



IBM

IBM Top Account Marketing: A Customized Approach to ABM

Summary

Dedication to our clients' success is a core value at IBM. We integrate technology and expertise – from IBM and a growing ecosystem – to meet the urgent needs of our clients who see hybrid cloud and AI as crucial sources of competitive advantage. A critical part of our strategy has been revamping our go-to-market to align client-focused roles at our most committed clients, including client engineers, technical architects, and a newly created marketing specialty: top account field marketers.

Program Overview

We see top account field marketing as its own discipline and not a job done by a marketing generalist. To this end, we created a new senior-level job role within marketing including role descriptions, a defined skill set, enablement journey, and career pathing examples so that our field marketers can truly differentiate themselves from other marketers. Our program went from design to full execution in just one fiscal quarter, including the hiring and onboarding of 50+ ABMers across all geographies.

Program Execution & Lessons Learned

We have leveraged ITSMA to build up the skills of our account field marketers to be more focused on growing the business, being a strategic partner to sales, and providing deep client understanding to inform our marketing execution choices.

In fact, we extended our education efforts with an "observer" program with ITSMA to further embed account-based marketing awareness and understanding across the organization.

Successful elements of our approach include:

- Advanced client insight and behavioral capabilities including in-depth executive profiling, AI-based demand sensing, and client research
- Investment in a centralized program team that drives the education roadmap, community building, plan management, and tooling support
- Active account planning participation to help set strategy and objectives
- Real-time client interest triggers that field marketers use with sales to provide guidance to improving ongoing client conversations
- Recognition and celebration of successes to foster innovation and best practice sharing among the top account field marketers
- A comprehensive web portal that serves as a one-stop shop for all things related to the ABM journey. From onboarding, enablement, and community, through engagement, and performance evaluation tools, the portal provides an all-encompassing toolkit to set our ABMers up for success.

Our account field marketers are now a vital network of practitioners who bring inspiration and creativity to our client selling teams. They are empowering IBMers to be the catalyst of progress for our clients as they pursue digital transformation.