



# The Winning Formula: Supplementing B2B Cannabis Field Marketing with Scalable Digital Marketing Tactics



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**01**

**Introduction**

**02**

**Assessing the Dynamics of B2B  
Field Marketing**

**04**

**Amplify Field Marketing with  
Digital Tactics**

**06**

**Unleashing the Power of  
Digital Marketing**

**09**

**Building a Balanced Marketing  
Strategy**

**10**

**Conclusion**

**11**

**Tips from In-House Experts**

# Navigating Marketing in the Cannabis Industry

Field Marketing is a widely used outreach tactic in the cannabis industry. It's no surprise that over 80% of cannabis marketers consider it a top strategy for building brand awareness, driving customer loyalty, and fostering retention. However, it's worth noting that field marketing is frequently described as labor-intensive, costly, and measuring its actual impact can be both complex and challenging.

B2B cannabis marketers should consider a mix of tactics within their marketing planning, and an oft-underutilized approach is digital marketing and advertising. This guide delves into field and digital marketing channels individually, and optimal strategies for combining the two to achieve specific goals. We will uncover the most effective approaches to aligning these two strategies, ensuring maximum impact and success, and share valuable tips from our in-house marketing experts.

*\*DATA REFERENCED BELOW WAS COLLECTED FROM A 3-WEEK SURVEY RUN IN DECEMBER 2023 BY LEAFLINK THAT GATHERED OVER 100 RESPONSES FROM B2B CANNABIS BRANDS.*



# Assessing the Dynamics of B2B Field Marketing

Field marketing, like in-person conferences, happy hours, roadshows, and vendor days, is a highly effective approach to raise brand awareness, provide product education, and generate leads, and is a fundamental strategy for brands. According to a survey of over 100 wholesale cannabis sellers, 49% of brands actively participate in in-person events on a monthly basis.

# 49%

Of brands participate in monthly in-person events

What sets field marketing apart is its ability to directly interact with potential customers, creating personal connections that digital advertising often lacks. This personal touch not only builds trust, but also strengthens brand loyalty and education. However, field marketing also has its challenges. See below for an overview of the strengths, opportunities, and weaknesses of field marketing.

B2B Field Marketing: Strategic Evaluation Matrix	
<b>Strengths</b>	<p><b>Direct Customer Interaction:</b> Field marketing allows direct engagement with retailers and customers, fostering relationships and brand loyalty through face-to-face interactions.</p> <p><b>Customized Approach:</b> Tailoring marketing strategies to locations, demographics, and events creates personalized market and brand experiences.</p> <p><b>Real-time Feedback:</b> Instant feedback from retailers and customers at events helps refine marketing tactics in real-time, gaining valuable insights into preferences.</p>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<p><b>Digital Integration:</b> Using advertising and technology (like QR codes and event apps) to enhance interactivity and capture inbound leads easily.</p> <p><b>Local Market Penetration:</b> Planning local events and targeted promotions to establish a strong presence in specific regions or communities.</p> <p><b>Coordinated Partnerships:</b> Collaborating with retailers or complementary brands for joint promotions to expand market reach and share customer bases.</p>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<p><b>Resource-Intensive:</b> Field Marketing requires significant resources for travel, staff training, event space, and promotional materials, making it costlier than other marketing channels.</p> <p><b>Scalability Limitations:</b> There are difficulties in achieving consistent success across locations due to geography or event-specific nuances.</p> <p><b>Measuring ROI:</b> Measuring ROI accurately is challenging due to indirect attribution and complex conversion tracking. Uncertainty around event turnout, engagement, and connecting with decision makers adds to the difficulty of predicting success.</p>

While field marketing is a cornerstone for successful B2B strategies, it's important to acknowledge that it is not without challenges, including high costs in terms of time and expenses. 46.7% of brands identified the high costs of field marketing activations as a major challenge.

46.7%

Of brands identified the high costs of field marketing activations as a major challenge

Field marketing requires promotional materials, staff travel and accommodation, event space rentals, staffing, setting up displays, and potentially offering discounts or samples. While these tactics may yield immediate results, their long-term effectiveness, return on investment (ROI), and tangible success metrics can be uncertain and challenging to obtain.

B2B Field Marketing Expenses and Cost Estimations	
Expense	Annual Cost Estimation**
<b>Event Fees:</b> costs for securing booth space, constructing and customizing a booth, staffing the booth, and providing technology and AV equipment in the booth.	\$25,000-\$50,000
<b>Travel Expenses:</b> transportation costs, such as airfare, gas, rental vehicles, or public transportation, depending on the mode of travel.	\$5,000 - \$10,000
<b>Promotional Materials:</b> costs for designing and printing promotional materials, including brochures, flyers, banners, posters, business cards, and other marketing collateral.	\$2,000 - \$5,000
<b>Promotional Materials:</b> costs for designing and printing promotional materials, including brochures, flyers, banners, posters, business cards, and other marketing collateral.	\$3,000 - \$6,000
<b>Branded Merchandise:</b> expenses associated with producing and distributing branded merchandise like T-shirts, hats, pens, stickers, or other promotional items.	\$4,000 - \$8,000
<b>Data Analytics Software:</b> Expenses related to utilizing data analytics platforms or software to analyze consumer data and refine targeting strategies.	\$2,500 - \$5,000

43.8%

Of brands struggle with measuring ROI for their field marketing efforts

Expensive activations, coupled with unpredictable turnout and engagement at events, can potentially lead to lost sales due to inefficient targeting. In fact, 43.8% of brands struggle with measuring the return on investment (ROI) for their field marketing efforts.

\*EXPENSES WILL VARY BASED ON COMPANY SIZE.

\*\* COST ESTIMATION BASED ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RESEARCH.

# Amplify Field Marketing with Digital Tactics

Businesses can significantly expand their reach and effectively engage with their target audience by combining traditional field marketing strategies with innovative digital marketing techniques. Among the top-performing B2B field marketing strategies, in-store promotions stand out. A remarkable 80% of wholesale cannabis brands identified in-store promotions as the most effective B2B tactic.

## 80%

Of brands find in-store promotions as the most effective B2B tactic

These brands captivate dispensaries and boost sales with exclusive discounts, bulk purchase options, product bundles, and early access to new releases. In-store promotions create urgency and exclusivity with time-limited or in-store-only offers. Extending special deals to retailers not only incentivizes them to carry the products but also encourages active promotion to their own customer base. These partnerships foster long-term relationships and increase sales for both parties. Amplifying in-store promotions with digital marketing activities maximizes the benefits of these limited-time offers.

## What are effective ways to integrate a digital marketing strategy with in-store promotions?

- ➔ **Targeted Offerings:** Leverage powerful digital advertising campaigns that complement in-store promotions and reach a wider audience, increasing the chances of bulk purchases. Enhance customer engagement and highlight promotions in-store with captivating online content, text and email promotions, QR codes, and geo-targeted advertising with crisp calls to action (CTAs).
- ➔ **Email Marketing:** Utilize first party email marketing to promote or tease out in-store promotions to customers who have subscribed to your brand's newsletter. Expand reach by also leveraging a third-party service to deliver an additional email campaign on behalf of your brand, and reach new audiences.
- ➔ **Feedback and Adaptation:** Collect customer feedback during and after promotions to adjust strategies, improve offerings, and enhance the customer experience. Combine digital marketing analytics (customer engagement, click-through rates, and conversion rates) with in-store promotion performance to dynamically adapt strategies and connect with changing customer needs.

Product demonstrations also play a highly valuable role in B2B field marketing efforts. According to our survey, 46.7% of participants consider product demonstrations a key component of their field marketing strategy. By showcasing products in action, wholesale cannabis sellers can effectively communicate the quality, features, and numerous benefits of their products to potential buyers, leaving a lasting impression and building trust in their offerings. This interactive approach allows buyers to witness firsthand how the products can meet their specific needs, ultimately leading to increased sales and business growth.

46.7%

Of participants see product demonstrations as a key component of their field marketing strategy

17.1%

Of brands consider trade show participation to be a top tactic

In contrast, trade show participation proved to be less fruitful, with only 17.1% of participants considering it a top tactic. Despite the potential for exposure and networking opportunities, the majority of attendees found that the return on investment fell short of expectations, indicating the need for alternative strategies to maximize business growth and success.

## How can you maximize B2B trade show traffic and build up brand awareness before a trade show?

- ➔ **Email Campaigns:** Send third-party email blasts to promote your brand/products and encourage trade show participation. Include booth details, special promotions, product launches, and reasons for attendees to visit.
- ➔ **Digital Display Advertising:** Utilize display ads on high-traffic industry websites or B2B platforms frequented by your target audience. Create visually engaging ads that will drive brand recall and recognition.
- ➔ **Social Media Promotion:** Leverage social media posts on platforms like LinkedIn or Twitter to reach out to industry professionals.
- ➔ **Direct Engagement via Messaging Platforms:** Engage directly with potential attendees on apps/platforms like Slack or industry forums. Share trade show details, event info, and exclusive offerings.

# Unleashing the Power of Digital Marketing

Digital tactics act as a catalyst, amplifying the impact of traditional field strategies. According to a survey, 57.1% of brands acknowledge the importance of digital advertising in reaching a wider audience, while 50% consider it indispensable for brand building. Incorporating digital advertising into your marketing mix is pivotal for success.

## 50%

Of brands consider digital advertising indispensable for brand building

B2B Digital Advertising: Strategic Evaluation Matrix	
<b>Strengths</b>	<p><b>Targeted Audience Reach:</b> Digital marketing enhances targeting, reaching specific demographics, interests, and behaviors, maximizing the potential for engaging the right audience.</p> <p><b>Cost-Efficiency:</b> Compared to traditional methods, digital advertising can often be more cost-effective, allowing for smaller budgets to achieve broader reach and measurable outcomes.</p> <p><b>Flexibility:</b> Digital marketing offers flexibility that allows for quick changes in messaging or targeting based on real-time data. This adaptability can result in more effective campaigns and better ROI. Digital initiatives are the key to long-lasting success, aligning with business needs and targeted launches.</p> <p><b>Measurability:</b> Digital advertising provides clear metrics and analytics to track campaign performance, providing measurable outcomes that aid in decision-making and future campaign planning.</p>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<p><b>Content Personalization:</b> Leveraging data insights enables personalized content delivery, enhancing user experiences and fostering stronger connections with the brand.</p> <p><b>E-commerce Integration:</b> With the growth of online purchasing in the cannabis industry, integrating e-commerce platforms into digital marketing strategies opens new sales channels.</p> <p><b>Increased Visibility:</b> Implementing effective search engine optimization strategies can improve website traffic and increase overall online visibility. Building an email list allows for direct communication with customers, promoting new products or services, and encouraging repeat business.</p>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<p><b>Regulatory Hurdles and Compliance Restrictions:</b> Stringent regulations and restrictions in the cannabis industry continue to challenge digital marketers. Navigating varying advertising guidelines across regions and platforms is crucial for compliance and campaign effectiveness. These limitations can constrain digital marketing strategies in the cannabis sector.</p> <p><b>Ad Fatigue and Overexposure Concerns:</b> With fewer advertising options, captivating audience attention without overwhelming the target market is a challenge.</p> <p><b>Limited Ad Platforms and Channels:</b> Many mainstream digital advertising platforms have restrictions or outright bans on cannabis-related content. This limitation significantly reduces the available channels for cannabis brands to promote their products or services, hindering their ability to reach a wider audience effectively.</p> <p><b>Learning Curve:</b> Keeping up with the rapid evolution of digital marketing trends requires continuous learning and adaptability.</p>



The proven advantages of digital marketing are evident, it's notable that 15% of surveyed brands are investing more than \$5,000 per month in digital advertising. Brands that strategically allocate budgets towards digital channels, employ cost-effective strategies, and explore platforms that deliver substantial Return on Advertising Spend (ROAS).

15%

Of brands invest more than \$5K a month towards digital advertising

47%

Of brands find that advertising on LeafLink has been their most successful ad channel.

Digital advertising campaigns, with their extended lifespans, guarantee continuous visibility, enabling customers to consistently see and engage with the brand. This prolonged exposure is instrumental in reinforcing brand recall and recognition, both of which play pivotal roles in influencing purchasing decisions and fostering enduring customer loyalty.

## Exploring Digital Advertising Platforms and Channels

Digital advertising encompasses a spectrum of platforms and channels uniquely suited for the cannabis industry, such as advertising, email marketing, list building, content marketing, and search engine marketing. Not only is it cost-effective, but it also provides measurable results that aid in identifying Return on Investment (ROI) and enhancing targeting precision.

- ➔ **B2B Platforms (LeafLink):** These serve as direct bridges between cannabis brands/wholesalers and dispensaries, simplifying transactions and helping to scale brand awareness. Notably, 47% of brands surveyed reported that Advertising on LeafLink has been their most successful advertising channel.
- ➔ **B2C Platforms (Jane, Leafly):** Crucial for engaging directly with end consumers, these platforms aid in brand awareness and consumer interaction, offering invaluable touchpoints. However, restrictions on traditional social media channels (like Instagram) make operating on these channels nuanced.
- ➔ **Google Ads (Search, Display Networks)\*:** With a vast reach, these platforms provide extensive reach to attract potential customers actively seeking cannabis-related products or information.

## Sample Digital Channel x Business Goals

	<b>B2B Platforms (e.g., LeafLink)</b>	<b>B2C Platforms (e.g., Jane, Leafly, Weedmaps)</b>	<b>Google Ads* (Search, Display Networks)</b>
<b>Goal: Brand Awareness</b>	Showcase your unique offerings and brand values with monthly keyword/category search and featured brand ads.	Use banner ads, search ads, and keywords to create compelling content that boost visibility among consumers.	Optimize ads with targeted keywords to rank higher in search results, increasing brand exposure.
<b>Goal: Lead Generation</b>	Capture the potential customers and build a leads list with in-platform Display Ads and sponsored email blasts.	Run campaigns on sales/deals pages with enticing offers or exclusive content to capture potential leads interested in purchasing products.	Design ads with appealing offers or downloadable content to entice potential leads actively searching for cannabis-related products.
<b>Goal: Product Education</b>	Share product specifications, benefits, and usage guides in your LeafLink brand menu.	Highlight product features and informative content using email blasts to inform consumers about product details and benefits.	Use display ads to showcase product features, benefits, and direct users to landing pages for in-depth product information.
<b>Goal: Customer Loyalty &amp; Retention</b>	Use in-platform ads and email blasts to highlight exclusive deals/discounts. Offer loyal wholesale customers special incentives for repeat purchases/bulk orders.	Promote loyalty programs, exclusive offers, or early access deals to consumers through multiple in-platform ads.	Display ads with loyalty-based incentives, rewards, or customer appreciation messages to encourage repeat visits or purchases.

# Building a Balanced Marketing Strategy

The convergence of traditional field marketing tactics with cutting-edge digital strategies is imperative for the cannabis industry's success. Roughly 50% of brands allocate 10-25% of their marketing budget to field marketing activities. Nevertheless, a significant number of them miss out on maximizing the impact of their marketing expenditure by neglecting to establish a comprehensive and multifaceted marketing strategy.

Building alignment between digital and field marketing channels allow brands to amplify their reach, without losing human touch. 41% of brands identify that digital efforts complement field marketing. To ensure a balanced approach, cannabis brands should take advantage of digital marketing strengths to extend the impact of their field marketing efforts.

## 41%

Of brands identify that digital efforts complement field marketing

## Strategies for Aligning Field and Digital Marketing:

### 1 Unify brand messaging

Create a strong brand presence across all your digital channels—social media, email marketing, and digital ads. Let your online persona reflect your brand's values, identity, and key messages. Train your teams to deliver the same brand message at in-person events.

### 2 Build integrated campaigns

Align and enhance field marketing efforts with advertising campaigns. Promote in-store promotions, trade show participation, and local events through digital advertising and social media. Incorporate digital elements like QR codes, hashtags, and interactive content to bridge offline and online experiences.

### 3 Cross-Promote

Promote your field marketing events through digital channels. Use email marketing, social media, and online ads to create anticipation for in-store promos, trade shows, or product launches. Offer exclusive discounts to attendees who engage digitally. Encourage them to follow your social accounts, subscribe to newsletters, or take online surveys during or after events for continuous engagement.

The use of field marketing allows cannabis brands to establish a personal connection with potential customers, fostering brand loyalty and trust. On the other hand, digital advertising provides the advantage of targeting and data-driven insights, enabling brands to refine their campaigns and optimize their marketing efforts based on real-time results.

By embracing a balanced marketing approach that combines the power of field marketing and digital advertising, cannabis brands can effectively navigate the unique challenges of the industry and position themselves for long-term success in a rapidly evolving market.



# Tips from Our In-House Experts

## Alex's B2B Field Marketing Tips

- 1 Events don't have to break the bank! Here's a pro tip – attending at an event can offer the same benefits as exhibiting. Embrace networking, work the room, and discover the power of industry connections. You'll be amazed at the valuable leads and opportunities that await you.
- 2 Create event themes aligned with causes or community interests such as Breast Cancer Awareness or Pride Month. Coordinate promotions and activities to coincide with busy days like 4/20, 7/10, or Green Wednesday.
- 3 Build community relationships as a vital part of your field marketing efforts. Be an ally to the community and industry, supporting relevant organizations and initiatives. This will bring authenticity to your company and foster stronger connections. Your brand will be seen as more than just a business, but a positive influence in the community.



**Alex Calderon**

Alex Calderon is a seasoned Senior Manager of Field Marketing at LeafLink, with extensive expertise in field and experiential marketing, as well as brand management in Retail, CPG, and Cannabis industries. With a proven track record of success, Alex has partnered with renowned brands such as Red Bull, CLIF Bar, Urbn Leaf, Eat Just, StateHouse Holdings, and Timbuk2 Designs.

## Kate's Digital Advertising Tips

- 1 Have clear goals and outcomes for your digital advertising strategy to guide your approach. For instance, use our Buyer Dashboard ad to raise awareness for a new product launch. Alternatively, send an email blast for a time-sensitive fire sale on specific products.
- 2 Maximize your sales during your advertising campaign by offering a volume discount or running a special promotion. Highlight these offers in your ad copy and on your LeafLink brand page, and website.
- 3 Get your company website and LeafLink menu ready for a successful advertising campaign! Optimize your digital presence by adding product images and ensuring correct pricing.  
**Pro-tip: LeafLink customers can schedule a growth consultation with their Account Manager to ensure their menu is set up correctly.**



**Kate Biggs**

Kate Biggs, a seasoned Senior Director of Ads Sales at LeafLink, consistently demonstrates exceptional leadership, driving high-performance sales teams and fostering revenue growth. With a rich background in the Cannabis Industry, including roles at MSOs like Acreage Holdings and Curaleaf, Kate brings a strategic, customer-centric approach, leveraging leadership, innovation, and cannabis expertise.