

Cannabis Brand Cookies Expands Into Alcohol Industry

Cannabis Brand Cookies Enters the Alcohol Industry with a Tequila-Based Ready-to-Drink Beverage

In a move that flips the recent trend of alcohol companies adding THC to beverages, cannabis lifestyle brand Cookies is moving in the opposite direction from cannabis to alcohol. The company has launched Adios, a tequila-based ready-to-drink (RTD) cocktail line, marking its first foray into the spirits sector.

While Cookies sees this as a way to extend its brand reach and showcase its cultural influence beyond cannabis, industry observers are divided on whether a marijuana brand's expansion into alcohol makes strategic sense.

A Strategic Brand Extension or a Risky Diversion from Core Business?

Cookies' marketing team describes the Adios launch as an opportunity to tap into a broader consumer base while staying true to the brand's identity. The beverage line will carry the company's iconic C-bite logo alongside subtle "Cookies" script, ensuring visual continuity for brand recognition.

"We see alcohol as an opportunity to flex our brand power," said Crystal Millican, head of marketing and retail at Cookies. "This gives us a broader reach, but we wanted to do it in a way that aligns with our values."

Critics, however, worry that the move could dilute the company's image as a premium cannabis provider. Some believe the shift into spirits risks distracting from Cookies' core mission of delivering top-tier cannabis products.

Riding the Wave of a Booming Ready-to-Drink Cocktail Market

The timing of Cookies' entry into the alcohol market aligns with robust growth in the global RTD cocktail sector. According to Grand View Research, the market was valued at \$3.21 billion in 2024 and is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15.4% from 2025 to 2030 as consumers increasingly favor convenience.

Tequila, the spirit at the heart of Adios, is also enjoying rapid market expansion. In 2023, the global tequila market was valued at \$10.53 billion and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 9.5%, reaching nearly \$19.73 billion by 2030.

Cookies founder Berner said the product's development was a long time coming. "Agave-based spirits like tequila and mezcal are my personal favorites," he explained. "They're also the fastest-growing category in the U.S."

Adios: Four Flavors with Premium Tequila and Real Fruit Juice

Crafted in partnership with Casa Rica, a Jalisco, Mexico based tequila producer, the Adios line is made with premium tequila and real fruit juice, emphasizing quality and authenticity. The four flavors — Lime, Spicy, Mango, and Strawberry — were chosen after collaborative tasting sessions and consumer feedback.

"One of our core values is to honor the plant," Millican said. "When stepping into this category, we looked for a partner who honors the agave plant the way we honor cannabis." Casa Rica's small-batch production, natural process, and zero additives aligned with Cookies' brand ethos.

Adios debuted on July 19 during the Manny Pacquiao vs. Mario Barrios fight at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, signaling a splashy entrance into the competitive spirits market.

Beyond Cannabis: Cookies' Expanding Lifestyle Empire

Cookies' venture into alcohol is the latest in a long line of brand expansions led by Berner, who has built Cookies into a global cultural brand. In addition to cannabis products, Cookies operates a clothing line, a cannabis-focused venture capital fund called 12/12 Ventures, and the Vibes rolling paper brand.

Millican said the Casa Rica partnership also honors Berner's Mexican American heritage and strengthens Cookies' cultural relevance. "With Cookies and with Berner, the ecosystem is just bigger than cannabis," she explained. "There's clothing, snacks, music — he's a serial entrepreneur."

From his early days as a budtender in San Francisco to his parallel career as a rapper, Berner's dual identity has shaped Cookies' unique brand presence. Today, Cookies operates more than 70 retail locations in multiple countries, with distribution channels capable of scaling new products quickly.

Cultural Insight Meets Craft Spirits Expertise

According to Adriana Rios, CEO of CKS Distro, which is distributing Adios, the partnership between Cookies and Casa Rica was a fusion of cultural vision and craftsmanship.

Cookies' ability to tap into cultural trends and blend them with high quality production methods could prove to be its competitive advantage in the crowded RTD market.

Skeptics Question the Move from Cannabis to Alcohol

Not everyone in the cannabis industry is convinced. Avis Bulbulyan, CEO of California-based cannabis consulting firm Siva, questioned whether branching into alcohol aligns with Cookies' identity.

"It's a money grab, it's an identity crisis," Bulbulyan said. "There's some cross-promotional opportunity, but it's more of a distraction than anything else."

He noted that several craft beer companies have taken the opposite route, launching hemp-derived THC beverages as a way to diversify in the face of declining alcohol sales.

Alcohol Market Faces Competition from No-Alcohol and THC Beverages

Cookies' alcohol launch comes at a time when the no-alcohol beverage market is also on the rise, projected to grow by 7% through 2028, according to IWSR, a global drinks market data provider. This growth is driven by younger consumers seeking healthier alternatives and novel beverage experiences.

Simultaneously, brewers and beverage companies are investing in hemp-derived THC drinks, capitalizing on regulatory openings and leveraging existing production lines. Jason Pickle of Volunteer Botanicals noted earlier this year that brewers can make THC beverages more quickly than beer, offering a faster path to market.

Will a Cannabis Brand Thrive in the Spirits Industry?

Whether Cookies' expansion into tequila-based cocktails becomes a blueprint for other cannabis brands or a cautionary tale remains to be seen. The brand has the cultural credibility, retail reach, and marketing savvy to succeed, but faces a competitive market where product quality, distribution, and authenticity will be tested.

If successful, Adios could create a new category of brand crossovers — cannabis companies leveraging their cultural footprint to enter mainstream consumer goods. If not, critics may point to this as a case of overextension.

Conclusion: A High-Profile Gamble with Cultural and Market Potential

The launch of Adios marks a bold step for Cookies, placing the cannabis giant in the middle of one of the fastest-growing alcohol categories. With tequila's popularity soaring and RTD cocktails booming, the timing may be right.

Still, success will depend on whether Cookies can convince both its loyal cannabis consumers and new alcohol buyers that its tequila cocktails are more than a brand stunt. As the lines between cannabis, alcohol, and lifestyle branding continue to blur, Cookies' latest move will be closely watched by both industries.

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

© Copyright 2025 Cannabis Risk Manager. All Rights Reserved