

Cannabis in 2019

What cannabis trends are expected in 2019?

With the second wave of legalization coming in 2019, edibles and drinks are the next obvious trends in the cannabis marketplace.

Some are questioning if the market is ready for the demand of new products. Since legalization, the demand for cannabis products has been high in many provinces. Shipping for orders from the Ontario Cannabis Store (OCS) took longer than promised due to the volume of orders and retail locations in Quebec had to trim store hours due to stock shortages. Will adding more product hinder or help retailers to meet up with the demand, no one knows, but some companies have decided to get ahead of things this time.

Chuck Rifici, the chairman and CEO of Auxly Cannabis Group, said his 18-month-old company is jumping right into developing edible products. "We're focusing on everything from different types of edibles to ready-to-serve drinks and vape pens, all the types of products that one might find if they wander into an unlicensed dispensary today."

Some predict edibles and infused beverages may be even more in demand than traditional cannabis, as consumers may consider eating and drinking products, more socially acceptable than smoking them.

This "second wave" will give companies the chance to develop their brand, with the development of unique products, which has been an issue to date. Marketing and advertising for cannabis products must adhere to strict guidelines as set out by [Health Canada](#) and the [Cannabis Act](#) and it has been a challenge for companies to differentiate themselves in the marketplace while adhering to these guidelines. Many companies are seeing expansion in the form of edibles, from candy to chocolate to specialty beverages, as a way of standing out from the crowd.

Riffi says, "The average Canadian will be able to have a lot more brand differentiation because whether it's packaging or taste, there will be a lot more factors beyond just flower and bud."

The biggest surprise is well-known brands and big companies are also seeking to cash in on this flourishing industry.

Will Cannabis drinks be the next big marketing trend? What can we expect?

Molson and Coors have already signed on in a deal to make cannabis infused booze, and rumours have it that Coke is developing a soft drink that will be CBD infused.

Alcohol is already restricted in advertising and must follow regulations such as not appealing to minors, similar to that of cannabis. It will be interesting to see how an already restricted market is able to advertise under the Cannabis Act which has some argue, very strict advertising and marketing regulations of cannabis making it difficult to navigate. Strict fines for disregarding these rules have some companies nervous, and others getting creative in getting their products out.

Is Coke making a CBD drink?

There might not be a better marketed product on the planet than Coca Cola, so what will happen if they develop a CBD infused product? Will Coke follow through on their talks with Canadian based cannabis company, Aurora Cannabis to make a cannabis laced drink? And if they do how will they market it?

According to the [CBC, a report this morning from BNN Bloomberg](#), citing "multiple sources," says the Atlanta-based company is in "serious talks" with Edmonton's Aurora Cannabis Inc. to create a line of beverages containing cannabidiol (CBD), a non-buzzy chemical found in pot plants. The concoctions would be marketed as "wellness drinks," purporting to reduce inflammation and joint pain appealing to the medical marijuana market.

Why Coke might consider pot infused drinks

The CBC cited that "discussions, now confirmed by both companies, sent a jolt into Aurora's stock prices, with the company's shares trading up \$1.19 to \$9.73 on the TSX at the noon hour, and "it seems all but inevitable, however, that soft-drink makers are going to get into the booming pot market."

The same article on [CBC.ca](#) said, "Coca-Cola products still account for 40 per cent of the U.S. and 65 per cent of the global soft drink market. But its 2017 revenue of \$35.4 billion US was down almost 16 per cent from the year before, and the company's stock price has been lagging as investors seek out better growth opportunities. Last year, the company announced a turnaround plan, and a promise to become a "total beverage company" by introducing more low and non-sugar drinks and focusing on "emerging categories." CBD-infused drinks certainly fit that bill, with some analysts suggesting that market growth for the non-intoxicating compound will far outpace legal pot, hitting \$22 billion US by 2022."

How will Coke market CBD infused drinks?

Declining soft drink sales attributed to the public shying away from sugar and artificial sweeteners and seeking healthier beverage alternatives such as tea, coffee, and water have the industry giants looking for other sales alternatives. Coke has always been a market leader and part of this new strategy may be marketing the new CBD-infused drinks as a medicinal product, with health benefits for those with chronic pain, much like medical marijuana.

Ironic since this is how the original Coke which actually contained cocaine was marketed, as at the time cocaine was viewed as "medicinal." According to [factmyth.com](#), "Coca-Cola (Coke) had cocaine in it, in varying amounts, from 1886 – 1929. At the time cocaine was legal and treated as a medicine. From 1900 – 1929 opinion turned against cocaine, but Coke continued to use trace amounts of cocaine and "spent" coca leaves to maintain its flavor and trademark. Today Coca-Cola uses caffeine rather than cocaine."

Whatever happens it's certain that the emergence of CBD drinks is coming and marketers will have to keep up with the demand and restrictions of what is predicted to be another booming market.

2019 will continue to be an everchanging industry when it comes to cannabis and marketing. At [Kevllar](#), we handle all your digital marketing needs, keeping on top of regulations in the marketplace. Check out some of our services while you're here.