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Field Marketing and Technology - a Match Made in Heaven? by [Joseph Clinkard](#)

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Field Marketing (FM) is commonly employed in retail markets to help raise awareness of a brand, or to directly engage with customers and boost sales. It covers everything from sampling and 'mystery-shopping' to experiential and guerilla tactics. Figures have shown, time-and-again, that a good, well-planned FM campaign can offer a substantial Return On Investment (ROI). Almost every major retailer has some form of marketing department, responsible for subcontracting FM agencies. In short, FM has become a vital part of the way business is done in the world, though many firms have failed to grasp its true potential.

The technology market is no exception to this. We live in a world that is utterly dependent-upon the machines that it builds; where our doctors, soldiers, lawyers and businessmen now use computers as a standard part of their day-to-day lives. The technology market has been central to our culture since the Industrial Revolution. 80% of households in America and over 70% in the United Kingdom have some form of personal computer or laptop, and the massive surge in tablet and mobile computing has made digital access something affordable and within-reach for much of society.

It stands to reason, therefore, that such a huge market should extensively use FM in-conjunction with its products, but this is not always the case. Given the dominance of the internet over the way we interact and learn, many developers or retailers expect consumers to turn to the web for marketing or assistance. In many cases, this is true. However, physically experiencing something creates far more of an impression than, for example, watching a video on the internet. In this respect, FM definitely has a role in the tech-market.

There are a great many ways FM could benefit technology retailers, and the methods use largely depend upon the nature of the goods being marketed. For example, a new video-games platform might warrant a hands-on opportunity at a private venue, whereby fans can experience it first-hand. If a piece of software is the focus of the FM campaign, then distributing free (limited functionality) samples may be the most prudent course of action. For the launch of a new computer or, particularly, a new operating system, a conference and demonstration might be in-order. At the far end of the spectrum, technology designed for use by law-enforcement or similar could require a practical demonstration of its effectiveness in the field.

The key, with marketing technology, is to bring it as close to the customer's needs as possible. We generally use technology in a personal or professional manner to convenience ourselves, but convenience is difficult to communicate without a first-hand display to showcase the potential of the brand. In short: a consumer is more likely to invest in a product if they feel that it could play a role in their lives, and so FM must ensure that the technology is portrayed as such.

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