

Get Repeat Cannabis Customers with These Retail Tips

Interior Designer Kim Myles Reveals the Biggest Design Mistakes in Cannabis Retail and How to Fix Them

Cannabis retail is a booming industry, but it comes with significant challenges. Interior designer Kim Myles, host of the reality TV show *High Design*, saw this firsthand when she stepped into dispensaries across the country. By the time she visited many of these businesses, store owners were struggling—not just with taxes, fees, and zoning laws, but also with making their retail spaces competitive in an increasingly crowded market.

One of the biggest concerns Myles noticed? Surviving in areas where multiple dispensaries had opened in close proximity due to zoning laws.

But beyond business strategy, Myles believes that retail design plays a crucial role in whether cannabis dispensaries succeed or fail. In an exclusive interview, she shared her insights on the biggest design mistakes, trends shaping the industry, and how store owners can create spaces that keep customers coming back.

Many Cannabis Retailers Underestimate the Power of Good Interior Design, Leading to a Generic Customer Experience

Myles has seen a common trend in cannabis retail: many entrepreneurs think they can handle store design themselves. Since most dispensary owners are bootstrapping their businesses, interior design often falls to the bottom of the priority list.

But she warns that this approach leads to a poor customer experience. When a dispensary's design feels uninspired, it can drive customers away.

Instead of settling for a bland or cookie-cutter design, Myles urges dispensary owners to think about how they can create an atmosphere that sets them apart. The goal should be to offer something unique, whether that's a luxury boutique vibe, a cozy neighborhood feel, or a modern, tech-forward environment.

Cannabis Retail Design Trends in 2025: Personalization Over Cookie-Cutter Aesthetics

Myles has noticed a shift in cannabis retail design toward more hyper-personalized experiences. However, many dispensaries are still following a repetitive formula.

While these elements might create an aesthetically pleasing space, they don't necessarily make a store memorable. Myles predicts that the next big trend will be differentiation—dispensaries that develop a strong, unique brand identity will be the ones that thrive.

“In most places, brick-and-mortar is taking a much more hyper-personalized approach. Everybody has a vibe, and I think that’ll be the pendulum swing,” she added.

How Cannabis Dispensaries Can Overcome the Challenge of Product Display Restrictions and Engage Customers More Effectively

In many legal cannabis markets, regulations require products to be stored behind counters or under glass, making it difficult for customers to interact with them. Myles acknowledges this challenge but says smart design choices can help retailers create a more engaging shopping experience.

“The work being done in the field of branding around cannabis is off the chain, so the best owners realize that is something they can use,” she said.

She advises dispensary owners to think carefully about how their lighting and store layout can guide customer attention toward the most important products. Retailers should ask themselves:

What products do we want to highlight?

How can we create a natural flow that leads customers to those products?

Where can we place branding elements to reinforce our identity?

By making these strategic decisions, dispensaries can still create a compelling experience even if they’re limited in how they can display products.

Why Over-Reliance on Digital Menus Can Hurt Dispensary Sales and Customer Loyalty

Many dispensaries rely on digital menus to showcase their product offerings, but Myles argues that execution matters more than the technology itself.

Most digital menus are placed inside the dispensary rather than in the waiting area, which means customers are directed to look at a screen instead of engaging with staff.

Myles sees this as a missed opportunity. Instead of letting technology replace human interaction, dispensaries should use digital menus as a supplement to a strong customer service experience.

She pointed to Apple stores as an example. Even though Apple is full of screens, customers are constantly engaged by employees who guide them through the shopping process.

“That is a very focused approach when screens and screen engagement is going to be part of the protocol of the business,” she added.

The Top Design Concern Among Dispensary Staff: Finding Products Quickly and Efficiently

While dispensary owners worry about branding, staff members often have a different concern—organization.

“For staff in a lot of places, it was just not being able to find the product,” Myles noted.

Many dispensaries try to stock a huge variety of products to appeal to a wide range of customers, but this can backfire if employees struggle to locate inventory efficiently.

Retailers should consider investing in better storage systems, clear product categorization, and training staff on inventory management to streamline operations.

What Makes a Great Cannabis Consumption Lounge? It's All About Air Filtration and Ambiance

As more markets legalize on-site cannabis consumption, the demand for well-designed consumption lounges is growing. Myles says there are two key factors to getting it right:

A powerful but quiet air-filtration system – Without proper ventilation, lounges can quickly become unpleasant. Customers won't want to stay if the air quality is poor.

A strong, intentional atmosphere – Successful lounges will have a clear identity, whether it's a high-end lounge, a sports bar, or a cozy café-style setting.

Just like with bars and restaurants, people will be drawn to cannabis lounges that match their personal style and preferences.

The Best Time to Hire an Interior Designer for a Cannabis Retail Store Is Before Breaking Ground on a Major Renovation

For dispensary owners who want to ensure their space is both functional and aesthetically appealing, Myles advises hiring a designer at the right stage of the process.

“The right time to call me is once you have a plan, but before you've broken ground on any big renovation,” she said.

She encourages business owners to lock in their location, permits, and builder before bringing in a designer. At that point, she collaborates with architects to ensure the space is optimized for both customer experience and operational efficiency.

Cannabis Retailers Need to Prioritize Design to Stay Competitive in a Crowded Market

The cannabis retail landscape is evolving, and dispensaries that stand out will be the ones that invest in good design. From avoiding generic aesthetics to creating engaging in-store experiences, Myles's insights offer a roadmap for success.

By prioritizing unique branding, improving customer interactions, and designing inviting spaces, cannabis retailers can build loyal customer bases and thrive in an increasingly competitive industry.

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