



The Real World

ACCOUNT BASED JOURNEY

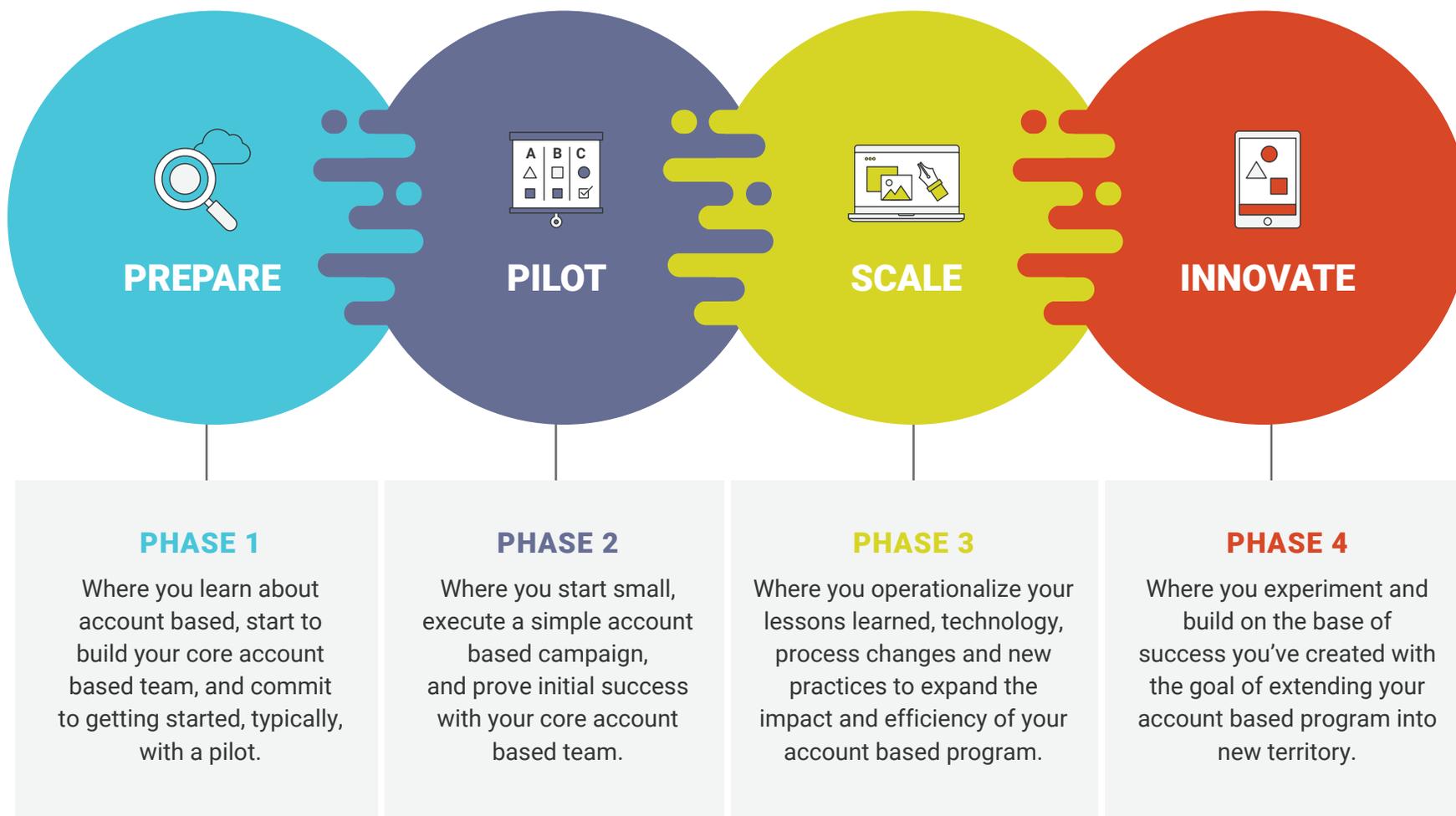
A revenue growth guide from Intelligent Demand

WHAT'S INSIDE



- **The Account Based Journey Overview**
- **1 The Prepare Phase**
- **2 The Pilot Phase**
- **3 The Scale Phase**
- **4 The Innovate Phase**
- **The Top 5 Journey Mistakes**

THE ACCOUNT BASED JOURNEY



YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN THAT BASIC JOURNEY MAP INTO ACCOUNT BASED BEFORE, HAVEN'T YOU?

These high level phase are accurate. But we've all seen frameworks that look deceptively simple, only to find out the real world truth of it isn't quite so neat and tidy.

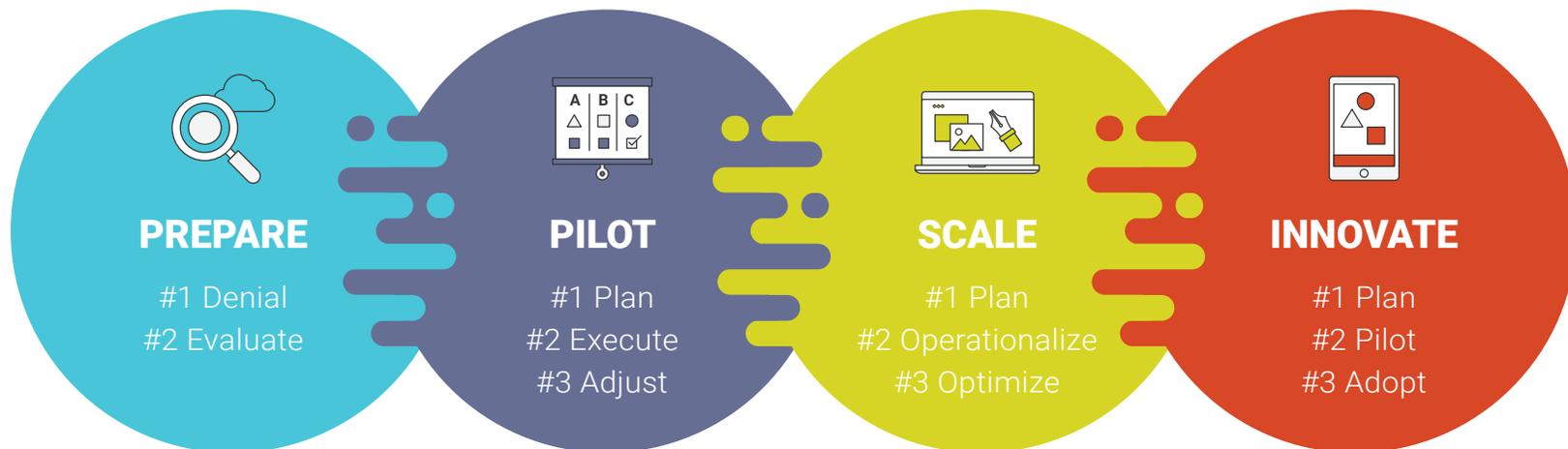
And when you find yourself struggling your way through an allegedly-simple process, it's easy to get frustrated, or feel stupid, or even feel mis-lead. That's the downside of reducing things that are complex, strategic and multi-faceted into a bumper sticker or a t-shirt. The truth is, you aren't going to completely overhaul and transform the way your company goes to market, aligns stakeholders, and generates better end-to-end revenue in four easy steps. Right?!

If you're serious about ABM at your company, there are many benefits to thinking through the underlying steps of each phase of the journey beforehand:

- 1 Fewer unpleasant surprises
- 2 Better able to set your own and your stakeholders' expectations
- 3 Avoid wasted time
- 4 Avoid wasted budget
- 5 Higher likelihood of success -- you can de-risk, some of the journey by know
- 6 Faster time to impact
- 7 Higher likelihood of building genuine internal alignment and collaboration with your team
- 8 Build your own personal credibility as an expert

LET'S DIVE INTO THE REAL WORLD JOURNEY

Surprise, surprise. The real world journey into account based stardom isn't really four steps. You'll notice some bullets underneath. Where did those come from?



Don't worry. We're going to walk through each of the four phases, as well as the underlying key steps inside each phase.

THE PREPARE PHASE

This phase of the journey is all about laying a solid foundation of understanding and commitment to using account based to grow revenue. It's where you decide if account based might really be a good fit for your company. And it's where you begin to build internal alignment and excitement with what will become your core ABM team.

There are two main steps in this phase:

1 PREPARE - DENIAL:

You think ABM is a fad. Or it's just buzz. But then you get curious. Or maybe someone says something that cuts through your skepticism. And then you move into the next step.

2 PREPARE - EVALUATE:

This is where you begin to learn the fundamentals of account based. And as you do, you start to apply it to your use case. You begin to imagine what type of ABM might be the best fit for your company (1:1, 1:Few, 1:Many) and which business goals you should focus on.



OUR ADVICE:

If you're in this phase, take a fresh and honest look at your current go to market strategy. How well is it working? Are you beating your revenue goals? If so, seriously consider learning and then piloting ABM. We don't even care if you call it ABM.



THE MISTAKES YOU WANT TO AVOID:

- 1) staying in denial or letting core members of the revenue team stay in denial
- 2) not leveraging the evaluate phase as a key opportunity to educate and build alignment and excitement for account based

THE PILOT PHASE

This phase is where you actually start doing account based! The trick is to assemble your core team and define your pilot so that is both meaningful and very executable.

There are three main steps in this phase:

1 PILOT - PLAN:

You must have a plan for your pilot. Don't wing it. In your plan, try to use what you have. Start small — don't over-engineer things! Set clear/measurable goals. Make sure you set and manage expectations with your plan. Focus on learning. And remember that it's okay if it's manual at this point - you're trying to prove MVP success here.

2 PILOT - EXECUTE:

Don't worry about scaling yet. Really focus on hitting your pilot goals and laying a solid foundation of learning with the success principles — even with this MVP approach!

3 PILOT - ADJUST:

Expect imperfect results — don't be bummed out and DO NOT give up if your first or even 2nd try isn't successful. That's what this step is about — adjusting until you succeed.



OUR ADVICE:

If you're in this phase of the journey, remember that you are creating a new, better way. It's going to feel awkward; it's going to be hard at first, and it's important not to give up. This is as much about change management as it is about tactics.



THE MISTAKES YOU WANT TO AVOID:

- 1) not creating a solid plan
- 2) not managing expectations
- 3) giving up
- 4) moving into scale before you've proven success

THE SCALE PHASE

This phase is where you carefully expand the success you proved in the Pilot phase. To do this, you have to solve operational problems such as resourcing, repeatability, efficiency, speed, automation (where appropriate), personalization at scale, and measurement. You'll do this by intentionally applying technology, process, and by developing new, better practices – while continuing to be a change agent. It's work – but this is where BIG revenue impact happens.

There are three main steps in this phase:

- 1 SCALE - PLAN:**
This is where you identify and architect solutions for specific challenges that you have to solve if you want your ABM program to deliver at scale.
- 2 SCALE - OPERATIONALIZE:**
This is where you incrementally execute your scaled plan – all while delivering increasing amounts of revenue impact. Integration, alignment, and orchestration are super important here.
- 3 SCALE - OPTIMIZE:**
Absolutely expect hiccups and imperfection here. But you'll use reporting and analytics to guide your optimizations and expand on your early pilot success. You are creating a new “standard operating procedure” here!



OUR ADVICE:

If you're in this phase of the journey, recruit the people at your company who are TRULY GOOD at operations into the program. During the Pilot phase, it was okay (even a little helpful) to act like a revolutionary. It's not helpful here. Here, you want to expand the team to include people who will help you turn the pilot into the new business as usual (BAU).



THE MISTAKES YOU WANT TO AVOID:

- 1) not creating a solid plan (i.e. trying to solve all of your scaling challenges in one step)
- 2) skipping straight to Scale without a proving success in a proper pilot phase
- 3) again, failing to manage expectations – specifically around budget and time

THE INNOVATE PHASE

This phase is almost a return to the Pilot phase but with a HUGE difference: you're doing it with the benefit of lots of knowledge, success, momentum, and a strong, proven account based program! You are essentially testing new strategies and tactics to push the boundaries of the standard operating procedure you created in the Scale phase.

There are three main steps in this phase:

1 INNOVATE - PLAN:

Yes. Even though you're starting to get really good at this, each innovation still needs a plan.

2 INNOVATE - PILOT:

Just like before: start small, set clear/measurable goals, set and manage expectations, and focus on learning and proving results.

3 INNOVATE - ADOPT:

When something has truly proven itself to be a winner in your program, adopt it! This means integrating it into your current program in ways that don't break what you have in place that is already working.



OUR ADVICE:

If you're in this phase of the journey, first of all – **CONGRATS!** You are truly in the minority of companies. Remember that you've earned the right to take some calculated risks. But don't forget the fundamentals that got you here.



THE MISTAKES YOU WANT TO AVOID:

- 1) skipping the innovation pilot step and assuming your innovative idea is going to crush it out of the gate
- 2) doing too many simultaneous innovations because you fell in love with new shiny objects
- 3) forgetting to do the basics really well



THE TOP 5 JOURNEY MISTAKES

AB Journey Mistake #1:

ALLOWING NAYSAYERS ON YOUR CORE TEAM

"ABM is
a fad"

"We've been
doing ABM for
20 years!"

"There's
nothing new
about ABM!"



It's okay if you run across people who aren't yet believers in the impact that ABM can have at your company. In fact, expect it. But it's critical that your core ABM team be staffed with people who are excited about the opportunity to learn, plan, execute, and optimize a successful pilot.

When you run across someone who is skeptical about ABM, hear them out. Ask them what they think ABM is. Share some of the definitions and guiding principles of a modern account based approach and ask them if they agree.

Share the results data and trend data about ABM (ask us here at Intelligent Demand if you need any of this information – we're happy to share)

Quite often, when you remove the label, you and your skeptical friend will look at the underlying strategies, principles and best practices – it's easy to agree that ABM offers a smarter approach for targeting, engaging, converting, and growing your best customers.

AB Journey Mistake #2:

BLOWING THROUGH EVALUATE ALONE

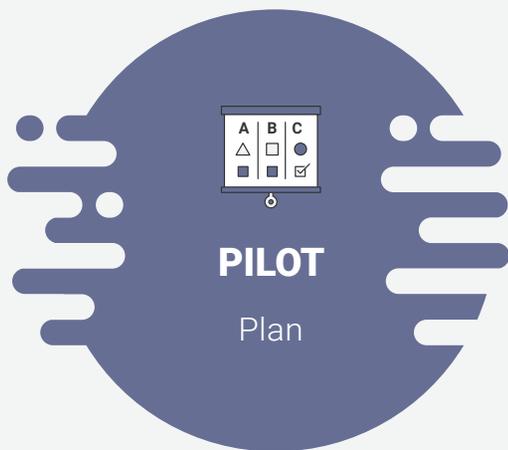
“If you want to go fast,
go alone. If you want
to go far, go together.”

– A great saying from
mysterious origins



ABM is exciting to learn and exciting to lead. But don't make the mistake of trying to do the Evaluate step of the Prepare phase alone. Instead, use the Evaluate step to build learning, alignment, and commitment to ABM within your core team and with executive sponsors. You're not just trying to get "the right answer" here – you're laying the foundation for change management and teamwork.

AB Journey Mistake #3: **SKIPPING THE PILOT PLAN**



Other than making a smart decision about whether you should do account based at your company (and what type) in the Evaluate step, the Pilot step is likely the most important step in the entire journey.

Why?

Because the Pilot step is where you and your internal stakeholders actually do ABM for the first time in your company's *real world*. It's critical for setting and then meeting (maybe even beating) expectations. It's critical for setting the stage for ongoing change management.

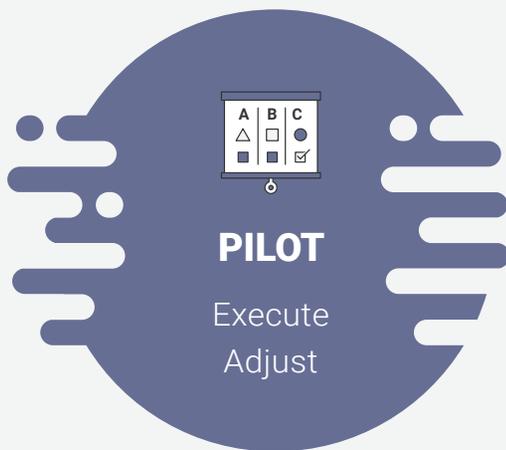
And it's critical to get the greenlight to continue and scale ABM at your company. You only get one chance to do ABM for the **FIRST TIME**. Therefore, don't wing it.

That being said, your pilot plan doesn't have to be over-engineered or too detailed.

Reach out if you'd like to chat about how to create a "just-right" ABM pilot plan. We help clients do this all the time.

AB Journey Mistake #4:

GIVING UP



In the Evaluate step, you decided, as a team that account based was right for your company. At that point, it's no longer about IF you should do ABM, it's about committing to SUCCEEDING with ABM in a step-by-step way.

AND HERE'S A LITTLE SECRET: MOST account based pilots suck a little (or a lot) at first! So don't get bummed out. Don't feel like a failure. And most importantly, DO NOT give up!

That's why the Pilot-Execute step is followed by Pilot-Adjust. This is where you learn from both the mistakes and the wins, and then make adjustments to your pilot until you hit (or beat) your goals!

So don't give up. You've got this.

AB Journey Mistake #5:

JUMPING STRAIGHT TO SCALING



You'd be surprised how often I see companies who skip the Pilot phase and go straight to the Scale phase. This is not a good idea.

Why?

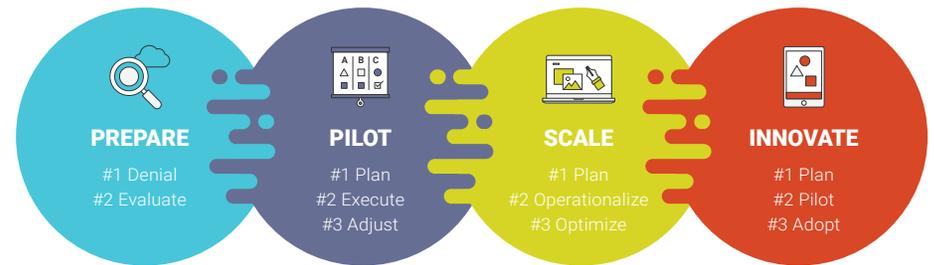
Because when you skip the Pilot phase, you inject a bunch of high profile, unnecessary risk to your fledgling, unproven account based program. You also tend to mis-set expectations (sometimes badly) by laying big time ROI and business impact expectations on a strategy and approach that your

organization hasn't even fully tried or experienced success with yet. Lastly, the Pilot phase is about stakeholder alignment, learning, and building momentum as much as it is about the actual measurable results you get.

Follow the steps of the process, and when you get to the Scale phase – trust us, you'll still have plenty of learning (and also big impact) to experience!

LEAD YOUR COMPANY THROUGH THE JOURNEY

There it is – the full, real world account based journey! Hopefully this guide gives you the information and the confidence you and your team need to go through the process and create growing successes along the way.



Here are some questions for you and your team:

- 1 Where is your team in the journey?
- 2 What have you learned so far?
- 3 Is your team coming together?
- 4 Are you in danger of making any of the journey mistakes we shared? If so, how can you correct and get back on course toward success?

REMEMBER TO EMBRACE THE JOURNEY, AND DON'T SKIP STEPS!



LET'S TALK SHOP

Would your company benefit from an expert partner to help you pilot or scale a successful account based program? Reach out to us – it's one of our true specialties. We love helping companies grow revenue with account based. And we know how to do it in the real world – with all of its imperfections and opportunities to make a big difference.

Let's chat about your account based program.

Call Us **877 654 2234**

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