Advancing Your Strategy:

The Future of Intent Data

How High-Performing GTM Teams Turn Buyer Signals into Revenue-Driving Action

GTM PARTNERS

Executive Summary

In today's rapidly changing market landscape, understanding and acting on buyer intent is more critical than ever.

Intent data has historically faced skepticism, often perceived as noisy or unreliable. However, by shifting from generic intent to actionable signals, organizations can unlock significant business impact. While the strategic value of intent data remains unchanged, agentic AI finally makes it possible to execute with it across your GTM at scale.

Leveraging intent data effectively enables sales, marketing, and customer success teams to align on high-priority accounts, personalize engagement, and drive efficient growth.

This report will guide B2B go-to-market (GTM) leaders through the maturity curve of intent data usage, highlighting how to move from basic awareness to full lifecycle integration, transforming raw data into actionable insights.

Cheat Sheet: Types of Intent Data

Understanding the types of intent data is foundational for any GTM leader looking to leverage actionable signals effectively.

Each type has unique strengths and challenges, making it essential to align data strategies with specific business goals.

One common misconception about intent data is that organizations must choose one type over another. In reality, the most sophisticated programs leverage all types of intent data in unison to create a comprehensive strategy.

By combining first-party, second-party, and third-party data, GTM teams can build a holistic view of their target audience. This integrated approach ensures that insights are not limited by the constraints of any single data type and that sales and marketing efforts are informed by the richest and most diverse set of signals available.

Data Type	Definition	Benefits	Challenges	Use Cases	Examples	Individual or account data?
First-Party Data	Data collected directly from interactions between the company and its users.	High accuracy, relevancy, and control; based on direct user behavior.	Limited reach and scale; requires ongoing data collection.	Personalization, retargeting, customer journey mapping, and churn prevention.	Website visits, email engagement, content consumption data	Both
Second- Party Data	Data shared between partners; someone else's first-party data.	Extends reach, offers insights from trusted partners.	Consistency and quality may vary; it depends on strong partnerships.	Co-marketing initiatives, account-based marketing, cross-promotion. (Some second-party data providers can also provide everything from first-party data)	Content syndication, data shared by publishers, vendors, review sites, or partners in a strategic relationship,	Individual
Third-Party Data	Aggregated data collected by third-party sources and sold to multiple companies.	Broad reach; can provide insights on new prospects and competitive intelligence.	Privacy concerns; data freshness and accuracy can vary; reliance on third parties.	Account prioritization, early lead identification, segmentation, sales prioritization.	Web-scraping, publisher co-ops, bidstream,	Account

10 Reasons Intent Signals are Crucial for B2B GTM

Intent signals bridge the gap between data and decision-making, helping organizations target the right opportunities at the right time.

The importance of intent data in B2B stems from the complexity of modern buying processes. Unlike in B2C, where purchases are often impulsive and individual, B2B decisions involve multiple stakeholders, extended research phases, and significant investments.

Intent data provides clarity by revealing who is actively researching solutions, what challenges they face, and how close they are to making a purchase. This actionable intelligence enables sales and marketing teams to move beyond guesswork and engage with prospects more effectively and efficiently.

Here are the top reasons why intent signals are indispensable for B2B GTM strategies:

- **01** Align sales and marketing on high-priority accounts.
- **02** Identify and engage new buying committee members.
- **03** Prioritize leads efficiently to improve conversion rates.
- **04** Enhance ABM strategies.
- **05** Use intent data for customer success to predict churn and upsell opportunities.
- **06** Personalize engagement across channels.
- **07** Shorten sales cycles.
- **08** Gain competitive intelligence.
- **09** Inform product development and innovation.
- **10** Enrich account, buying group, and individual data.

Each of these benefits underscores the strategic value of intent signals in driving business growth and operational efficiency.

Readiness Assessment: When to Add or Elevate Intent Data Usage

Assessing readiness to buy or expand intent data is a crucial step for organizations aiming to enhance their GTM strategies. Without the proper foundation, investments in intent data may fail to yield the expected results.

Companies need to evaluate their current processes, infrastructure, and team alignment to determine if they are prepared to integrate intent data effectively. This readiness ensures that intent data becomes a strategic asset, seamlessly complementing existing marketing and sales efforts rather than creating additional complexity or inefficiencies.

This checklist is a diagnostic tool designed to help organizations assess their readiness to scale intent data usage. If you answer yes to many of these questions, you are likely ready to expand your usage of intent data.

Do you generate a **high volume of leads but struggle with low conversion rates?** *If your team is overwhelmed by the number of leads or prospects they're nurturing, intent data can help focus on those actively researching or preparing to buy.*	Yes/No
Are your **sales cycles longer** than you'd like? *Intent data can help by identifying when buyers are ready to move faster through their purchasing journey, allowing you to engage more proactively.*	Yes/No
Do you use **multiple marketing channels** (email, social, PPC, webinars, events, etc.)? *Intent data is valuable when you can act on it across various channels, aligning content and messaging to buyer signals.*	Yes/No
Are you running or planning to run **ABM campaigns**? *Intent data can fuel ABM by identifying high-intent accounts and customizing outreach based on buyer signals.*	Yes/No
Do your **sales teams struggle to prioritize outreach?** *Intent data can give sales teams clear signals on who's researching or close to a decision, allowing for more targeted outreach.*	Yes/No
Are you focused on **customer retention and upselling?** *Intent data can help uncover signals that your customers are researching competitor solutions, giving you time to intervene or provide new offerings.*	Yes/No
Do you have the **technical infrastructure (CRM, MAP)** to integrate intent data into your existing systems? *Intent data becomes actionable when integrated into your existing marketing and sales stack.*	Yes/No
Do **reps struggle to identify active contacts in a buying committee**? *Intent data helps reps focus on the highest priority accounts and contacts.*	Yes/No

The Role of Intent Across the Customer Lifecycle

Intent data can be a game-changer when strategically applied across each stage of the customer lifecycle. Here's how organizations can use intent signals to align with their goals at every stage:

Stage	Goal	How to Use Intent Data
Awareness Stage	Build brand recognition and attract potential leads.	Identify prospects who are actively researching industry topics or solutions similar to your offerings. Create targeted content and advertising that aligns with the interests revealed by intent data. Use third-party intent data to expand your outreach to a broader audience interested in relevant topics.
Consideration Stage	Educate prospects and position your solution as a strong option.	Personalize email campaigns and nurture sequences based on the specific topics prospects are engaging with. Share in-depth resources (e.g., white papers, webinars) related to their expressed interests to keep them engaged. Use intent data to prioritize and tailor outreach efforts by sales teams, ensuring they address the unique needs and questions of potential buyers.
Decision Stage	Convert prospects into customers.	Provide customized demos or consultations that align with the prospect's expressed interests and pain points. Use real-time signals from first-party data (e.g., repeated visits to pricing pages) to trigger immediate follow-up from sales teams. Coordinate cross-departmental efforts, including marketing and sales, to reinforce consistent messaging and personalized offers.
Onboarding Stage	Ensure a smooth transition from prospect to customer.	Leverage insights from the consideration and decision stages to customize onboarding content that reflects their interests and challenges. Provide resources and training that highlight features or benefits they showed interest in during the decision-making process.
Adoption and Engagement Stage	Foster active use of your product or service and build customer loyalty.	Monitor product usage behavior as a form of first-party intent data to identify patterns and proactively offer assistance or additional resources. Suggest relevant features, upgrades, or add-ons based on topics customers have shown interest in through their ongoing engagement. Segment customers into different groups based on intent data to personalize retention strategies and improve user experience.
Renewal and Expansion Stage	Encourage contract renewals and upsell opportunities.	Identify signals that indicate readiness for renewal or potential churn (e.g., drops in engagement, decreased logins). Provide proactive outreach and value reinforcement, such as case studies or new feature demos, based on customer intent data. Target customers showing interest in new industry trends or complementary solutions with upsell offers that fit their needs.
Advocacy Stage	Turn satisfied customers into brand advocates.	Identify customers who are highly engaged and show signs of interest in industry topics where they could be showcased as thought leaders. Encourage customers who demonstrate strong intent data patterns (e.g., positive product interactions, sharing relevant content) to participate in referral programs, testimonials, or case studies. Personalize loyalty programs and communications to keep these advocates engaged and motivated to share their positive experiences.

From Noise to Insight: Understanding Signal Strength

Understanding signal strength is crucial for building trust between marketing and sales teams and ensuring the efficient use of resources.

One of the most common pitfalls in intent data usage is passing leads to sales too early— often when they exhibit only weak signals.

This premature handoff can erode trust and lead to wasted efforts on unqualified prospects.

The role of marketing with weak signals is to nurture these leads, warming them up through targeted campaigns and additional engagement, so they are truly ready for sales interaction.

By focusing on signal strength, organizations can create a seamless collaboration between marketing and sales, improving overall performance and outcomes.

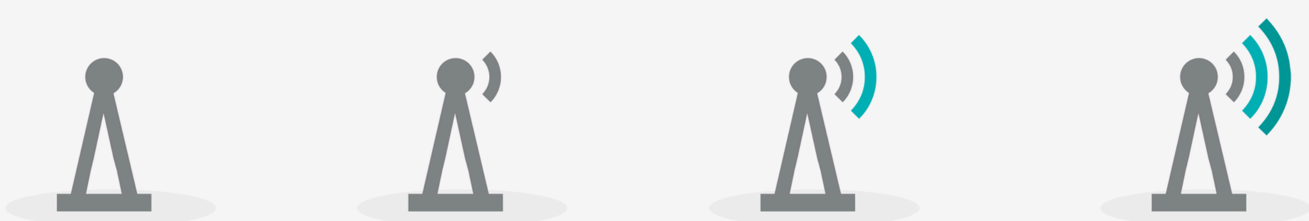
Organizations can categorize signals into four levels:

1. No Signal:
No engagement or evidence of interest.

2. Weak Signal:
Low frequency and generic interest.

3. Moderate Signal:
Consistent, mid-funnel engagement across multiple channels.

4. Strong Signal:
High-value interactions involving decision-makers, frequent multi-channel activity, and advanced analysis.



Intent Data Maturity Curve: From Signal to Action

As organizations evolve in their use of intent data, they progress through distinct maturity stages. Understanding where your organization stands can help identify the next steps for growth:

01 **Basic Awareness:** Minimal knowledge of intent data, no structured processes.

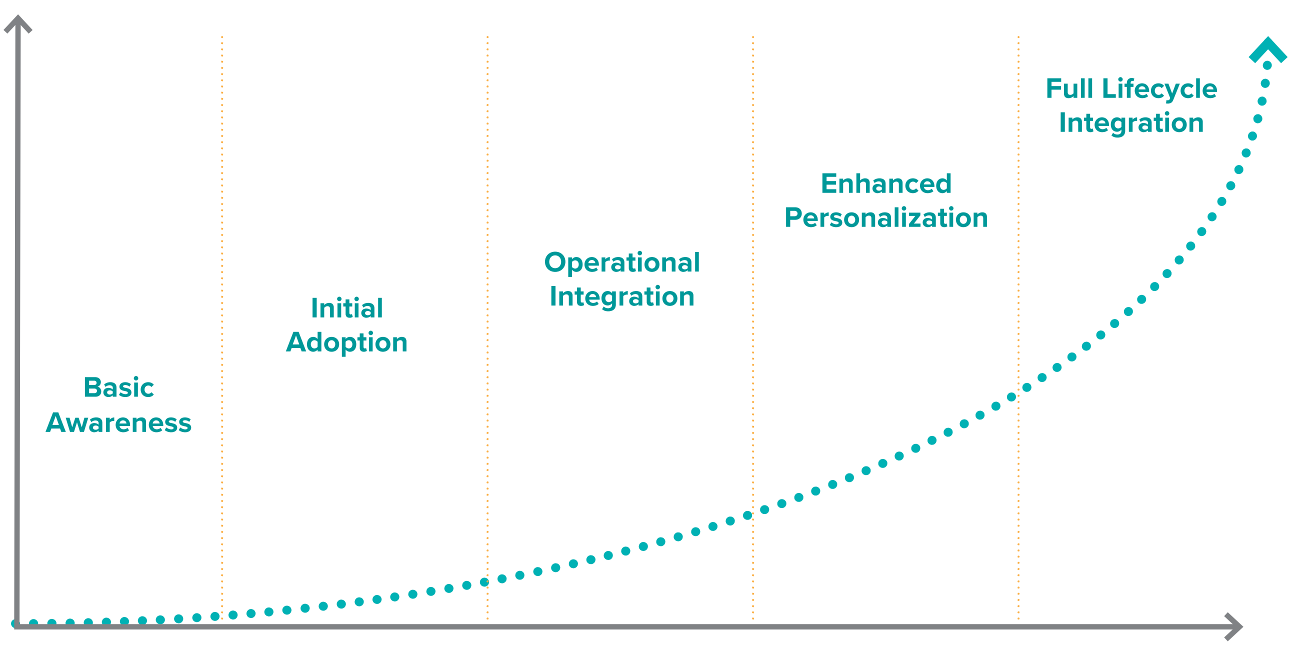
02 **Initial Adoption:** Basic experimentation with limited collaboration between teams.

03 **Operational Integration:** Intent data informs lead scoring and outreach; integrated with CRM.

04 **Enhanced Personalization:** Data supports ABM strategies; marketing and sales alignment improves.

05 **Full Lifecycle Integration:** Advanced use of predictive analytics and automation to optimize strategies across all GTM functions.

Each stage builds on the previous, illustrating a clear path to maximize the value of intent data, and with AI integrated across customer touchpoints, the highest levels of maturity are now within reach.



Leveraging Intent Data Across the Six GTM Motions

Intent signals enhance each of the six GTM motions by providing actionable insights tailored to specific strategies:

GTM Motion	How to leverage signal
Inbound-Led	• Collect preferences through surveys or interactive content to tailor inbound content. • Website visits, form submissions, and content interactions to understand intent and create more holistic inbound. • Identify external prospects showing interest across the web to feed inbound campaigns
Outbound-Led	• Use previous engagement to identify and retarget high-intent leads. • Utilize partner-shared data to target accounts and improve ABM or joint sales efforts. • Aggregate intent data from multiple sources to help prioritize outbound lead targeting
Product-Led	• Gather feedback during onboarding to improve user experience and product growth. • Monitor product usage patterns to identify upsell or expansion opportunities. • Identify prospects researching competing solutions, suggesting product trial readiness.
Partner-Led	• Collect attendee preferences during event registration to personalize the experience. • Track attendee behavior, session participation, and follow-up engagement post-event. • Share data between event co-hosts to expand reach and gain additional insights. • Identify potential event attendees engaging with related topics for targeted invites.
Event-Led	• Track joint customer interactions with partner solutions to identify cross-sell or upsell opportunities. • Partners share intent data to target high-interest accounts for co-marketing and co-selling • Provide a broader view of accounts showing interest in partner solutions, useful for co-selling.
Community-Led	• Track community engagement (topics followed, content shared) to reveal user intent • Track external community discussions to identify high-intent prospects in related forums.

These motions illustrate how intent data can be customized to fit diverse GTM strategies, driving targeted and impactful outcomes.

Conclusion

Transforming intent data into actionable signals requires a strategic and structured approach. By advancing along the maturity curve, B2B GTM leaders can move beyond noise, unlocking the full potential of intent data to drive personalized engagement, align teams, and fuel growth. The future belongs to those who can turn intent into insight—and insight into action, with AI enabling execution at scale.

The Go-to-Market Operating System

We often hear business leaders speak of the desired outcomes as though they are the plan: “We need 3X pipeline,” “Increase Net Revenue Retention (NRR) by 10 points,” “30% increase in revenue,” etc. However, without a systematic way of confirming you have the correct processes and investments to achieve the goal, you might struggle to see risks that could prevent you from reaching it. How do you bridge the gap between your strategic planning and execution?

The GTM Operating System is an 8-pillar framework that we have developed to provide organizations with a blueprint to clarify and align strategic planning and execution processes.

How The GTM Operating System Works

The GTM Operating System is made up of many interconnected parts that will allow your Goto-Market team to stay aligned on a common goal, both as a team and within specific disciplines such as Sales, Marketing, and Customer Success. It also allows the owner of GTM within your organization to validate your strategy and understand the capacity of the GTM team.

The GTM Operating System provides blueprints for how to run a successful plan to manage the execution of a successful GTM Motion(s) across the entire company. Each pillar builds on the next, allowing you to connect the dots between teams with significantly different roles. These 8 pillars are critical to ensuring that GTM is a company-wide holistic initiative and not just a marketing and sales initiative.

For example, without having the correct positioning and branding support, Sales will struggle to make their numbers, or if your customers can’t see value in your solution, having your revenue depend on expansion will become a challenge for your Account teams.

ABOUT GTM PARTNERS

GTM Partners, a data-driven Go-to-Market Analyst firm, helps organizations achieve efficient growth by transforming their GTM strategy. We work with high-growth companies to help them unify their GTM teams and to provide them with lasting strategies and frameworks. GTM Partners, with a mission to make Go-to-Market simple, aims to be the voice of the industry for all things GTM.

We do this by offering:

1. Data and benchmarks collected from data providers, including G2 and Bombora, as well as our community of the world's fastest-growing companies.

2. Research, best practices and design frameworks to provide guidance on the best-in-class approaches to strategizing, executing and tooling your Go-to-Market approach.

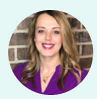
3. Personalized advice and support from experienced leaders and practitioners that help you address business challenges in a manner that is authentic and specific to you. Our consulting work focuses on areas such as Go-to-Market strategy, creating a Point of View and Go-to-Market project execution strategy across the 8 pillars of GTM.

4. Events and networking with industry leaders looking to define the category of Go-to-Market and revolutionize the way we create value for our organizations.

THE ANALYSTS

Bryan Brown
Cofounder, Chief Analyst

Bryan is a SaaS pioneer and thought leader in the marketing and sales tech industry. He has both created and brought to market innovative software products and ideas while helping thousands of companies in their effort to grow revenue more efficiently. Bryan is a co-founder with multiple exits (Vtrenz), has led strategy teams in Fortune 100 Companies (IBM) and has helped multiple organizations scale their products and Go-to-Market approaches from point solutions to platforms (Silverpop, Terminus).

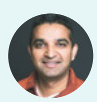


Lindsay Cordell
Senior GTM Analyst

Lindsay is a practitioner turned analyst who studies best practices and trends in Go-to-Market and develops actionable models and blueprints for our clients. She has held both practitioner and leadership roles in almost every aspect of Go-to-Market, including Product, Marketing, Sales, RevOps, and Enablement in Fortune 500 companies including AT&T, Hearst and Cox. She most recently ran the GTM Center of Excellence for the Account-Based Marketing Platform Solution Terminus.

Sarah Allen-Short
GTM Analyst

Sarah brings more than 20 years of experience of B2B marketing and sales leadership to her role as a GTM analyst. She's worked in technology, nonprofit, government, and higher education, with a specialty in B2B SaaS. She excels at taking the skills and experience she developed working with Fortune 500's and billion-dollar companies and helping startups and scaleups apply those lessons in practical, agile ways. Sarah specializes in combining strategic and tactical approaches for maximum impact.



Sangram Vajre
Cofounder, Industry Analyst

Sangram is a three-time best-selling author and co-founder of several organizations, including Terminus, The Peak Community and most recently, GTM Partners. Sangram has been at the forefront of B2B marketing trends, the Flip-myFunnel movement, and defining the Account-Based Marketing category ushering in a new generation of marketers. He has previously held CMO roles at Pardot, a Salesforce company and Terminus.