

MEDIA REPORT

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PART ONE

B2C - Cannabis and the Consumer

WOMEN & WEED

Female cannabis consumers are an entirely different demographic than their male counterparts. A cannabis brand for women must be dedicated to supporting women with their products and online presence. Industry players often call out brands for women with shallow or disingenuous branding. The best way to solidify REDACTED as a brand for women, is to be a genuine presence and support for other female enterprises.

WHO THEY ARE

There is no 'one type' of female consumer, women who use cannabis are as diverse as the different strains of the plant itself. Women make up half of the consumer market but are often an afterthought when marketing cannabis. Selling cannabis to women isn't about marketing a fantasy, women prioritize education and support. As consumers, women can be fickle or fiercely loyal depending on if a brand and will use word of mouth to share their opinions. A 2018 Vander Pop survey showed that 66% of North American women hide their cannabis use out of fear of being judged. There is still a lot of stigma around the 'kind of woman' who would use cannabis - that they are bad moms, lazy, immoral, unmotivated, or a hippie/stoner. The role of a cannabis brand for women is to actively dispel stigma and tell stories of everyday consumers like themselves.

WHAT THEY WANT

The first rule of marketing to women is not to market to women. The distinction is that a brand must market to specific types of women, not a blanket version of what a woman is expected to want/be. This is where many female centered cannabis brands lose face and customers, both professionals and consumers alike expect more than just a pink package. In order to unlock the power of the female market, a brand has to support women before and after their purchase.

A BRAND'S ROLE IS TO MAKE WOMEN FEEL JUST AS COMFORTABLE BUYING A GRAM OF DRIED FLOWER AS THEY ARE BUYING A BOTTLE OF WINE.

PART ONE

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WHERE MARKETING MEETS EDUCATION

The best way to reach women is to create authentic content for women, by women, that addresses their specific concerns. Over 70% of women still believe there is a stigma surrounding cannabis consumption. REDACTED role is to make women feel just as comfortable buying a gram of dried flower as they are buying a bottle of wine. An effective way to combine marketing and education is investing in content and digital media that informs and empowers women. Since a brand can't be next to a potential consumer when they are making their purchase, the digital information women access before and after shopping is imperative. The investment in education and dispelling stigma pays back in brand loyalty, sales, and impressions.

MARKET RESEARCH SURVEY OPPORTUNITIES

The customer survey mentioned in REDACTED's marketing research goals is a multi-faceted way to reach new audiences and create multiple media opportunities. The Vander Pop survey previously mentioned has been featured in countless cannabis publications. Cannabis consumer data is valuable, since the legal market is in its infancy these surveys hold key insight for consumers and professionals. In addition to providing REDACTED with information about their consumer base, the survey can be used to build media opportunities that increase brand awareness and reach. Results can be pitched to publications inside and outside the cannabis space to humanize the brand and generate buzz.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop narratives that customers see themselves in. Women 30 - 60 are generally new to cannabis and need to be walked through every step from seed to harvest (think farm to table)
- Increase the use of brand story, very few companies have an authentic origin - use it
- Current branding works well for appealing to all kinds of female consumers - turn 'the boss' et al. into a marketing campaign emphasizing not all consumers are alike and REDACTED has something for everyone

PART TWO

B2B - Cannabis Industry & Media Relations

MEDIA RELATIONS

Building relationships within the cannabis industry garners more than respect, it facilitates connections that make money. Don't underestimate the importance of how the industry perceives a brand, even if they aren't the target market.

Fostering meaningful relationships with PR reps, publications, freelancers, and influencers within the cannabis industry is the key to a successful and long-lasting presence. In addition to external marketing, these professionals and their networks are great secondary sources for market research.

REDACTED's retail strategy is strong, however, digital marketing needs improvement to merge the disconnect between the brand and the consumer. Utilizing Canadian cannabis publications, podcasts, and influencers all affect the staying power of a brand. Through building quality connections within the industry itself, REDACTED can increase media coverage, differentiate from competitors, and reach a larger consumer base.

PITCH EXAMPLE

Make it as easy as possible for cannabis publications to use your brand in their stories. Sending quarterly pitches to publications and freelancers keeps you in the front of their minds when creating content.

Successful pitches offer the journalist a stepping-off point to report a story or use a brand rep as an expert source. Build relationships with certain writers and offer them exclusive access to company announcements and interviews before press releases drop.

Example: It's Mother's Day, celebrate the woman in your life with "product", Founder REDACTED says "sound bite comment". To learn more contact our communications lead.

When REDACTED executes the customer survey, the results will make compelling content for pitches. In the example above you could tie in 'X amount of cannabis consumers surveyed were moms/parents'

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CANNABIS PUBLICATIONS

- [The GrowthOp](#) (Postmedia News, reporting)
- [Leafly](#) (reporting, education and reviews)
- [Lift & Co](#) (education and reviews)
- [HerB Life](#) (female centered stories, education)
- [Merry Jane](#) ((female centered stories, education)
- [Broccoli Magazine](#)
- [Vice Cannabis](#) (reporting, some education)
- [StratCann](#) (industry news, independent publication)
- [Inside the Jar](#) (consumer based, independent publication)
- [Green Entrepreneur](#) (industry news, reporting, education)
- [Benzinga Cannabis](#) (reporting, education, some storytelling)
- [Business of Cannabis](#) (industry news, live interviews, panel discussions)
- [Cannabis Wiki](#) (industry news, education, consumer stories)
- [Marijuana Business Daily](#) (industry news, reporting, networking events)
- [Marijuana Moment](#) (mostly US, some Canadian brands)

- Pitches should be short, concise, and offer a hook for the writer.
- Offer timely, relevant ideas
- Follow-up 1 -2 times max on pitches
- Include a quote from the public face of the company (Melinda?)
- Promote articles featuring Eve on all social media channels

POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS

- [Boss Ladies of Cannabis](#)
- [Canndora Connect](#)
- [SheCann Cannabis](#)
- [The HerB Life - Spotlight Series](#)
- [Alpha Woman Co.](#)
- [Ellementa](#)
- [Women Grow](#)
- [Jacqui Childs](#) (influencer)

PODCASTS

- [The Green Room](#) - contact [Jacqui Childs](#)
- [The Flower Hour](#) - contact [Ned](#)
- [The Dopeist](#) - contact [Nicole](#) (female centered)
- [Wine, women & weed!](#)
- [Your Highness Podcast](#)
- [Sessions](#)

PART TWO

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CANNABIS CONFERENCES

Working in cannabis is a combination of industry and consumer engagement - both can happen at a cannabis conference. Customers attend cannabis conferences for education and support, despite not being able to purchase products on-site they will make relationships with brands there. Consumer impressions at conferences are generally a SWAG game - having sustainable, useful, and creative gift items generates engagement that lasts long after the event is over. For professionals, cannabis conferences offer networking and media opportunities. Regardless of whether you purchase a booth, REDACTED should have a rep at these conferences. Whether the rep is featured on discussion panels, or simply attending to network with journalists and location retailers, there are meaningful opportunities only available through attendance.

- [New Heights Cannabis Tourism Summit](#)
- [Grow Up Conference](#)
- [O'Cannabiz](#)
- [Lift & Co Expo](#)
- [MJ Biz Cannabis Conference](#) (US based)
- [Cannabis Europa](#)
- [International Cannabis Business Conference](#) (ICBC)
- [Benzinga Cannabis Capitol Conference](#)
- [WWC Conference](#) - Women, wellness and cannabis conference (new)

CANNABIS PR AGENCIES

Cannabis-focused PR agencies and reps are allies for media training, sending press releases, and finding collaboration and networking opportunities. Even when not employed by a brand, their social feeds and websites hold valuable insight into industry stakeholders and news.

- [Marigold PR](#)
- [JESCO](#)
- [Root Creative](#)
- [Alan Aldous](#)
- [AdCann](#)
- [Ethical Image](#)
- [RNMKR](#)
- [The Elevated Collective](#)

PART THREE

Digital Marketing Strategy

CONTENT MARKETING

In the current legal framework, consumers largely rely on online sources to understand cannabis. Developing authentic and informative content is one of the easiest ways to garner brand recognition and reach larger audiences. In addition to consumer leads and impressions, having an educational blog component will increase your search engine viability. Offering information on how and why women use cannabis creates loyal consumers and shows that REDACTED is by women, for women.

Newsletters are also a powerful part of your content marketing toolkit. Use newsletters to educate subscribers about cannabis, support on-brand industry peers, and offer customer incentives. To give subscribers added value, there needs to be some sort of exclusive access - let readers know when sales are coming, new product launches, company news, and events (new retail locations etc).

SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

The key to marketing cannabis to women is to showcase how your brand fits into their lives. What BRAND's social media needs is more of a human story component. Diversify social media feeds to capture a holistic view of REDACTED as a brand; include posts on products, brand values, education and speak on pop culture topics (ie. social movements like BLM and/or standard calendar items like women's health awareness week etc),

Optimize existing trends like #SelfcareSunday to promote products like teas and bath bombs. Any time staff or consumers do something on-brand and online, it needs to be on social media. Promote customer stories, panel discussions, retail locations, new swag and when X employee attends X conference. These small changes will appeal to the female market, it shows interest in their stories and provides an air of authenticity to your feeds.

Example:

When REDACTED launches its infused beverages, turn #HASHTAG into a social media campaign. Release a blog post after the product launch that includes a recipe for infused sangria showcasing the products as the main ingredient. Then you can encourage consumers to take photos of their sangria versions and share them. This adds that much-needed human storytelling element to your feed and engages audiences in a genuine way that doesn't feel like marketing.

PART FOUR

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Build relationships with industry professionals and media

FOUNDER has an incredible and authentic story on what inspired BRAND and why she is working in cannabis. In my research I discovered she was the first female founder to REDACTED - this should be discussed more often. News cycles are constantly turning over and it gets buried. To build traction as a brand for women you have to showcase that there are women in senior positions at BRAND. Share their stories, collaborate with on-brand groups, and actively support women, inside and outside of the organization.

2. Fine Tune Digital Marketing and Content Strategy

A majority of women are looking for information about cannabis online but feel they lack a trusted source - be that source. Consumers aren't just looking at a brand's website for strain information or THC potency, they need education and support. This is where consumer stories are essential, blogs should be a tapestry of product and use information, and pieces of interest/ opportunities for learning.

Hire a content strategist to work with your Communications and Marketing team to lay out a solid strategy for a newsletter, blog section, and social media execution. A consultant like myself can help plan and execute content and social media calendars. Proper content development can help transform a blog into a well-researched, educational, entertaining, and effective marketing tool.

3. Increase human element to social media feeds

BRAND's social engagement and growth rates are low, most recent posts have garnered around 10 likes each. A simple way to increase engagement on social media is to increase the storytelling component. REDACTED is a brand clearly for women but it lacks women's stories in social feeds. Increase posts about BRAND's mission and origins, as well as show more support for like-minded brands. Spend time liking, commenting, and sharing on-brand posts from peers. Women supporting women works both ways, currently on Instagram BRAND is following only 308 accounts. One quick and easy way to build your audience is to follow other accounts and amplify their voices. Find accounts to follow easily by looking at other cannabis professionals 'following' lists and select everyone who is on-brand for REDACTED.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Be ready to define 'women'

Politically correct ideologies aside, it is important for brands that are marketing to women to be ready to define what that means. When BRAND says 'all women' are they also using inclusive language that supports trans and non-binary individuals as well? This is a choice each brand must make for themselves, many avoid the conversation to avoid conflict. A proactive strategy can be beneficial, getting ahead of the conversation is excellent PR crisis management. There doesn't need to be a specific page or post dedicated to BRAND's definition of women. Simply keeping inclusivity in mind while creating content and digital marketing is enough to make Eve feel welcoming for all individuals who identify as women.

FINAL THOUGHTS

BRAND has solid core branding and all the key elements are there to be the top Canadian cannabis brand for women. In my professional opinion, the disconnect in your forward facing messaging is the lack of content development and digital marketing. It isn't enough to say your products are for women, a brand needs to actively and repeatedly show up for women.

I spoke with several female industry professionals in BRAND's target market and the resounding feedback I heard was that BRAND feels like a brand for women made by men. I believe that my social media and content recommendations are a solid step in repairing that misconception. BRAND needs to share consumer stories, showcase their female executives, and work diligently to promote and support women.

BRAND has some really exciting products about to hit the market, speaking with REDACTED about the upcoming launches had me genuinely excited about the brand. BRAND is sitting on a goldmine with infused beverages and bath products. Women also love pre-rolls and BRAND's are one of the best in the current market. Don't listen to any whispers that consumers aren't interested in these incredibly niche products. These products are mindfully tailored to women and will definitely make an impression on the female market.