

Cannabis Operators Prep for 4/20 With High Hopes

As 4/20 Approaches, Cannabis Operators Focus on ROI and Flawless Execution

Cannabis retailers and brands across the country are ramping up efforts to maximize returns during the industry's most important sales window: the days leading up to and including April 20. This period, often referred to as Weed Week, represents a critical opportunity for growth but comes with high stakes.

Retail management platform Sweed reported that in 2024, gross sales increased by 58% and units sold by 60% during this week compared to the previous one. However, those gains are often followed by steep declines, making performance on 4/20 essential.

MJBizDaily data shows a consistent drop in cannabis sales after 4/20 as consumers stockpile discounted products and promotions fade. This trend leaves little room for error, prompting retailers to treat 4/20 with the precision of a major product launch.

Widespread POS system failures in 2023 push operators to shore up digital infrastructure

In 2023, many cannabis stores experienced serious disruptions when point-of-sale provider Dutchie suffered outages across the U.S. and Canada. These failures impacted online menus and checkout processes at a time when stores were experiencing peak traffic, significantly affecting sales and operations.

Retailers impacted last year have since taken steps to strengthen their tech infrastructure. Some have migrated to dedicated servers and implemented standard operating procedures designed to maintain operations even if technical issues arise.

While Dutchie reported that less than 20% of its clients were affected, the impact on business was considerable. With over 2 million transactions processed on April 20 alone last year, the stakes for system reliability remain high.

New Cannabis Retailers Prep Early for Their First 4/20 Rush

Several new cannabis stores, including Sparkology in New Jersey and Hi! People Cannabis Market in Connecticut, are gearing up for their first 4/20. Preparation has involved weeks of staff training, operational adjustments, and digital infrastructure testing to ensure smooth performance.

Sparkology conducted a soft opening to gradually scale up operations, giving teams time to rightsize inventory and refine the in-store and online customer experience. The company also brought on experienced managers to help train employees and simulate high-traffic scenarios.

Hi! Cannabis increased product inventory weeks in advance, boosted cash reserves, and added an ATM to reduce dependency on POS systems during critical hours.

Veteran Operators Lean on Advanced Planning and Forecasting

Experienced businesses like Perfect Union and Cannabis & Glass began 4/20 planning as early as October. This head start allowed their teams to forecast demand by product category and brand, align purchase orders with vendor production schedules, and ensure seamless retail operations.

In Washington and Oregon, Cannabis & Glass refined its logistics, staffing, and inventory systems to avoid bottlenecks. The proximity of 4/20 to Easter Sunday this year made flexible planning even more important for operators juggling multiple priorities.

Retailers Expand Staff and Budgets to Meet 4/20 Demand Surge

To accommodate the increase in foot traffic, many cannabis operators have extended hours and significantly increased staffing. Illinois-based Ivy Hall expects over 20,000 visitors across its 10 stores and has adjusted schedules accordingly, offering overtime pay and staff perks to maintain morale.

Nationally, cannabis companies spent \$5.3 million on overtime during the first quarter of 2025—a 67% increase over the same period last year. Holiday scheduling, especially with 4/20 falling on Easter, has made workforce management even more critical.

4/20 Colliding with Easter Sunday Adds a Layer of Uncertainty

This year, April 20 lands on Easter Sunday, creating a new variable in cannabis retail planning. Unlike other holidays that complement cannabis shopping patterns, Easter may lead to store closures or limited hours, which could suppress same-day sales.

Historical data from analytics firms shows that in similar situations, consumers tend to shop earlier—particularly on the Friday before 4/20. Many retailers are anticipating this shift and planning major promotions and staffing schedules accordingly.

Post-4/20 Sales Slump Forces Retailers to Rethink Promotional Strategies

While sales typically peak during 4/20, they drop sharply in the following week. Sweed reported a 46% decline in gross sales and a 45% drop in units sold between April 22 and April 28 last year. Headset data also confirms a significant dip compared to the three weeks preceding 4/20.

To offset this, retailers are increasingly running weeklong promotional events rather than concentrating all discounts on a single day. However, this extended promotional period often results in higher operational costs and thinner profit margins, even if it helps smooth customer flow and inventory turnover.

The result is a demanding, high-output season for cannabis retailers that, while essential for brand awareness and loyalty, does not always translate into record profits.

Email: info@cannabisriskmanager.com | Phone: +415-226-4060

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