

Mature Markets Welcome New Cannabis Brands, Say Executives

Colorado's Cannabis-Infused Gummies Market: Innovation, Growth, and the Role of Newcomers

Economists monitoring state-regulated marijuana markets have long anticipated industry consolidation, predicting that U.S. consumers would eventually encounter the same dominant brands across retail outlets. However, the experience of three Colorado-based companies specializing in cannabis-infused gummies demonstrates that there is still room for innovative newcomers in the nation's oldest adult-use marijuana market. These companies are not just competing with nationally recognized brands but are also driving innovation and expansion within the industry.

Ripple: Disrupting the Gummies Market with Low-Cost, High-Quality Products

Ripple, headquartered in Commerce City, Colorado, has been a notable disruptor in the cannabis gummies space. The company, which launched Ript Gummies in November 2022, has rapidly grown to become a major player. According to Missy Bradley, Ripple's Chief Revenue Officer, Ript Gummies account for over half of Ripple's business, with the company producing more than one million servings per month.

Ripple's journey has been one of constant adaptation and innovation. Initially entering the market with a low-THC tea in 2014, the company later pivoted to create Ripple, a water-soluble THC powder that gained significant traction. Expanding its product line to include Ripsticks (flavored powders), Riplets (cannabinoid-infused pills), and now Ript Gummies, Ripple has consistently responded to market demands.

Filling Market Gaps with Competitive Pricing

Ripple identified a significant gap in the market: affordable yet high-quality cannabis gummies. While many brands priced their products between \$15 and \$20 for a 10-gummy package, Ripple introduced Ript Gummies at just \$6 per pack. Bradley emphasized that the company prioritized efficiency in manufacturing to reduce costs, ensuring savings were passed directly to consumers.

"Ript was scrappy," Bradley said, explaining how the company initially used minimal packaging and a limited marketing budget to focus on the product itself. This strategy paid off, attracting cost-conscious consumers while maintaining product consistency and quality.

Dialed In: Revolutionizing Gummies with Solventless Rosin

Dialed In, another Colorado-based brand, entered the market in 2020 with a game-changing approach: solventless, rosin-infused gummies. This method, which uses no ethanol or butane in the extraction process, set Dialed In apart from competitors like Wana and Wyld. By focusing on small-batch, single-strain edibles, the company carved out a niche for itself in the premium segment of the market.

Under the leadership of Max Vansluys, Dialed In scaled its operations significantly, expanding from producing 6,000 units per week to 22,000. Its collaboration-based model allowed the company to partner with cultivators like Boulder's 14er, trading finished gummies for biomass in a mutually beneficial arrangement. This unique approach fostered brand loyalty while enabling the company to deliver more than 2,600 unique batches of gummies, each with its own distinctive strain and label design.

Flower Union: Reintroducing Cannabis Flavor to Edibles

Flower Union, Colorado's newest entrant into the cannabis gummies market, is challenging the status quo with its Whole Plant Activator-infused gummies. Unlike other gummies that focus on masking the flavor of cannabis, Flower Union's products embrace it. Visible flecks of bud and flavors reminiscent of the strain's terpene profile make their edibles stand out in a crowded market.

Founder Jon Spadafora, inspired by a conversation with Azuca CEO Kim Sanchez Rael, launched Flower Union in late 2024. By the year's end, the brand had established a presence in 15 retail outlets across Colorado, with stores consistently reordering larger quantities.

The Role of Consumer Education in Shaping Preferences

One of Flower Union's primary challenges has been educating consumers about its unique product. Spadafora noted that consumers were initially surprised by the gummies' cannabis-forward flavor, prompting the company to create branded marketing materials for budtenders to use during sales interactions. This effort has since eliminated confusion and reinforced the brand's identity.

Similarly, Dialed In's expansion into the Ohio market demonstrated the importance of consumer education. Vansluys emphasized that having a robust marketing budget and dedicated educational efforts were critical to ensuring a smooth entry into new markets.

Market Expansion Beyond Colorado

The success of these companies has encouraged them to explore opportunities beyond Colorado. Dialed In recently entered the Ohio market, introducing flavors and production techniques from Colorado while simplifying its offerings to accommodate local regulations. Meanwhile, Flower Union is preparing to launch in New Jersey, partnering with licensed cultivators and adapting to state-specific requirements, such as listing terpenes on product labels.

Innovation as a Catalyst for Growth in the Cannabis Market

The stories of Ripple, Dialed In, and Flower Union highlight the potential for innovation to thrive, even in mature cannabis markets like Colorado. Each company has identified a unique value proposition—whether it's affordability, premium-quality rosin, or embracing the natural flavor of cannabis—to differentiate itself from competitors.

As state-regulated marijuana markets continue to evolve, these Colorado-based companies serve as a testament to the opportunities available for entrepreneurs willing to take calculated risks, embrace consumer feedback, and prioritize quality. Despite predictions of market consolidation, their success underscores the enduring demand for diverse and innovative cannabis products.

Email: info@cannabisriskmanager.com | Phone: +855-507-2622

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