3 UNLIKELY INDUSTRIES CASHING IN ON CANNABIS

As weed goes mainstream, brands and products across the spectrum are tapping into the trend to reach young consumers. We’ve highlighted how three industries are getting unexpected weed makeovers...

Since we first wrote about the burgeoning “marijuanaconomy” a few years ago, the cannabis industry has exploded—and brands are taking the opportunity to ride the weed wave. Recreational marijuana is legal in nine states and Washington D.C., and medical marijuana is legal in 29 states. This year, more states are set to legalize adult-use as public support of the drug soars to record heights—over six in ten Americans now say the use of marijuana should be legalized, according to a Pew Research Center survey, a figure that increases to 70% among Millennials. Young consumers have been leading the charge in the mainstreaming of weed: 52% of the country's 55 million pot users are Millennials.

But we’re not just talking about the illegal stuff. CBD (the non-psychoactive compound in cannabis) and hemp have exploded as trendy ingredients that surprising industries are adding to their products to appeal to young consumers. While it may still be awhile before we see the political overhaul required for national legalization, that’s not stopping brands and products across the spectrum from jumping in on the hype—and targeting young consumers.

Beauty, food and beverage, and wellness are all getting a cannabis infusion with surprising new products and services. Find out which companies are innovating in their respective industries below, and get a glimpse of what’s next:

1. Beauty

Young consumers love a good miracle ingredient when it comes to beauty trends, which set the industry up perfectly for the next wellness phenomenon—cannabis. CBD oil is making its way into makeup, skincare, and even manicures. “Canna-Cures,” as they’re called, launched at Bellacures salons earlier this year, where they use CBD-infused products from Kush Queen for the “totally legal, marijuana-infused service.” Kush Queen is also capitalizing on the trend with bath bombs and lotions. Milk Makeup came out with a new infused mascara for “dope” lashes, and weren’t afraid to own the weed angle in their edgy marketing for the product (it even has a “puff puff brush” for "high" volume). Not to mention that KANA released a Lavender CBD Sleeping Mask to much fanfare and one entrepreneur is betting on cannabis cologne. But it’s not just beauty brands taking on the craze; companies that mainly sell cannabis like Charlotte’s Web and Papa & Barkley are jumping on the trend with balms and body oils.

2. Food & Beverage

These days, eating your weed is nothing like the homemade brownies of old. Edibles have been elevated to the foodie status Millennials are known for. In California, Colorado, Oregon, and even New York (where recreational weed is not yet legal), chefs and party planners are turning cannabis-infused meals into high-end dining experiences, complete with multiple courses, locally sourced ingredients, and design-centric settings. On the grab-and-go level, coffeeshops like NYC’s Swallow Cafe are offering infused lattes and small startups are crafting fancy...
edibles and infused sodas available at dispensaries across the U.S. In addition, the California wine industry is joining forces with the weed boom to pair the local industries together, and one winery is even making an alcohol-free weed vino. And as the beer industry worries about a sales slump in light of legal weed, some breweries—including such heavy-hitters like Blue Moon and Corona—are adding cannabis to their brews.

3. Wellness

While the claims behind medical marijuana’s effectiveness are still up for debate, that’s not stopping it from becoming a go-to ingredient for new health brands—particularly those targeted towards young women. In fact, as Jessica Assaf—known as The Cannabis Feminist—told Well+Good: “Some of the most innovative and revolutionary products for women’s health are coming out of the cannabis industry.” In addition to things like CAP Beauty’s recently launched oil-based dietary supplement made with CBD, cannabis is gaining ground in the arguably under-tapped market of feminine care and intimacy. Foria is making cannabis products meant to target sexual pleasure and PMS relief, Kikoko is making libido-specific cannabis-infused tea, and Whoopi Goldberg’s new venture, Whoopi & Maya, makes edibles, tinctures, topical rubs, and a THC-infused bath soak meant to relieve cramps.

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