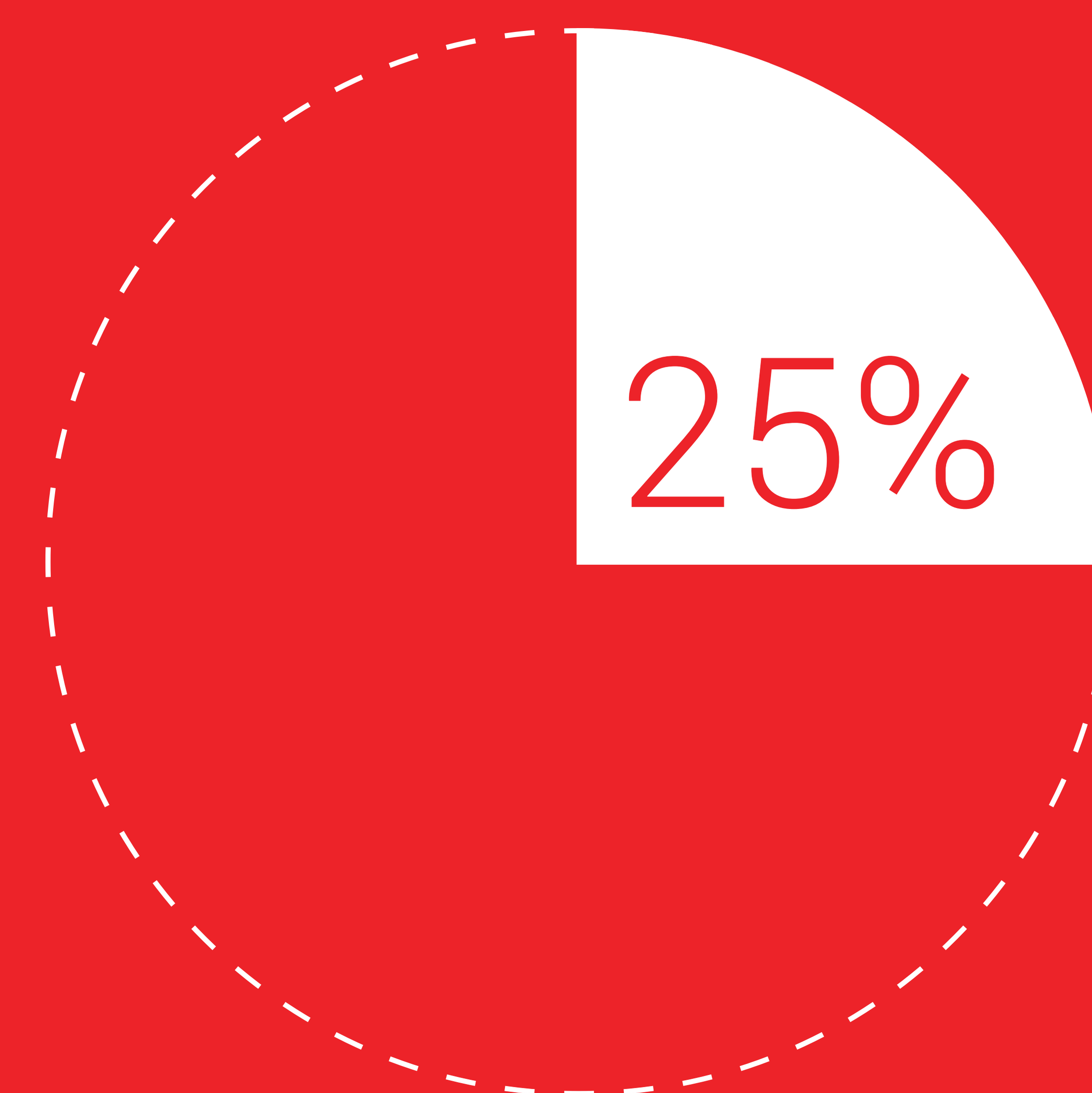
For example, a marketing team for a data security software provider can track online activity on topics related to their product — topics such as online security, data breaches, cyberattacks, ransomware, etc. Their intent data platform can reveal which IP addresses the activity is originating from and match those IP addresses to organizations and locations. The marketing team can then add those organizations to its target list and create focused campaigns incorporating email, programmatic ads, and offline activities such as telephone-based lead qualification.

As powerful as intent data is, a surprisingly small number of B2B marketers has caught on. According to Demand Gen Report's 2017 ABM Benchmark Survey Report, only 25 percent of B2B companies are currently using intent data and monitoring tools. The reason could be a simple matter of education — marketing teams know about this powerful tool, but lack the knowledge to be able to use it to its full potential.

This presents an enormous opportunity for nimble, forward-looking B2B marketers who can put intent monitoring to work today and create a sizable advantage over their competitors.

Only 25 percent of B2B companies are currently using intent data and monitoring tools.

Source: 2017 ABM Benchmark Survey Report



In this e-book, we'll briefly explore the basics of intent data — what it is and how it's different from other approaches. Then we'll show you how to prepare your organization to leverage intent intelligence and explore 10 powerful tactics you can use today to put intent data to work for your organization.

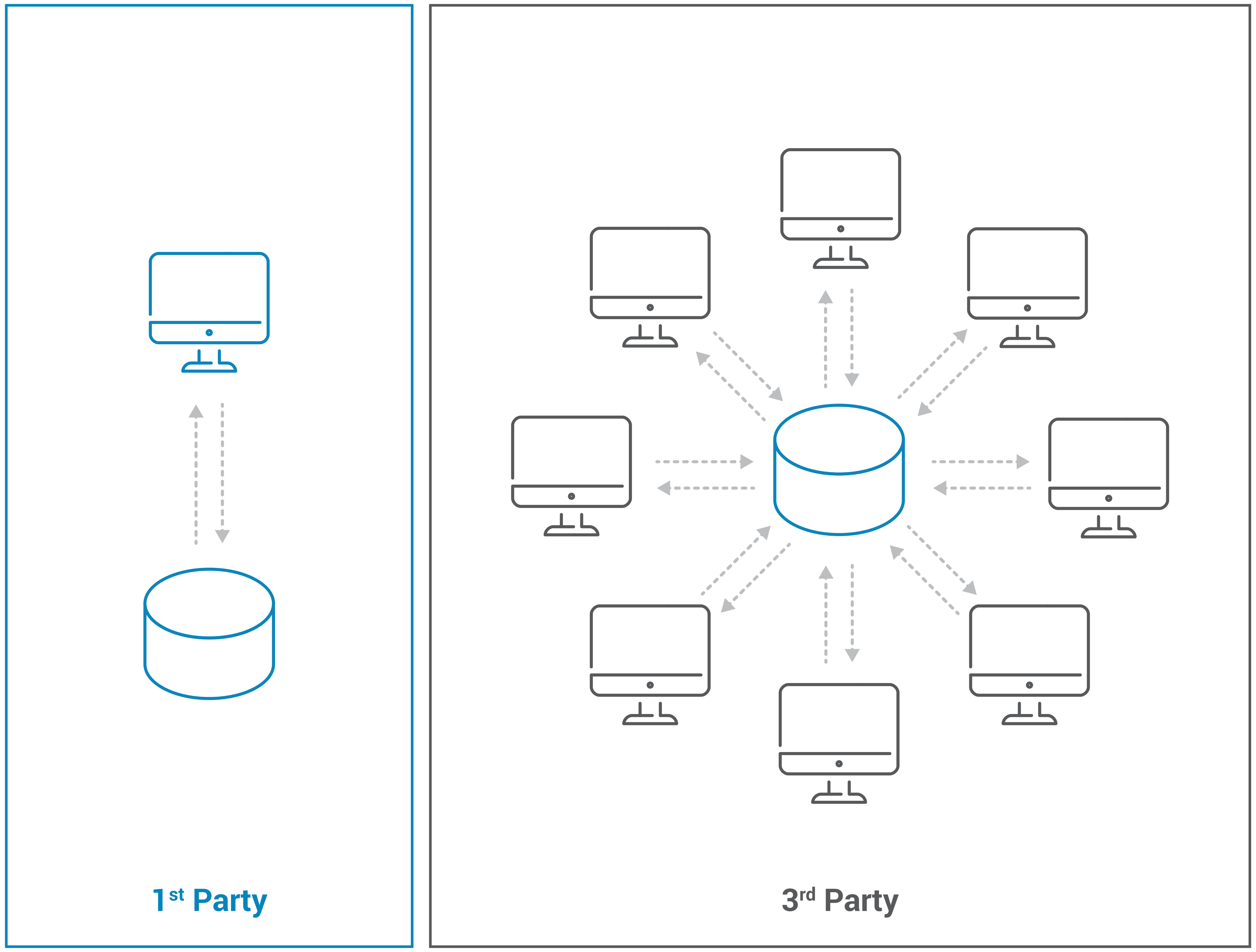
For a primer on what to look for in intent data providers, see our blog:
Choosing an Intent Data Provider: 6 Questions to Ask Before You Buy

What is Intent Data?

Intent data is the behavioral information users generate as they engage in online activities around a specific topic. As targets conduct online research related to your product or service, they may read blog posts, download white papers, attend webinars, and/or engage in social media conversations. Intent data monitoring gives you a window into this behavior, enabling your sales and marketing teams to leverage the resulting data in fine-tuning their strategies. They can then customize their approaches, just as you would trigger a targeted nurturing campaign or create a personalized website experience for leads who completed a form on your site.

Intent data can come from two types of sources:

- **First-party:** First-party data is generated on your organization's own sites, including your website, landing pages, blog, apps, etc.
- **Third-party:** Third-party data is generated and shared from external sources not owned by your company.



Both sources are important, but using one without the other neglects important context that can be the difference between a won deal and a lost opportunity. Thanks to CRM systems and MAPs, your sales team has more insight than ever into your prospects' content engagement activities — which of your content and assets they engage with, and how often. But few B2B buyers limit their research to one brand; most seek out content from multiple resources, which is where third-party data comes in. Google reports that B2B buyers conduct an average of 12 online searches before visiting a specific brand's website.

Both first-party and third-party sources generate three types of intent data:

- **Anonymous:** Anonymous intent data offers no name associated with the record of a website visit.
- **Identified:** Identified intent data is the result of using reverse IP lookup to identify sources of web traffic, which reveals which organizations are visiting the website and consuming content. If individual visitors are cookied, marketers can learn more about their interests, which can offer clues about their job functions.
- **Opted-in:** Opted-in intent data comes from leads who have submitted information — such as their name, title, company name, and email address — in exchange for something of value, usually a high-quality piece of content. These leads have also given you permission, implicitly or explicitly, to contact them.

At first glance, opted-in data may seem like the only actionable data set, but consider that many B2B prospects are reluctant to submit information, especially in the early stages of the buying process. Opted-in data can also generate a large number of false positives. For example, you may offer a white paper that does a great job of attracting interest from your target audience … but also from casual learners, researchers, and even competitors. Including anonymous and identified data in your assessment provides a more complete picture of who your targets are and how they go about finding answers to their questions.

B2B buyers conduct an average of 12 online searches before visiting a specific brand's website.

Source: The Changing Face of B2B Marketing, Google

How is Intent Data Different from Predictive Analytics?

HOW IS INTENT DATA DIFFERENT FROM PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS?

The rise of account-based marketing (ABM), predictive analytics, and intent marketing signals a shift in how marketers are approaching demand generation. The focus is now on foreseeing buyer behavior. Tapping into a variety of resources — customer profiles, sales data, etc. — predictive analytics uses advanced technologies such as data mining, statistics, modeling, machine learning, and artificial intelligence (AI) to predict how B2B buyers will behave in the present and future.

While predictive analytics is valuable, it has its limitations. It's focused on past trends, which may or may not be accurate predictors of what will happen in the future. Predictive platforms also rely on a complex web of algorithms and models, any one of which could become outdated or inaccurate at any time.

By focusing on "lookalike" modeling, predictive analytics inherently overlooks any previously untapped markets, causing marketers to miss out on valuable opportunities. Targets in non-endemic markets could be self-identifying as prospects through their online research or technographic behaviors, and marketers relying on predictive analytics alone might never know it.

Finally, leveraging predictive analytics requires a high level of organizational sophistication as well as extremely clean data, both of which may be beyond the reach of some midsize companies.

Intent data offers an elegant solution to these shortcomings. Instead of basing its output on information that could be months or even years old, intent data shows marketers what is happening right now. Leveraging intent data via intent monitoring platforms like the True Influence Marketing Cloud™ make it easy to take immediate action, since the relevance and regressional analysis has been done for you. Intent data also delivers actionable insights you can use to trigger personalization, nurture streams, initiate prospecting, alert sales, and even plan your content calendar.

"We're not Nostradamus; we're the six o'clock news. We're going to report the information as fact, and there's lots of ways that you can use it."

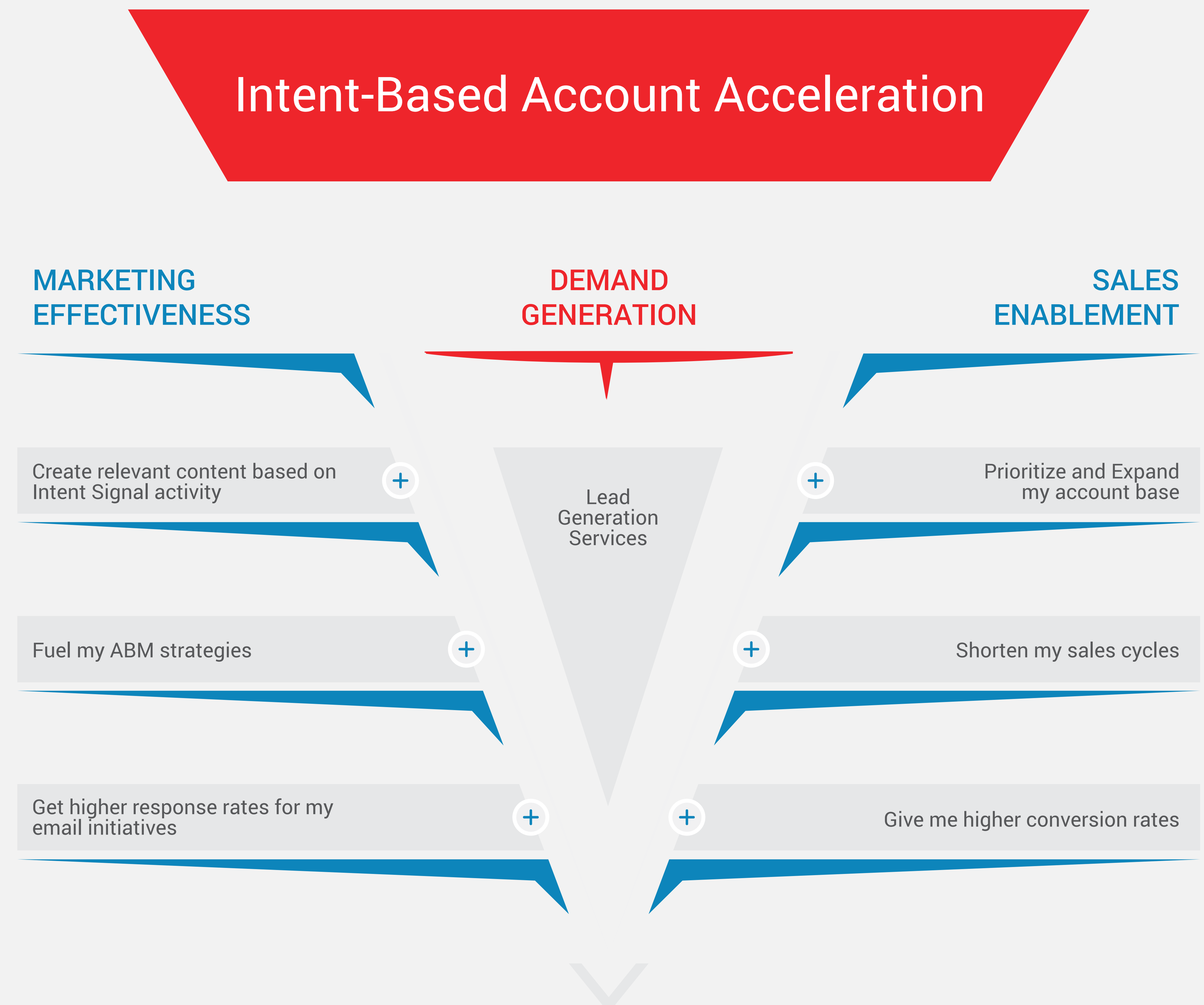
- *Brian Giese, CEO, True Influence*

Using Intent to Up-level Every Stage of Your Funnel

When marketers first learn about intent data, their thoughts immediately turn to generating quality lead lists — and rightly so — but that's just the beginning of what intent data can do. If you're using it just to bring new leads into your system, you're missing out on opportunities to gain deep strategic intelligence about your current targets, customers, and even competitors.

If you're just using intent data for generating new leads, you're missing out on opportunities to gain deep strategic intelligence about your current targets, customers, and even competitors.

Intent data offers the insights you need to ramp up results at each level of your marketing and sales funnel. On the marketing side, it can help you create relevant content, determine the right accounts to target in your ABM strategy, and even trigger campaigns automatically based on specific online behaviors. For your sales team, intent data helps you prioritize your existing account list, find out which accounts are ready to buy, and shape your sales conversations to respond precisely to your targets' needs.



Benefits to Your Marketing Team

Publish more relevant content: Intent data lets you "listen in" on your targets' online activity, giving you an insider's view of the topics they are researching, the webpages they visit, and the people and brands they engage with. This information lets you fill in your content strategy with the topics that are relevant to real business users who are researching your solution *today*.

For example, when Gartner leveraged intent data to develop a custom umbrella program for their campaigns, their average lead conversion rate rose from 40% to 60%, and they are continuing to use these programs to further tailor their content strategies.

Choose your ABM targets based on real data: ABM is one of the most prominent trends among B2B marketing teams today. The success of ABM hinges on choosing the right accounts to target, and then connecting with and engaging each of the decision makers individually to advance your relationship. Intent data takes the guesswork out of ABM target selection by showing you which organizations are actively researching your product area.

Increase your digital campaign ROI: Intent monitoring lets you focus digital campaigns and retargeting efforts on prospects who have an interest in your solution and align your ads with their topics of interest. By serving specific ads to targets based on their interests and ramping up your efforts on accounts whose activity is spiking, you can elevate your chances of generating click-throughs, engagement, and positive ROI.

When Hbsuofs leveraged! uif intent data!pg JotjhiuCbtf-!uifjs! bwfsbhf!mfbe dpowfstjpo! spt f!gspn!51&!up!71&/

Benefits to Your Marketing Team

Improve your email response: Your targets receive hundreds of emails every day, but when they see one that promises to answer the exact questions they've been researching online, they're far more likely to open it and click through for more information. Also, when intent data feeds directly into your marketing automation platform, you can set up email campaigns to trigger automatically when a target account's activity "spikes," indicating that they are approaching a buying decision.

Better MQL/SQL qualifier: By incorporating intent data spikes into your lead qualification process, you can add context to your marketing

automation program's scoring and avoid passing false positives on to your sales team.

When the marketing team at GE Power used intent data to uncover new prospects for their ABM outreach, they realized a 75 percent increase in sales-accepted lead generation and an 80 percent overall improvement in data quality.

60%

lead conversion rate (up from 40%)

Gartner

75%

increase in sales-accepted lead generation

GE Power

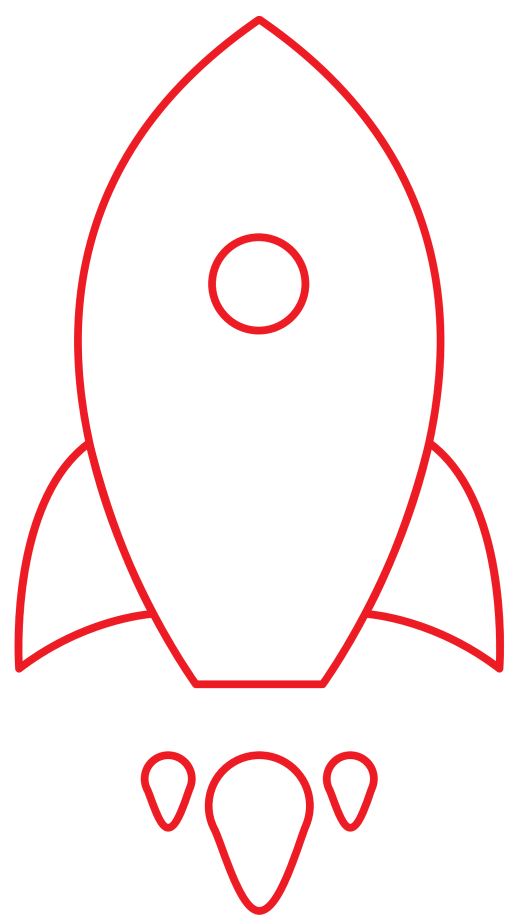
Benefits to Your Sales Team

Expand your account base: Traditionally, sales teams have relied on demographic and firmographic data as the basis for their prospecting, which offer no indication of readiness to buy. Intent data lets you expand your account base by bringing in new leads who have self-identified through their online behaviors their intent to solve a problem that's related to your product or service.

Prioritize your existing account list: The average enterprise B2B sales rep is responsible for dozens of accounts, and there's often a fair amount of guesswork in deciding which account to focus on. By looking at the intent signals of accounts on your current list, you can see which ones are likely to be approaching a buying decision and place those organizations at the top of your call list.

Shorten your sales cycle: Intent data not only shows you targets that are interested in your solutions, but also gives important clues as to where they are in the buying cycle. By looking at a target's activity history, intensity, location (such as headquarters vs regional branch), and spiking behaviors, you can gain insights as to whether they're just beginning the research process or approaching a decision. This intelligence lets you customize your strategy to deliver the right message to the right prospect at the right time to guide them towards a buying decision.

Improve account retention: According to Forrester Research, it costs five times more to acquire a new customer than it does to retain an existing one. Intent data can help guard against turnover by alerting you when a current customer begins searching certain topics that indicate they might be considering a switch. Your inside sales team can take that opportunity to reconnect with the customer, find out why they might want to leave, and possibly save the account.



It's All in the Preparation

Once you discover all the powerful possibilities intent monitoring offers, it's easy to get excited and want to dive right in. Like any solution, intent data is only as effective as the action you take with it, and any good action plan starts with preparation.

Just about every budget owner has had the frustrating experience of buying a software solution, then having to wait months to be able to demonstrate value because they didn't do the necessary prep work. To ensure that your intent data solution starts delivering results right away, follow these steps before you onboard your solution.

Define use cases:

Your use cases will specify who will use the intent data and how. This exercise will help you determine:

- How your data will need to be structured
- How data will flow from your intent monitoring platform to your marketing automation and/or CRM systems
- What scoring you might want to perform
- Triggers or alerts you will need to set up

If, for example, a current account's contract is coming due and you notice they are starting to look at your competitors, that should trigger an alert to the account's sales rep. Or if a target's search activity is spiking for certain keywords, that should kick off a nurture and retargeting campaign, and possibly an outreach call from an inside sales rep.

Create a change management plan:

Intent data is only useful if you act on it. Once you've appropriately determined how to make the data flow and which behaviors it should influence, your next step is to define those behaviors in detail. Partnering with sales, create a detailed plan — including service-level agreements (SLAs) and a timeline — for incorporating intent monitoring into your day-to-day sales and marketing activities. Which campaigns will precipitate a sales development call? Which campaigns trigger which nurture behaviors? When should an account director engage? Remember, without a plan for maximizing its potential in elevating your results, intent data can easily become noise. And this exercise may often identify different use cases or data flows from the ones you anticipated earlier (see "Define use cases" above).

Lay the groundwork to ensure that your intent data solution can start delivering results right away.

Determine history and relevance:

Examine your customer journey to discover which intent trends or historical moments were inflection points and map that information to your new data flow. Decide which "interesting moments" are worth capturing for future campaign refinement, or how the evolution of a target's spiking topics might indicate they are entering the vendor research phase of the buying decision. Have a plan in place for your team to take specific actions in a timely manner so that you can capitalize on those opportunities ahead of your competitors.

Identify the fields you might need to create to capture and monitor data flow:

As you'll see later in this guide, structuring marketing flows based on binary intent data (whether an account is spiking on a relevant topic) is a first step. But to take intent data to the next level, you'll want to identify which data is provided by your intent provider and map it to existing or new fields in your MAP or CRM. Even if you don't integrate your intent monitoring platform directly with your marketing automation or CRM system, map out exactly which intent data needs to make its way into the hands of those who will take action on it.

Start slowly with a proof of concept:

When you get your hands on a powerful tool like an intent data monitoring platform, it's tempting to build out every possible use case immediately, but this approach can lead to "data paralysis." Take your time and become familiar with how intent spikes relate to your actual deal flow, then expand your portfolio of use cases gradually as you become more comfortable. Collaborate with your intent data provider to define use cases that support your business needs. Chances are they have fresh ideas for how to find the relevance and insights that will deliver the highest ROI given your unique business challenges.

Choose your topics strategically:

When choosing topics to monitor, think beyond the terms related directly to your product or service. What are the most common problems you solve, and which words do your targets use to describe them? What are some competing or complementary technologies that targets may also be researching? By strategically expanding your topic stack, you'll stand a far greater chance of finding targets who have identified a need, but who might not yet know about your solution.

While intent data reflects online behaviors, it doesn't work the same as SEO/SEM. For example, if you are in an emerging category, not all prospects will be aware of the category even if they are seeking a solution. What are companion categories or topics that indicate either available budget or an unexpressed need?

Explore cross-organizational uses:

Intent data has many other uses beyond sourcing and prioritizing prospects and accounts. Larger organizations will gain even greater value from intent monitoring when it is made accessible to the product marketing, content development and business intelligence teams. Consider convening a task force consisting of sales, marketing, product management, and marketing operations to explore other areas where intent intelligence can enhance efforts and create market differentiation.

For a list of questions to ask when looking at intent data solutions, see our blog *Choosing an Intent Data Provider: 6 Questions to Ask Before You Buy*

10 Ways to Put Intent Data to Work for You

By now we've established that intent data is a multi-functional solution that can improve results at every phase of your sales and marketing funnel. Here are the 10 ways B2B marketing teams are leveraging the power of intent to fill their pipelines, engage targets, and guide prospects all the way to a sale.

1. Outsourced Lead Generation

Maybe your organization wants to leverage intent data, but is not in a position to allocate the budget or the manpower needed to build an in-house solution. A more workable alternative might be to import ready-to-work leads generated by an intent monitoring platform.

When reviewing possible lead generation partners — like content syndicators and tele-prospecting sources — be sure to ask vendors whether they use intent data in generating the leads they send you, and listen carefully to their responses. The growing popularity of intent data is no secret, and many marketers have begun working the word "intent" into their marketing — including those who incorporate intent data only in the very loosest sense.

Benefits:

- Higher lead quality than traditional methods can deliver
- Higher conversion rates
- Improved ROI from your lead-generation budget
- Near-immediate availability of sales-ready leads

How to get started:

1. Choose a provider with a proven track record of success. Questions to ask include:
    - What is their quality control process? How do they validate lead contact information?
    - What is their lead replacement policy?
    - Are their programs exclusive, or will your content appear with other brands or competitors?
    - How do they use intent to narrow a campaign's target audience?
2. Specify the types of leads you're looking for, and include firmographic and technographic information. Note that campaigns from providers who cannot target by firmographic and technographic data may result in fewer marketing- or sales-qualified leads.
3. Be collaborative in developing the keywords and topics used for their intent data research.
4. Set up your lead feed to integrate directly with your CRM and/or marketing automation platform.
5. Add leads to a relevant nurture program to engage them as soon as they are received, and trigger a sales alert email to notify the appropriate salesperson of their new, high-priority, sales-ready lead.

2. Prospecting

A good intent monitoring platform will deliver a steady stream of quality prospects week after week, month after month.

Unlike other lead-generating approaches based solely on firmographics (company size, industry, geography, etc.), intent data alerts you to organizations who have shown interest in keywords indicating a potential buying cycle for your products – before they ever reach your website or opt-in to your marketing programs. That means your team wastes less time on leads who aren't even close to being in market for your product, and they can focus on those who have, by their online activity, given you a head start on the qualification process.

For Salary.com, this approach produced 46 percent higher opportunity values than non-intent-sourced opportunities. Additionally, their lead sales representative was then able to refocus the five days per month previously spent prospecting to actions that could accelerate their sales pipeline.

Benefits:

- Less time wasted on prospecting and working low-quality leads
- Intel based on what targets are doing today, rather than relying on historical data
- Opportunity to engage prospects during the buying decision phase that would otherwise be missed by other programs

How to get started:

1. Create a dedicated campaign for each of your products and services. This will allow you to more accurately nurture each prospect, as well as notify the appropriate sales representative. Depending on your marketing stack, sales territories, and variance in sales role best practices, you may even want to create dedicated campaigns not just by product, but by sales team/role as well.

2. Define your target prospects by selecting the appropriate firmographic filters of industry, company size, revenue, and location. If your sales territories are geographically based, consider dedicated campaigns for each sales territory, which will allow you to send alerts to the right sales development representatives.

3. Beyond firmographics, consider adding a filter for technographic requirements that might help you identify more actionable prospects. This is especially relevant for B2B software-as-a-service (SaaS) organizations who offer subscription models to small, mid-sized and enterprise customers. Remember, technographic requirements may be different for each product or service campaign, and the more targeted your campaigns are, the more effectively you'll be able to engage and nurture leads once they are identified.

4. Since prospecting is all about finding net-new accounts for sales development, be sure to suppress any current customer and prospect domains by uploading a suppression list. (We'll explore campaigns appropriate for customers and engaged prospects later.)

5. Set contact parameters to define the decision maker or influencer you are trying to reach. In many instances, InsightBASE can help you discover — and reach — key contacts at prospect accounts whom you might otherwise not have access to.

6. Identify the narrowest keyword and topic category available in your intent data monitoring system that most closely describe your product or the problem your services solve.

7. Set up an alert to come from your MAP, from your CRM, or straight from the intent monitoring platform to notify the appropriate sales development representative of new companies spiking on your topics. If your sales teams are responsible for multiple product lines, make the alert as specific as possible, including campaign descriptions to make it easy for reps to quickly engage the prospect on the right product or topic. Including potential prospect contact information will help save your reps valuable research and discovery time as well.

Advanced step:

8. For businesses with multiple products / solutions: Create a campaign reflecting your ideal target profile and include topics for complementary product lines to identify the best prospects for package deals. (See more under **Topics for Content Marketing** below.)

Your sales team can focus their efforts on leads who have, by their online activity, given you a head start on the qualification process.

3. Account Prioritization

When B2B sales teams decide which accounts to focus on, the approach can vary from day to day and from rep to rep. Intent monitoring lets you determine a baseline level of online activity around your selected topics and alerts you to “spikes” that indicate a buying decision could be forthcoming.

When those spikes occur, there’s no need to wait for lead scoring or other qualifying thresholds — your sales team has all the incentive they need to jump in and capitalize on those opportunities ahead of your competitors.

Benefits:

- Less guesswork in determining which accounts to focus on
- Improved productivity for your sales reps
- Fewer missed opportunities

How to get started:

Here you’ll use a similar strategy to the one you used for prospecting, but instead of selecting companies to include in your campaign by firmographic criteria, you’ll narrow the scope to include only the accounts in your target account list. This is particularly useful for organizations employing an ABM approach to sales.

1. Set up individual campaigns that align with each of your account team assignments.
2. Upload the appropriate named account domain list to each campaign. Depending on the size of your sales territories, you may want to do this by regional territory or by account representative.
3. Using the keyword and topic best practices noted earlier, create intent data campaigns focused on each of your products and/or account teams. Just as in prospecting, you’ll want these topics to be as narrowly focused on your product as possible.
4. Set up automatic alerts for spiking activity on those categories.
5. Focus sales follow-up on any accounts with spiking activity.
6. Consider triggering appropriate mid-funnel content campaigns to contacts at spiking accounts.
7. Lastly, decide how spiking intent should impact any lead scoring or activity/moment tracking you have in place. Some organizations find it useful to track spiking interest in specific topics as interesting moments; for others, inclusion in a specific campaign is sufficient.

4. Topics for Content Marketing

The problem with most marketing automation platforms is that they rely on user-defined lead scoring for engagement with existing content and assets, which does nothing to help you understand which other topics your targets might be focused on. Furthermore, beyond dynamic customization based on demographic and firmographic segmentations, most content nurturing programs still apply a "one asset fits most" nurturing model. But what happens when that asset isn't really of interest to your target? Intent data helps you fill this gap by showing you which topics your targets are researching, particularly the long-tail search terms that are so vital to your SEO, content marketing, and lead generation success.

One Identity's marketing team, for example, used what is now, the True Influence Marketing Cloud™ platform to identify content topics that were spiking at selected accounts. Their team of subject matter experts then leveraged these topics to create targeted content and display ad assets aimed at the specific interests of these targets. The result was a 50 percent increase in website traffic, of which 70 percent came from first-time visitors.

Benefits:

- Ability to identify new topics to expand your content marketing library
- Alignment of content topics with account and/or target interests
- Improved SEO from leveraging long-tail search terms in your content
- Increased media spend ROI

How to get started:

1. Determine whether you want to explore topics for a known account list or to discover topics by segmentation. To ensure relevance, define campaigns based on the narrowest segmentation parameters possible.
   - **Account-based exploration:** If you are exploring topic interest for known accounts, consider a campaign including all your accounts, then create additional campaigns based on account groupings such as business problem, size, industry, technology maturation, etc. Your strategy will also vary based on the number of topics you are exploring. The wider the list of topics, the narrower your segmentation should be.

- **Segmentation-based exploration:** As in account-based exploration, you might want to have one general campaign and several more targeted, firmographic-based campaigns to discover differences in topic interests based on industry, company size or technology usage. For example, for a marketing software company, interests are likely to vary dramatically based on whether companies are using Mailchimp or Oracle Marketing Cloud.
- **General topic exploration:** This approach can give you a sense of other topics you may not have thought of that may be broadly trending and worth capitalizing on. Here, instead of exploring narrow topic relevance to accounts or limiting topic discovery by segmentation, you create a broader campaign audience to discover how your topics might rank relative to other industry trends. This approach can also help you identify which of your topics might be better at attracting non-endemic prospects to your marketing programs.

2. For each scenario, start by defining your audience. For account-based topic exploration, upload a list of your target accounts; for all others, define targets by firmographic and technographics.

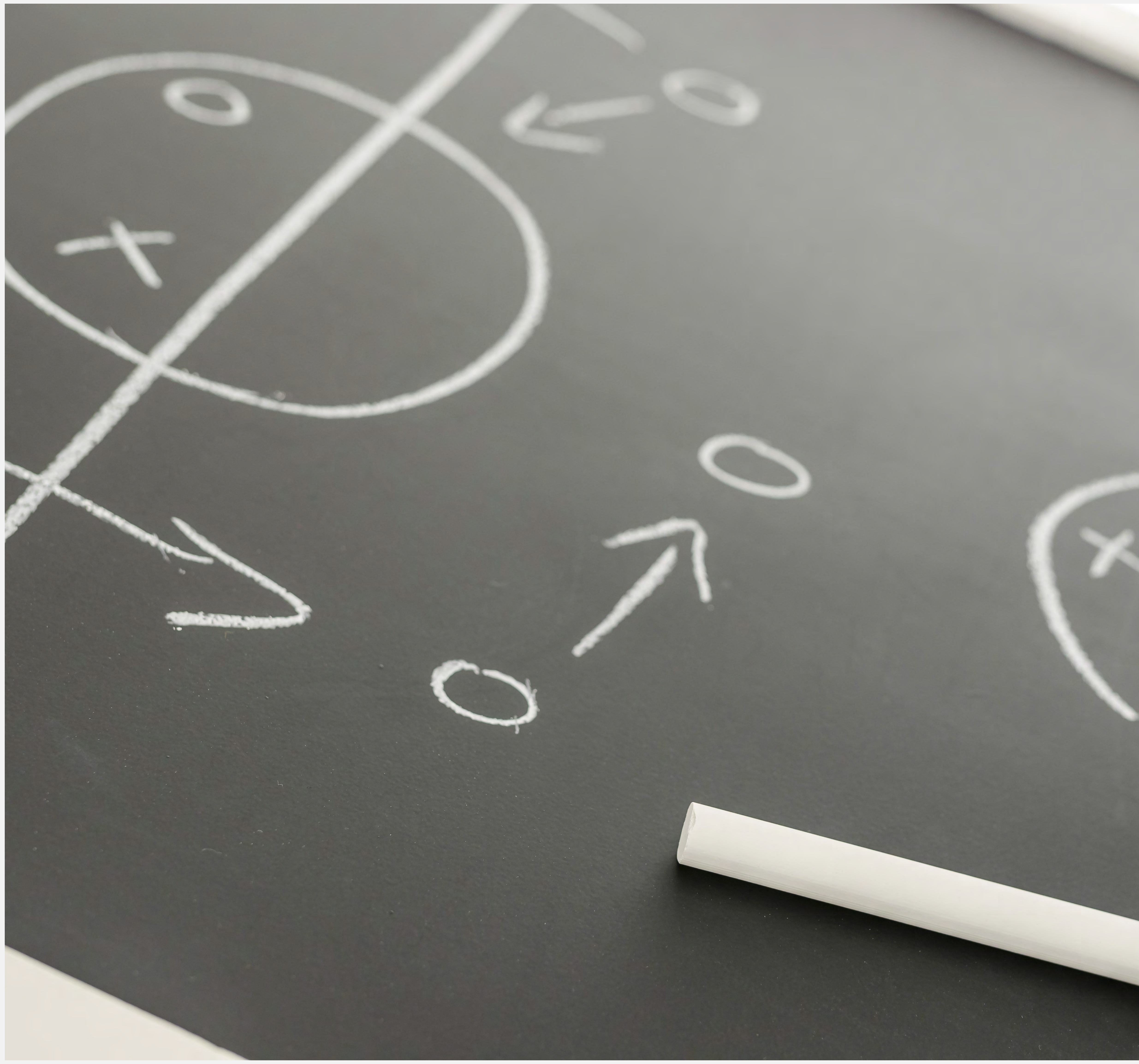
3. When selecting keywords, expansiveness will serve you well. Add all the keywords related to your products and services, as well as keywords representing the problem you solve or related pain points. Use the search function or consult the keyword list provided to identify as many relevant keyword topics as possible. Just as you would in SEO exploration, include any similar keywords available to discover all the ways your potential target might be looking for you.

4. For topic campaigns, choose a 30-day report parameter. Any less than that and you'll miss important trends. Any more and the results become less relevant.

5. Once your campaign is set up, generate a keyword summary report showing increased activity.

- **Account-based exploration:** This will show you the topics in which each of your current accounts or prospects has exhibited an increased interest. Develop content on these topics, then target each of the spiking accounts with related digital ads and micro-targeted email campaigns.
- **Firmographic-based exploration:** This will show you topics related to the segments you defined. Topic interest can range dramatically by industry and company size, so be sure to experiment to discover differences that can dramatically improve content engagement. This approach is best used to identify topics with the widest appeal that are best suited to demand-generation content — like white papers and ebooks — designed to bolster your inbound leads.
- **General topic exploration:** In this case, you'll explore the keyword potential report. Here you'll see a list of the top 100 keywords for each campaign audience, ranked by number of companies with spiking interest. Think of this as a "wild card" search. Your most compelling results will occur when you have a narrowly defined audience, but even broad audience campaigns can yield keyword topics you might not otherwise have considered. This is a great way to discover non-product related topical content that can add personality and interest to your blog and newsletter strategy.

6. Be sure to revisit your topics quarterly and refine your content calendar accordingly.



5. Improved Digital Campaign ROI

You can leverage intent data to improve the performance of your ABM campaigns by watching for spikes in current prospects' activity and using this intelligence as the basis for retargeting. For example, if your company sells data security software and you notice a spike in a prospect's activity related to data breaches, this could indicate that they've had a breach or that they've identified holes in their current security system. You can launch a campaign to retarget the organization through display ads, programmatic marketing, social media ads, and other approaches offering whitepapers and other educational content on data security best practices.

Alternatively, using contact lists generated by intent monitoring campaigns as the target audience in your social marketing campaigns can be a great way to generate new leads and gain opted-in content subscribers.

Benefits:

- More strategic use of budgetary dollars
- Improved campaign ROI
- Increased, higher-value marketing-qualified leads

How to get started:

1. Use what you learned in Topics for Content Marketing (see #4 above) to identify and develop your ABM and demand generation content strategies.

2. For ABM digital campaigns, set up intent monitoring limited to your named account list that corresponds to your content marketing and product topics. Have topic-specific retargeting campaigns ready to launch. Generate a weekly domain list reflecting spiking accounts and use it to update your digital campaign target audience.

3. For demand generation, use similarly designed intent monitoring campaigns to identify companies with increased interest. Generate and download contact lists for each prospect company, then use these lists as your target audience for campaigns on social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

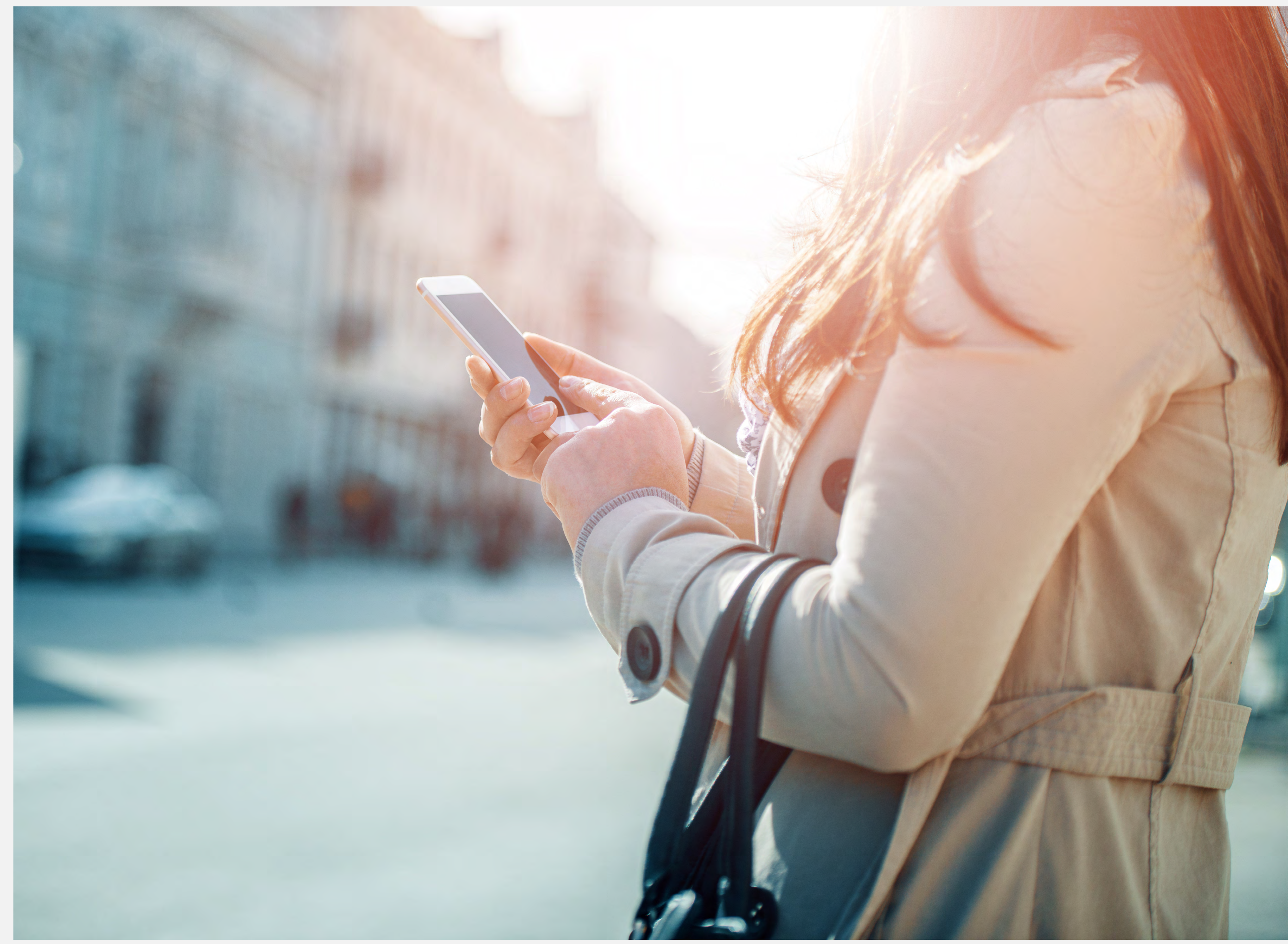
4. In each instance, set your intent data platform to send weekly alerts reminding you of which accounts and prospects are spiking on specific topics.

6. Advanced Nurture Streams

Many B2B marketing teams take a “one size fits all” approach to lead nurturing, only segmenting after a lead has taken a specific action to engage with the brand. With intent data, you can create a more customized approach to nurturing based on what your data tells you about the target.

For example, you can segment targets who have demonstrated an interest in your company from those who are researching a product. Those who have researched your company may receive a stream of messages focused on customer testimonials, your brand attributes, and your key differentiators. Targets who are searching for products require a more general approach, focused on determining their needs and prioritizing the product features that are most important in achieving their goals.

For example, you can target new leads from organizations already exhibiting intent in your category with more middle-of-the-funnel content than you might deliver to a new lead at an unknown company with no exhibited intent.



Or, if your organization has multiple product lines, you can use intent to personalize a visitor's website experience and to immediately drop them into the appropriate product-specific nurture stream — without ever needing them to select product interest on a form. End result? Leads that move through your funnel faster, and better campaign ROI.

Benefits:

- Ability to tailor nurture campaigns to targets' actual interests
- Increased engagement
- Faster funnel conversions

How to get started:

1. Create separate intent monitoring campaigns focused on groups of categories (for example, one group for topics related to your company, another for topics related to your products).
2. Define and, where necessary, build the advanced nurture streams you want triggered for each intent monitoring campaign.
3. Synchronize domains and/or contacts with spiking intent for each of your intent campaigns to the corresponding nurture stream, campaign, list, or workflow in your marketing automation or CRM platform.
4. For website personalization, make sure you have a designated data field that drives account segmentation based on intent data, and develop a workflow that updates that field accordingly. This will allow your marketing automation system to automatically personalize the landing page experience based on the intent profile you've created for that domain.

7. Renewals and Competitive Threats

Intent data isn't just about leads and prospects. You can also monitor your own customers' activity and set up alerts for specific behaviors.

For example, you can create campaigns limited to your customer account list focused on your category name or on your competitors' names, products, or solutions. If you see spiking activity from one of your customers in one or more of these categories, it could indicate a threat to renewal. An alert could be sent to the account manager, who can call the customer to find out what the cause may be and to offer a solution that keeps the customer in your fold.

Benefits:

- Improve customer retention

How to get started:

1. Build intent monitoring campaigns focused on keywords and topics that describe your category and that of your competitors. This will be similar to the process followed in Account Prioritization (see #3 above), except instead of uploading a list of prospect accounts, you'll upload the list of current customer domains.
2. Set up automatic weekly email notifications for each account owner informing them of spiking activity on their accounts.
3. Define and implement a process for customer engagement. This may be a timely occasion to schedule an account review or additional training that can remind your customers of the benefits of using your product or alert them to services and features they may not be using.
4. Consider using this spiking behavior to trigger delivery of a case study, market research, advanced tips, or reengagement nurture series to reinforce the customer's initial purchasing decision.

Alerts for spiking activity among current customers could indicate a threat to contract renewal.

8. Sales Intelligence & Cross - Selling

If your company offers multiple product or service lines, you can monitor current customers' activity for spikes in product and service categories related to the ones they're already using. These spikes could indicate an opportunity to engage the customer with an offer of add-on solutions, creating increased up-sell or cross-sell opportunities.

Intent intelligence about your accounts can also help your sales directors identify new potential opportunities and prepare for key pitch meetings. You can determine whether an account might have budget available by setting up campaigns on other solution categories a prospect may be researching that could indicate they have budget to spend. And understanding an account's topics of interest before your meeting can make the difference between a pitch that's well received and one that falls flat.

Benefits:

- Increased deal size and revenue
- More entrenched customers

How to get started:

1. Segment your existing customer accounts based on where they are in their customer journey for each of your products: Enablement, Adoption/Retention, Growth, or Advocacy. You'll have the most success if you focus your attentions on those late in Adoption/Retention or in the Growth stage.

2. Set up intent monitoring campaigns limited to Retention and Growth customers under each product or service line. Focus the campaign on keyword topics that describe companion products, services, or challenges.

3. Use the keyword summary report to see which customers are spiking in one or more companion topic categories. This will help you discover customers who may be ready to explore other areas of your offering.

4. Companion products often require selling to departments beyond your current sphere of influence. Use referrals and the contact list to explore decision-making contacts in other departments beyond those that may already exist in your database.

5. Consider personalized sales development outreach in which you offer a high-value content asset to newly discovered decision makers, followed by a middle-of-the-funnel nurture campaign.

6. For sales intelligence, use the company insights feature to explore the company keyword report prior to account meetings to discover topics that may impact your sales team's dialogue.

Don't limit yourself to narrow, product-specific keywords. Look for spiking activity around any keywords that indicate your target buyers have budget.

9. Market Exploration

Another area where intent data can enhance your marketing strategy is target market identification and sizing. Before launching marketing campaigns to new industries or segments, a little investigative intent monitoring up front can save you wasted dollars and sales rep frustration in the long run.

Using the same concepts and campaigns you created in Prospecting (see #2 above), you can quickly be on your way to discovering untapped markets ready for development.

Benefits:

- Improved marketing efficiency
- More strategic budget allocation
- Increased revenue and market share

How to get started:

1. Identify the keyword category that most closely aligns with your product or service.

2. Using the global insights feature, explore the keyword, industry and domain insights reports. These reports will give you a broad view of which industries — and how many companies in each — have recently exhibited interest in your keyword category.

3. Using these insights, you can now build industry-specific campaigns that deliver more detailed insights on exactly which keywords are of interest to which industry sub-groupings. Then you can develop market size estimates based on company size, revenue, geographic location, and even technology usage.

4. If your solution requires specific companion technologies, try creating a campaign using the broadest firmographic filters you are comfortable with. Then add the technographic filter to discover the total possible universe of companies exhibiting intent that would be relevant to you.

10. Competitive Intelligence

In the same way you can use intent data to discover when prospects are ready to buy, you can also use intent data to monitor your competitors' online behaviors. Using campaigns to track competitors' exploration of specific companies, technologies, or topic areas can indicate an acquisition, infrastructure improvement, or category expansion may be in the works.

Benefits:

- Competitive intelligence based on actual online activity
- Ability to respond to competitors' moves before they're even made public

How to get started:

Define a combination of campaigns and reports for the best insights into possible competitive threats.

1. Define a general intent monitoring campaign focusing only on your competitors' domains. Keyword topics should focus on your category, high-profile accounts, and possible infrastructure investments to start.
2. Explore your competitor intent campaign's keyword potential report regularly to discover possible category topic trends. Remember, your competitors research topics for content marketing assets the same way you do.
3. Explore the keyword summary report for insights into your competitors' behavior relative to each other on each keyword defined. This can give you insights into possible positioning or content under development.
4. Using the company insights feature, create and save company keyword reports for each of your competitor's domains. Here you can filter by activity level and specific locations for more targeted insights. For example, if you know a company's R&D department is in Raleigh, North Carolina, you may want to view that location's intent topics separate from those of their corporate headquarters or reginal sales office.
5. Monitor company keyword reports weekly for insights into possible accounts being targeted and be sure to share this intelligence with sales leadership.
6. Don't forget to add product marketing, business intelligence, and other strategic team members to your intent monitoring account. As with any other marketing and business intelligence tool, once team members have been trained on the basics, they are likely to come up with a litany of additional use cases to support their decision making.

This Is Just the Beginning

Once you implement an effective intent monitoring platform, integrate it with your current sales and marketing technology stack, and educate your team on how to use it, the possibilities are endless. By combining intent data with marketing automation, you can solve the age-old question of how to get in front of buyers at the right time. Your marketing team can focus its efforts on the approaches that produce results, and your sales team can spend less time playing phone tag with uninterested prospects as they concentrate on serious buyers.

The next step is up to you. Will you settle for the same old approaches to B2B marketing … or will you get a jump on your competitors by leveraging the most powerful tool to come along in decades?

If you want to learn more about intent data and how it can work for your organization, contact us anytime.

trueInfluence®

www.trueinfluence.com

103 Carnegie Center Drive, Suite 300, Princeton NJ 08540