

How Cannabis E Commerce Is Normalizing Legal Cannabis Sales

Cannabis E-Commerce Brings the Industry One Step Closer to a Mainstream Shopping Experience

From Strain Reviews to Same Day Pickup, Cannabis Shopping Starts to Feel Familiar

Imagine reading a review of a new cannabis strain or infused beverage, clicking a link and placing an order for pickup at your local licensed store later that day.

That scenario routine in most retail sectors has long been out of reach for legal cannabis consumers. But it's now becoming reality for customers of licensed cannabis retailers participating in a new collaboration between legacy cannabis magazine High Times and Chicago-based cannabis intelligence platform Hoodie Analytics.

Through a Hoodie-powered cannabis e-commerce platform now integrated into High Times' digital ecosystem, readers nationwide can browse legal products, place orders and pick them up at licensed retailers in their area.

Sales must still be finalized in person at dispensaries, ensuring compliance with state regulations. But the experience closely mirrors the online-to-offline shopping flow consumers expect from everyday retailers.

"It's that seamless e-commerce that we've never seen before," said consultant Rebecca Maestas Sincere, who previously worked with Bud & Mary's, LivWell and Dixie.

For the \$32 billion legal cannabis industry, it represents another step toward normalization.

The 'Amazon of Marijuana' Vision Connects Brands Directly With Consumers

The platform addresses a longstanding frustration for both retailers and brands: how consumers discover cannabis products.

"They really see that the market is broken in the way that consumers find products," said Wes Shepherd, chairman and CEO of Hoodie Analytics.

While platforms such as Weedmaps already allow online cannabis ordering, the High Times–Hoodie collaboration adds a new layer. Readers can order products directly from links embedded in editorial content—something that appears to be a first for the industry.

"We're directing traffic to them while providing a great customer experience," said Matt Stang, a High Times partner who, alongside Raw rolling papers founder Josh Kesselman, acquired the iconic brand in June.

Hoodie's technology tracks more than 10,000 licensed retailers and 9 million product SKUs nationwide, all accessible through the e-commerce platform. Retailers can also enroll in Hoodie Connect, a free program offering enhanced exposure and order referrals through the High Times network.

Moving Cannabis Sales Beyond Discounts and Toward Storytelling

The collaboration aims to shift cannabis retail away from relentless price competition.

"The cannabis market has been heavily reliant on promotions and discounting to drive sales, which turns products into commodities," said Kris Walker, president of Hoodie Analytics.

"Our goal is to provide tools that help brands and retailers drive sales through storytelling and consumer engagement, rather than a race to the bottom."

By tying commerce directly to content, the platform allows consumers to learn about products in context how they're made, what they taste like and why they stand out—before committing to a purchase.

What Happens to Premium Cannabis Brands in an E-Commerce World?

While e-commerce offers convenience and visibility, some premium brands worry about losing the influence of in-store education.

"As a premium cannabis brand, e-commerce is not always the friendliest," said Max Vansluys, president of Dialed In Gummies, a brand under Austin, Texas-based Sun Theory that operates in five states.

"We're being put up against a much cheaper product."

Premium brands often rely on budtenders to help consumers understand quality differences.

"I'm really big on the budtender experience," Vansluys said. "When an e-commerce buyer comes in, it's transactional. There's not a moment where the budtender can change the consumer's mind."

Without guidance, consumers may default to price, which Vansluys said can be a negative for both shoppers and brands.

Still, he acknowledged benefits, especially for travelers. Consumers can find Dialed In products on the High Times platform and locate dispensaries carrying them in the states they visit.

Solving a Regional Problem in a Fragmented National Market

Cannabis remains a state by state business, and product availability varies widely.

"This helps consumers determine whether what they're reading about is actually available near them," said Chris Mapson, former LivWell and PharmaCann executive and now vice president of marketing at Cannatrol.

"Everything in cannabis is regional, it's not a national product," Mapson said. "This platform bridges that gap."

Cannabis Discounts Go Old School With a Print Media Expansion

Alongside its digital push, High Times is also investing in physical media.

Through a partnership with Cannapages, a Colorado-based cannabis coupon magazine, High Times will launch High Times Local, a city-by-city print edition debuting in Denver, Colorado Springs and Phoenix in March.

The bi-monthly publication will feature coupons, advertising and local content, with an initial print run of 30,000 copies in Denver. Planned expansion cities next year include Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Detroit.

“There’s something valuable about tangible print,” said Matt Hollingshead, vice president of strategy and growth at Cannapages. “People want something they can touch—something real.”

Stang said physical media is experiencing renewed interest, particularly among younger consumers.

“Look at music people are waiting months to buy physical albums,” he said. “There’s a desire for something that can’t be manipulated, something authentic.”

Cannabis E-Commerce Signals a Shift Toward Retail Normalcy

By merging trusted cannabis media, real-time retail data and compliant e-commerce, the High Times Hoodie collaboration reflects a broader industry evolution.

While challenges remain especially for premium brands that depend on in-store education, the model brings cannabis closer to the shopping experience consumers expect elsewhere.

For an industry long isolated from mainstream retail tools, that shift may prove transformative.

For more information contact at info@cannabisriskmanager.com

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

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