

AN OVERVIEW OF TECHNOLOGY IN FE DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS AND DELIVERING VALUE

A thought-provoking new report

As part of our commitment to supporting the development of education technology (edtech), we have published a report in collaboration with William Jenkins, the Community Engagement Manager at Tech Stories, about how educators and IT suppliers might best work effectively to develop and implement technology projects. Featuring many practical learning points, this absorbing report is designed to prove useful with your current and future technology projects.

This introductory leaflet takes a brief look at some of the report's key points and explains why it's an engaging read for anyone interested in the future of technology in education.

Today... and tomorrow

Taking us from current practices in sales aimed at FE, through some of the challenges of developing and rolling out successful technology products, to how educators can help suppliers improve new and emerging edtech, the report is carefully structured to provide practical information for people involved in FE, as well as suppliers to the industry.

Should educators care about how tech companies run their business?

Central to this report is the relationship between suppliers and their FE customers. An FE supplier's business strategy, operational practices and roll-out plans can affect the quality of the edtech they deliver, and the report investigates the real need for collaboration and how educators can help suppliers improve new and emerging edtech.

In exploring this need, it looks at questions such as:

- What differentiates great technology tools from ones that are, frankly, quite disappointing?
- How are educators and edtech suppliers trying to predict and shape the future?
- Are the relationships between FE and technology suppliers as efficient and productive as they could be?
- What would happen if the dynamics of the relationship changed?
- Are there things that FE could be doing to assist suppliers?

“ *We want to support colleges as they explore new ways of working, encouraging them to be active, not passive, consumers of educational technology. This report is part of our campaign to help educators engage, and assist with edtech product development – not just use IT programs designed by others.* **”**

Mark Dawe, OCR Chief Executive

At a glance

Here's how the report is presented:

- Section 1** looks at the time and cost implications of suppliers' sales efforts for both colleges and suppliers.
- Section 2** explores the importance of 'product-market fit' and highlights how it is extremely difficult to get products right at the first attempt.
- Section 3** reflects on the best indicator for a company to gauge when they have a great product, and when it is time to look for new customers.
- Section 4** looks at some of the key considerations that suppliers should bear in mind when considering potential target markets for their product, and looks at whether FE could be the ideal niche target market.
- Section 5** discusses the level of focus required for a start-up and new provider to become a market leader, and looks at when colleges can expect the 'whole product' solution.
- Section 6** looks at the negative consequences for any organisation that loses its focus.
- Section 7** looks at the 'technology adoption cycle', the different profiles and expectations of each group when assessing technology. It discusses how FE could use this model to improve edtech, and the roll-out of new products within FE.
- Section 8** considers the issue of the sceptic's viewpoint.

One of the key messages of this report is "Let's collaborate"

The report concludes that it is hard to untangle the customer-supplier relationship from great products. It asks where the customer input stops and the supplier development begins, showing that one example of this in education is tech companies building and sponsoring new schools.

It also concludes that UK FE colleges could be a fantastic market for start-ups and new product ideas, and that this could have significant benefits. However, it also outlines how not innovating and changing could have some far-reaching and negative implications and consequences.

See the full report today

The 'Technology in FE' report is for anyone involved with making technology decisions in FE. To see a copy of the full report, download it at:

www.tech-stories.co.uk/reports/Technology_in_FE.pdf

**You can also watch a short film which summaries the report.
To see this, go to www.ocr.org.uk/vocational**

