



QUICK START GUIDE

Cybersecurity Buyer Intent Data

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Debunking Myths About Intent Data	3
Key Types of Intent Data	4
3 Critical Contact Level Questions	4
Content-Level Intent Signals	5
Tools to Get Started	5
An Everlasting Target Account List	6
Common Pitfalls to Avoid	9
Advanced ABM Trends	10
Contact-Level Intelligence - Why It Matters	10
Athena by ISMG	11
Putting It All Together - Your Cybersecurity Marketing Playbook	12
The universal step is to invest in contact-level intelligence	12
Metrics to watch	12
The Cybersecurity Marketers Who Will Win	12

Introduction

It’s challenging being a cybersecurity marketer these days. With an increasingly crowded marketplace, where multiple vendors offer similar solutions, differentiation is harder than ever. Every marketer wants to believe their product is unique, yet there’s often a disconnect between what the go-to-market teams think will resonate and what prospects are willing to invest in. The result? Wasted ad spend, ineffective messaging, and sales calls that lead nowhere.

At the heart of this challenge is understanding buyer intent—something you can’t manufacture or generate on your own.

Intent is based on market demand, which arises due to external conditions such as emerging cyber threats, compliance shifts, and gaps in existing solutions. You can’t force a need where none exists, just as you can’t create an effective positioning statement without validating its appeal in the market first.

Athena is proud to present the first-of-its-kind, quick start guide on intent data, specifically for cybersecurity marketers. Not only can this resource serve as primer for those new to intent data but provide clues to building a more tactical playbook for winning ABM campaigns.

Debunking Myths About Intent Data

Intent data is often misunderstood. Here are the top myths we’d like to dispel.

Myth	Reality
Intent data predicts purchases with certainty.	It signals interest, not guaranteed buys.
All intent data is the same.	It differs widely - first-party vs. third party, data quality, and more.
It’s only for marketing.	Sales, product, and customer success also rely on it.
It violates privacy.	Done ethically, it’s anonymous and compliant.
It works instantly.	It requires integration and action.
More is always better.	Focus on relevance, not noise.
It replaces humans.	It guides, but humans make the connections.

These myths arise from overhyped marketing or a lack of understanding about how intent data fits into a broader marketing strategy. When used correctly, it’s a powerful tool to identify opportunities and refine targeting—but it’s not infallible or a standalone solution.

Key Types of Intent Data

Intent data comes in several forms

First-party

Data from your website, such as form fills and page views.

Engagement Data

Webinar attendance, email opens, and other interactions.

Third-party

Data from external sources like B2B networks.

Search Intent

Data from search engine queries

Firmographic & technographic

Company size, industry, tech stack details. These help marketers track not just general interest, but also pinpoint when accounts are actively researching cybersecurity solutions, and how to prioritize outreach accordingly

3 Critical Contact Level Questions

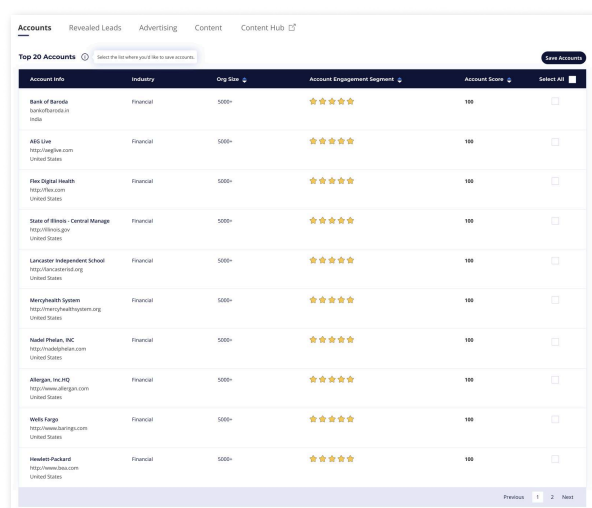
If you want to truly take advantage of buyer intent, you need access to objective high-quality data at the contact level. This demonstrates what each and every single one of your buyers care about. You should be able to answer the following questions:

1. Who, specifically, within an account is engaging?
2. What role do they play in the buying process?
3. Who else is part of the buying committee?

Content-Level Intent Signals

Contact-level intent data is the specific term we will use in this guide. The tangible outcome of using this data is to help identify the actual decision-makers and influencers in an organization. Only afterwards can your marketing team deploy precise targeting and messaging, especially critical in complex cybersecurity sales cycles involving multiple stakeholders.

Understanding contact-level signals is the key to high-performing ABM campaigns.



The screenshot shows a table titled 'Accounts' with a sub-header 'Top 20 Accounts'. The table has columns for 'Account Info', 'Industry', 'Org Size', 'Account Engagement Segment', 'Account Score', and 'Select All'. The data rows list various financial institutions and their engagement metrics.

Account Info	Industry	Org Size	Account Engagement Segment	Account Score	Select All
Bank of America bankofamerica.com India	Financial	5000+	★★★★★	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
ABN AMRO http://amro.com United States	Financial	5000+	★★★★★	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Digital Health http://fdh.com United States	Financial	5000+	★★★★★	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
State of Illinois - Central Manage http://illinois.gov United States	Financial	5000+	★★★★★	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lancaster Independent School http://lancasterind.org United States	Financial	5000+	★★★★★	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wentworth Systems http://wentworthsystems.org United States	Financial	5000+	★★★★★	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hood Pines, NC http://hoodpines.com United States	Financial	5000+	★★★★★	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allergan, Inc HQ http://www.allergan.com United States	Financial	5000+	★★★★★	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
Webb Page http://webbpage.com United States	Financial	5000+	★★★★★	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heavenly Packard http://heavenly.com United States	Financial	5000+	★★★★★	100	<input type="checkbox"/>

Athena monitors account level engagement to eliminate redundant messaging.

Tools to Get Started

To act on intent data, marketers can use industry-standard tools:



Uses ISMG's proprietary first-party data on 2M+ cybersecurity practitioners.



Uses a Data Co-op of 5,000+ publisher sites, offering real-time, privacy-compliant signals.



Integrates firmographics, technographics, and job changes, delivering a 360° view of prospects.



Uses AI to uncover hidden demand and predict buying stages.



Offers deep insights from IT decision-makers on it's content network.



What are some contact level signals?

Whitepaper or eBook Downloads

Indicates high interest and time investments.

Webinar Registrations or Attendees

Shows intent and active engagement with your messaging.

Multiple Article Views in a Topic Cluster

Suggests thematic research, signaling a buyer's journey.

Repeated Email Opens from the Same Account Group

Suggests revisiting of material and stronger interest.

Clicking on Specific CTAs in Emails

Indicates directional intent (e.g., "Get a demo," "Read the report").

Multiple Visits to a Key Product Page

Strong buying signal, especially if return visits occur over days/weeks.

Form Fills or Chatbot Interactions

Shows readiness to engage or convert.

Engagement with Peer-Reviewed or Analyst Content

Implies higher-level research by decision-makers.

Time-on-Page and Scroll Depth

Indicates depth of engagement with your thought leadership or offers.

Multiple Stakeholders from Same Org Engaging

Reveals buying group mobilization — ideal for ABM activation.

Interaction Across Channels (Email + Ad + Webinar)

Multi-touch engagement confirms genuine buyer intent.

An Everlasting Target Account List

A crucial step is creating a Target Account List (TAL) based on observed research behavior to prioritize high-value leads. It's more than a list of names segmented by criteria. It's an entire process that is repeatable and flexible enough to be refined and optimized over time.

The following is a brief overview of Athena's 9-Step process to building a Target Account List with recommendations on what to do, and what to avoid.

1. Define Your Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)

Your ICP should be a data-driven, dynamic blueprint of your best-fit customers. Start by analyzing firmographic (industry, company size, revenue), technographic (tools/ technologies used), and behavioral (buying stage, challenges) data. Collaborate across teams to ensure your ICP reflects both market reality and internal strategic goals.

DO

Analyze past wins/losses, interview customers, validate assumptions with sales, and refresh your ICP quarterly.

DON'T

Rely on stale templates or use "one-size-fits-all" profiles across product lines or regions.

2. Leverage Platforms with Flexible Contact and Account Views

Data is only as powerful as its accuracy. Use platforms like ZoomInfo or Clearbit to source validated company and contact data. Integrate these tools with your CRM or ABM platforms to ensure seamless flow and minimize data silos.

DO

Analyze past wins/losses, interview customers, validate assumptions with sales, and refresh your ICP quarterly.

DON'T

Rely on stale templates or use "one-size-fits-all" profiles across product lines or regions.

3. Make Sales Team Collaboration an Essential Process

Sales and marketing alignment is crucial for effective targeting. Marketing often owns the process of list creation, but sales holds critical insights into real buying dynamics. Build your target account list together to boost buy-in and relevance.

DO

Hold joint planning sessions, co-build tiering models, review feedback loops monthly.

DON'T

Assume marketing knows best or exclude sales from targeting decisions.

4. Harness Intent Data

Intent signals (from platforms like Bombora, G2, or ISMG's Athena) help identify accounts actively researching solutions. Use them to surface in-market prospects and prioritize outreach.

DO

Map intent topics to buying stages, segment based on signal strength, and integrate into lead scoring.

DON'T

Treat all intent equally or ignore cold accounts with surging interest.

5. Tier Accounts Strategically

Not all accounts deserve the same attention. Create a three-tier model based on fit, engagement, and buying readiness.

Tier A: High-fit, high-intent – white-glove ABM.

Tier B: Medium-fit or low-intent – programmatic ABM.

Tier C: Low-fit – nurtured via broader campaigns.

DO

Use a scorecard with firmographics, technographics, and intent.

DON'T

Guess or over-engineer. Simplicity scales.

6. Enrich with Technology Stack Insights

Knowing a target's tech stack helps personalize messaging and product positioning. Tools like BuiltWith, HG Insights, or Datanyze can identify installed technologies or recent migrations.

DO

Use tech stack data to tailor value props (e.g., "We integrate with your current solution.").

DON'T

Assume the tech stack doesn't change – update quarterly.

7. Monitor Engagement

Tracking engagement across channels (email opens, site visits, webinar attendance) allows you to optimize timing and messaging. Connect your MAP (Marketing Automation Platform), CRM, and website analytics.

DO

Set alerts for key actions, score by recency/frequency, personalize follow-ups.

DON'T

Spam unresponsive contacts or wait weeks to respond to a high-signal action.

8. Utilize ABM Tools

ABM platforms like Athena, Demandbase, 6sense, or Terminus can orchestrate multi-channel campaigns for different account tiers. Use them to automate outreach and adjust content dynamically based on behavior.

DO

Personalize by tier, integrate data sources, and experiment with ads, landing pages, and sequences.

DON'T

Over-personalize low-tier accounts or run campaigns without measuring influence.

9. Keep the List Fresh

Knowing a target's tech stack helps personalize messaging and product positioning. Tools like BuiltWith, HG Insights, or Datanyze can identify installed technologies or recent migrations.

DO

Markets evolve. Companies grow, pivot, get acquired. A stale target list kills ROI. Review your list monthly or quarterly with sales and operations.

DON'T

Hoard old accounts or fail to track ROI per account segment.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

New to intent data? Avoid these mistakes:

Focusing on data volume over quality

Webinar attendance, email opens, and other interactions.

Ignoring context

Just because someone reads a security article doesn't mean they're ready to buy—understand the journey.

By integrating intent data with existing CRM and sales tools, marketers can boost lead quality, reduce waste, and engage at the right time—critical advantages in the fast-moving 2025 cybersecurity landscape.



Athena maintains a steady stream of content that reinforces brand authority.

Advanced ABM Trends

For experienced marketers, consider investing in:

- **AI-powered intent analysis:** AI models can now filter noise and deliver high-precision signals for outreach.
- **Multi-channel signals:** Beyond Google and web visits, buyers engage across LinkedIn, X (Twitter), Reddit, and podcasts. Tracking these sources ensures no gaps in identifying who's actively evaluating solutions.

So what does this mean for cybersecurity marketers?

You can't forget about including non-traditional digital touchpoints to capture full-funnel engagement and stay ahead of competitors. But despite these advances, the lack of contact-level data remains a major gap.



Establishing authority can be challenging when you are competing with thousands of voices that have a similar message. You need credible, resonant partner that can help you break through walls of text and a flood of AI generated emojis.

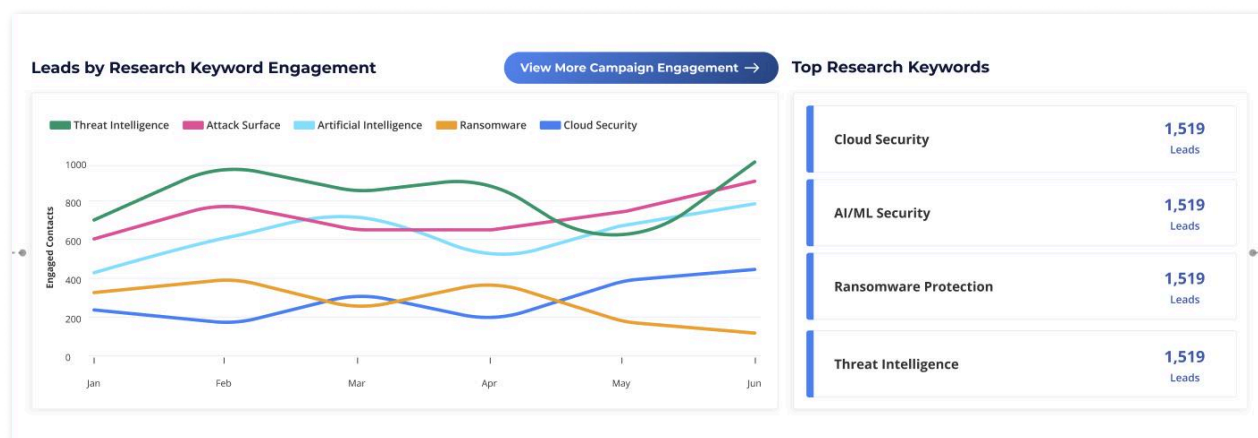
Contact-Level Intelligence – Why It Matters

Without contact-level intelligence, marketers are left guessing who within an account is engaged. Challenges include:

- **Misaligned outreach:** Targeting the wrong people leads to wasted effort.
- **Fragmented campaigns:** Poor targeting erodes trust.

- **CRM data gaps:** Incomplete or outdated contact data makes intent signals hard to act on.

The best cybersecurity marketers will move beyond firm-level insights to pinpoint actual decision-makers, enabling more impactful ABM strategies.



Athena provides content performance data for to scale high-engagement assets and execute targeted ABM campaigns.

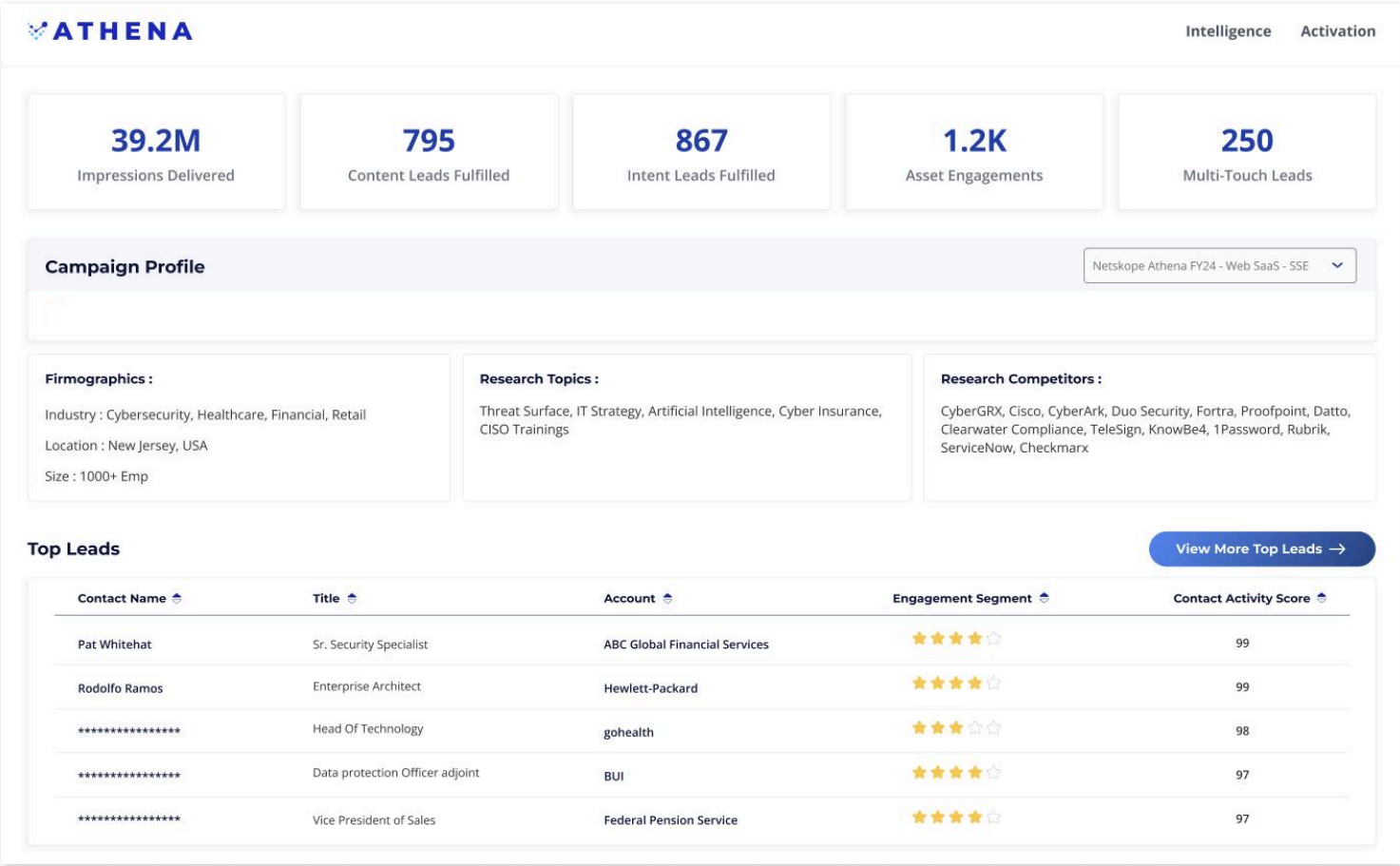
Athena by ISMG

Athena solves the most pressing cybersecurity intent data challenges by delivering:

- **Real contact-level intent:** Identify named decision-makers actively researching cybersecurity topics.
- **Deep audience understanding:** ISMG's proprietary data from its cybersecurity network ensures accuracy.
- **Multi-touch engagement:** Track research behavior, event attendance, and peer discussions.

- **Sales enablement:** Insights integrate directly into CRM and Salesforce, aligning sales and marketing.
- **White-glove support:** Athena's team helps activate data, ensuring campaigns are executed flawlessly.

With Athena, marketers can finally close the gap and unlock contact-level intelligence that accelerates sales cycles and drives conversions



Athena provides intelligence on the world's most valuable cybersecurity decision-makers, generating over 15M unique monthly touch points on ISMG's media network.

Putting It All Together – Your Cybersecurity Marketing Playbook

Now that we've explored intent data fundamentals, industry trends, and advanced ABM strategies, let's break it down into a practical playbook for cybersecurity marketers at every level:

- **For Newbies:** Start Small: Use intent data to build a target account list (TAL) and launch a basic email campaign.
- **For Intermediates:** Leverage AI, multi-channel intent tracking, and privacy-focused messaging to align with 2025 trends.
- **For Experts:** Master ABM with intent-driven personalization, predictive analytics, and real-time sales integration.

The universal step is to invest in contact-level intelligence

No matter your experience level, the key to intent-driven marketing success is quality contact intelligence. If you're only tracking firm-level signals, you're missing the real decision-makers.

Metrics to watch

- **Engagement Rates** – Are the right brands and contacts engaging?
- **Sales Cycle Length** – Is intent data accelerating pipeline movement?
- **ROI on Cybersecurity Marketing Spend** – Are campaigns driving real revenue impact?

The cybersecurity marketers who will win

The cybersecurity market is more competitive than ever, and intent data is the key to success. But data alone isn't enough. The marketers who know who to target—and when—will outpace the competition.

Don't let advancements in intent data catch you off guard. Audit your strategy today, explore contact intelligence solutions, and start testing intent-driven ABM to gain a decisive advantage.

Are You Ready to Take ABM to the Next Level?

Schedule a personalized demo of Athena, our cutting-edge, intent-based platform, and discover how it can optimize your organization's revenue ops.

info@ismg.io