Interlink

Customer Story / Federal Cybersecurity Compliance

How Fortreum found, reached and followed up with the federal buying committee

Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, built a signal-led, buying-committee program with Interlink that a single BDR could work.

854
verified leads delivered in six months

57%*
lead conversion on the first 653 leads

70 to 80%
open rate on the second touch

At A Glance

Rayleen Barndt was building Fortreum's demand engine with a new marketing team and one BDR following up on every lead. Click-based intent narrowed her market too far, and with one BDR, every lead had to count. With Interlink she prioritized accounts on buying signals and wrote to every role on the buying committee. Her BDR got a ready-made follow-up plan for every lead. In six months the program delivered 854 verified leads, and the first 653, delivered by the end of June, came in at 57% lead conversion.

> "When I first saw the persona approach, I hadn't heard of any other vendor going after accounts that way. I love it."
>
> Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, Fortreum

Company
Fortreum is an accredited FedRAMP assessor (3PAO) and cybersecurity assessment firm. It helps companies that sell to the US government pass the security assessments they need to keep selling.

Industry
Federal cybersecurity compliance

Headquarters
Lansdowne, Virginia

Hero
Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation

What Interlink Delivered

- Discover
- Predictive Personalization
- Cascade
- Demand generation
- Nurture

The Problem

Know who's buying, reach all of them, follow up fast

Fortreum helps companies that sell to the US government pass the security assessments that keep them selling: FedRAMP for cloud providers and CMMC 2.0 for defense contractors. Going into 2026 it had new investment, a rebrand on the way and a newly formed marketing team.

Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, was there to build its demand engine. Her own line sums up how she works: "I know who's buying before they do." Doing that in the federal market meant solving three things at once.

1

Click-based intent narrows the market too far

Traditional intent tracks visits and clicks. It narrows by topic and misses research done in zero-click search and AI tools. CMMC intent cut Rayleen's 16,000-account profile to around 400.

Answer: Discover

2

Buying decisions sit with a committee

Security leaders, contract owners and executives all have a say. A message written for one of them gets ignored by the rest.

Answer: Predictive Personalization

3

Every follow-up has to count

A rep can spend 30 minutes researching a lead before each touch. With one BDR, that time decides how many leads get a proper follow-up.

Answer: Cascade

> "Our sales team is tiny but mighty, and the market was still getting to know us. So we leaned on Interlink to help us work out who to go after."
>
> Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, Fortreum

The Solution

01 / Discover

Looking past intent to find more of the market

> "When we added CMMC intent, 16,000 accounts went down to about 400. The question was what else we could add so we stayed targeted, without shutting out all the other accounts we could be selling to."
>
> Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, Fortreum

Only research that leaves a click shows up as intent, and 68% of US Google searches now end without one.

Interlink's Discover gave Rayleen a second lens: company-level trigger events, such as new leadership, funding and expansion, that typically happen before an organization starts researching. Rayleen used it alongside her intent data, then built a priority list with sales so both teams agreed on the accounts that mattered.

16,000 → 400

accounts in profile vs accounts showing CMMC intent

68%

of US Google searches end without a click (SparkToro, 2026)

02 / Predictive Personalization

Writing to every role on the buying committee

Rayleen had Interlink turn each asset into plain-text emails written for each persona on the committee, with up to eight contacts per account. The second touch went only to people who had engaged with the first.

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> Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, Fortreum

Senior decision-makers became the top persona, and contract owners the biggest title. Rayleen used that to sharpen the targeting.

> "The numbers looked good, but I wanted to be more targeted. Sales and I agreed to shift the persona toward contract owners. They were our biggest title, and they're the ones who care."
>
> Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, Fortreum

Up to 8
buying-committee contacts per account

33% → 70 to 80%
open rate, first touch to second touch

276%
higher lead conversion for plain-text persona emails vs HTML emails (Interlink benchmark†)

03 / Cascade

Giving one BDR a head start on every lead

Before launch, Rayleen narrowed qualification to the two questions sales cared about: is this person a decision-maker, and is CMMC on their roadmap within a year?

> "I wanted every lead to be one sales could actually engage, so we agreed on the qualification before anything went live."
>
> Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, Fortreum

Every lead then reached her BDR with an Interlink Cascade page: research on the person and account, nine one-to-one follow-up messages and a call script, ready to send. Rayleen brought Interlink in to train her BDR to use them.

> "Interlink tells our BDR exactly what to do with each lead. I'd never seen that before."
>
> Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, Fortreum

653
verified leads by the end of June, at 57%* lead conversion

9
one-to-one follow-up messages ready for every lead

30 min → 30 sec
research time per touch (Interlink benchmark†)

The Bottom Line

What Rayleen put in place in six months

- Accounts prioritized on buying signals, agreed with sales
- A message for every role on the buying committee
- A ready-made follow-up plan for every lead
- Weekly delivery paced for one BDR

As Fortreum's priorities developed, Rayleen reshaped the program five times and it moved with her each time. She put a three-email nurture ahead of the first sales call, moved budget toward FedRAMP and added a brand program that ran at 52% lead conversion.

> "A lot of the leads I was seeing came from Interlink, and then they'd turn up at our webinars. That told me we were reaching the right people."
>
> Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, Fortreum

> "Our priorities changed a lot, and Interlink moved with us every time. They were transparent the whole way through."
>
> Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, Fortreum

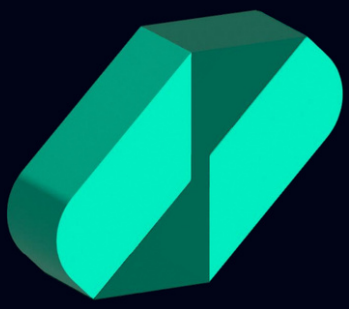
Rayleen's playbook for a demand gen leader with a small sales team

1. Add buying signals to click-based intent when you prioritize accounts.
2. Write a message for every role on the buying committee.
3. Agree on the two questions sales cares about, and qualify on them before launch.
4. Send reps the research and the next message with every lead.
5. Pace delivery to what sales can work each week.

"I really enjoyed working with Interlink's team. They're amazing, and I'd absolutely work with them again."

Rayleen Barndt, Senior Manager, Demand Generation, Fortreum

The buyers were already out there. Rayleen found them first.



Building demand for a business with a lean sales team? Talk to the team that worked with Rayleen.

weareinterlink.com

*Lead conversion: the share of engaged prospects who completed the form, answered the qualifying questions, passed Interlink's quality check and were accepted by the client. The 57% figure covers the 653 leads delivered by the end of June. Fortreum figures from Interlink campaign reporting, March to August 2026. Zero-click figure: SparkToro and Similarweb, US Google searches, January to April 2026. †Interlink benchmarks are averages across Interlink programs, not Fortreum results. Rayleen Barndt was compensated for her time contributing to this story.