



**Convenience
Retailing
University**
by informa...

The **ONLY**
Conference Dedicated
to Convenience
Category Managers

Feb 24-26, 2026

Marriott Downtown Austin | Austin, TX

THC: Risk, Reward and the Road Ahead

Why the future of cannabis depends on how—and where—it's sold



Cannabis 101



Cannabis Basics

The plant species that both hemp and marijuana belong to.

Hemp

A form of cannabis known for lower amounts of THC and higher amounts of CBD.

Marijuana

A form of cannabis consumed as a psychoactive, known for higher amounts of THC.



The Main Cannabinoids

Cannabinoids are natural compounds found in the cannabis plant.

THC



THC is the part of cannabis that creates psychoactive effects.

CBD



CBD does not produce a "high" but has potential functional benefits.

Understanding Cannabis Formats



Inhaleables

Activation: Immediate

Delivery: Enters bloodstream

Duration: Peaks after 30 minutes, lasts 1-2 hours



Drink-Ables

Activation: 10-30 minutes

Delivery: Enters bloodstream

Duration: Peaks after 30-90 minutes, lasts 1-2 hours

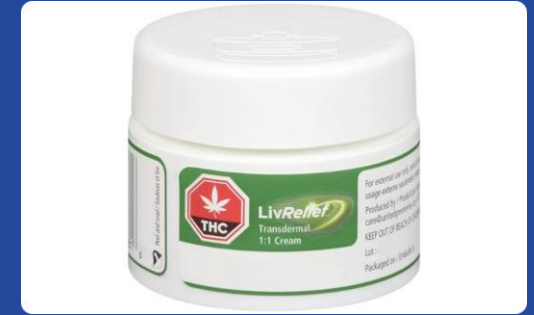


Edibles

Activation: Up to 2 hours

Delivery: Enters bloodstream

Duration: Peaks after 2-4 hours, lasts 4-12 hours



Topicals

Activation: 60-90 minutes

Delivery: Does NOT enter bloodstream (no "high")

Duration: 1-3 hours

Dosing 101: It's Complicated!

Cannabis affects different people differently depending on multiple factors:



Product Format



Cannabinoids



Your Experience/Tolerance



Your Body



Your Mood

General Dosing Guide for THC

1

2-3mg: “Micro” Dose

New consumers start here!
Should feel a lift in mood or
very mild effects.

2

5mg: “Standard” Dose

Should feel a noticeable
relaxation and gentle
euphoria.

3

10mg: “Experienced” Dose

Should feel a deeper
relaxation and/or bliss.

4

15-30mg: “Strong” Dose

Even experienced consumers
should feel a strong euphoria
and heightened sensory
experiences.

5

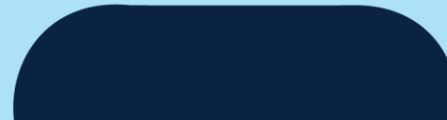
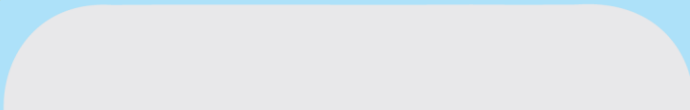
30mg+: “Dispensary” Dose

For high tolerance consumers only.

Remember: Start low and go slow as you determine your tolerance!



The Risks (aka regulations)



Cannabis Regs: How We Got Here

1937

The Marihuana Tax Act effectively bans cannabis federally (struck down in 1969)

1970

The Controlled Substances Act classifies cannabis (including hemp) as a Schedule I drug

1996

California legalizes medical marijuana

2012

Colorado and Washington legalize recreational marijuana

2025

24 states (and DC) have legalized recreational marijuana and 40 states (and DC) have legalized medical marijuana - DEA in the process of rescheduling to Schedule III



Hemp Regs: How We Got Here

1

2018: The Farm Bill

Removed hemp from the Controlled Substances Act and defined hemp as cannabis with less than 0.3% THC.

2

2022: Minnesota Leads

The first state to regulate hemp-THC products...

3

2026: Widespread Adoption

To date, over 28 states have passed some form of hemp-THC laws via legislation or executive orders...

Common Themes in State Hemp Regulations

Outright Bans

Or limiting sales to dispensaries

Dosage Caps

That heavily restrict the category

Channel-Or-Form Bans

*Mostly limiting to 21+ locations,
no on-premise and/or allowing just beverages*

Pro-Hemp Regulations

*5-30mg cap, allowing numerous retail outlets
to participate, taxing and age-restricting of
products*

📌 **NOTE:** States that have NOT passed laws since the 2018 Farm Bill are considered "open" until 11/12/26



FEDERAL UPDATE

What the Spending Bill Language DOES Do:

- Eliminate 95% of the consumable hemp market (including CBD)—THC and intoxicating cannabinoids capped at 0.4mg.
- Completely ban synthetic cannabinoids (ie Delta-8)
- Supersede state laws

What the Spending Bill DOES NOT Do:

- Go into effect until November 12, 2026
- Ban hemp-THC entirely
- Restrict hemp sales to specific channels



Griffith Bill

5mg THC
Per-Serving Limit

30mg THC
Per-Container Limit

Extension Proposals

Current Ban Date
November 12, 2026



**Proposed
Extension**
November 12, 2028



Convenience Has Experience With Bans

California's Menthol Ban:

- Pre-ban **24.5%** of cigarette sales were menthol
- Post-ban **21%** of cigarettes packs found were menthol

Flavored Vapor Ban:

- FDA enacted ban in 2020
- In 2025, **70%+** of vapor sales were illegal flavors

Unenforceable bans punish responsible players AND harm public health!

How Retailers Can Help

1. **Contact Your Associations:** *Ask what they're doing about federal and state hemp regs.*
2. **Leverage Your Relationships:** *If you have established relationships with your Senate and Congressional representatives, ask for a meeting to discuss how bans impact small businesses like yours.*
3. **Make Strategic Investments:** *Examples include:*
 1. Join a hemp association
 2. Attend fundraising events for champions/potential champions
 3. Volunteer to attend strategic legislator meetings—retail voices matter!

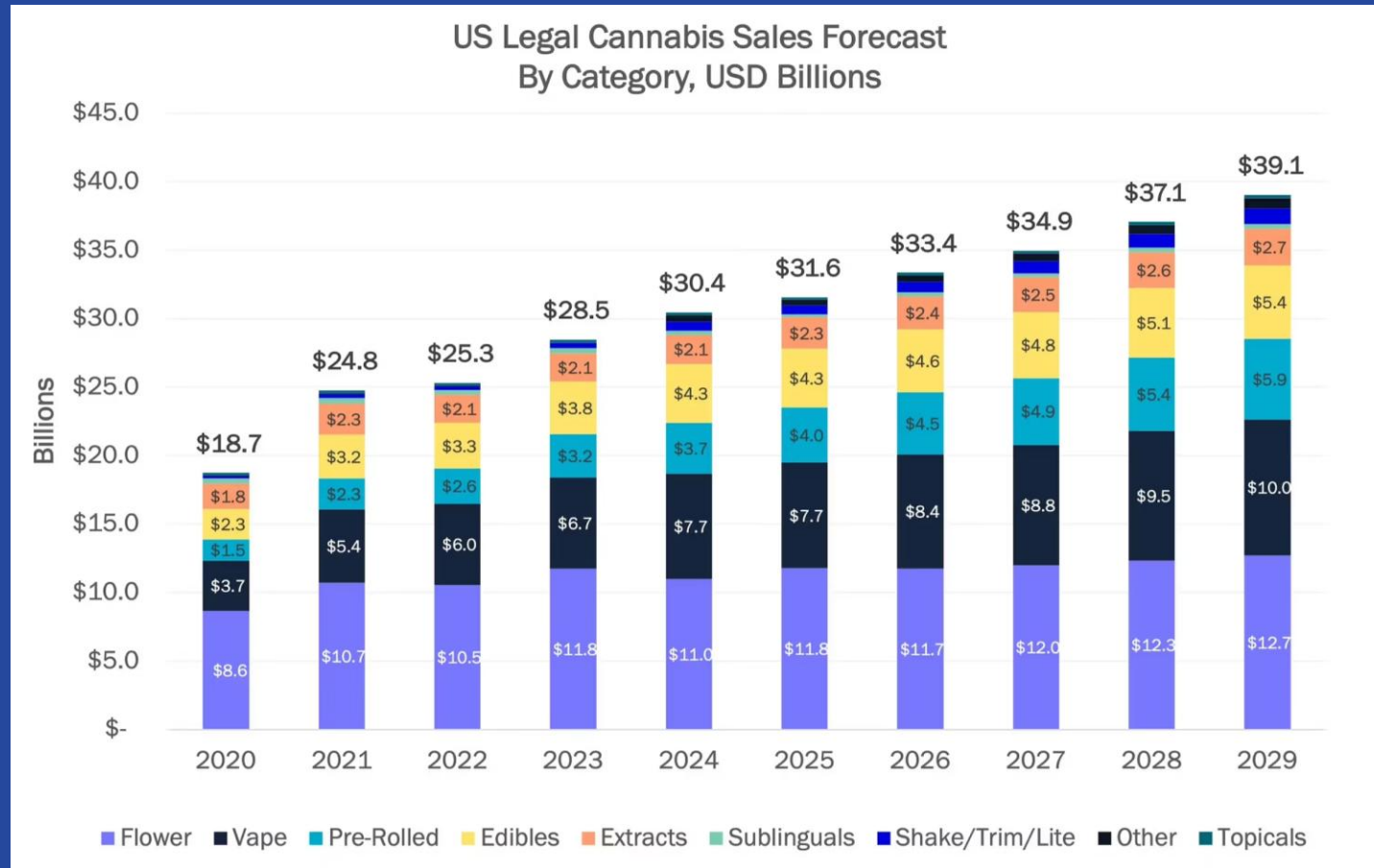
Sign up for the CSP C-Store Cannabis Forum E-Newsletter to be alerted to further advocacy opportunities!



The Rewards and Road Ahead



The Data: Cannabis at Large



2025 Market Size: \$31.6b

Exceeding the \$23.9-\$27.4 billion energy drink category

2029 Market Projection: \$40b

Approaching the \$44 billion salty snacks category

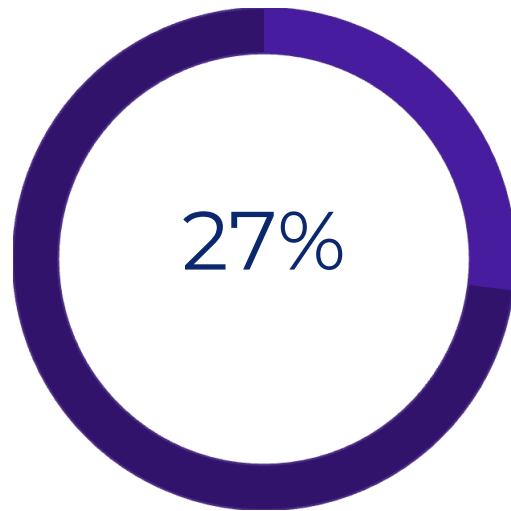
The Data: Hemp Market

Much of the hemp market operates outside traditional retail tracking, making it more difficult to quantify.

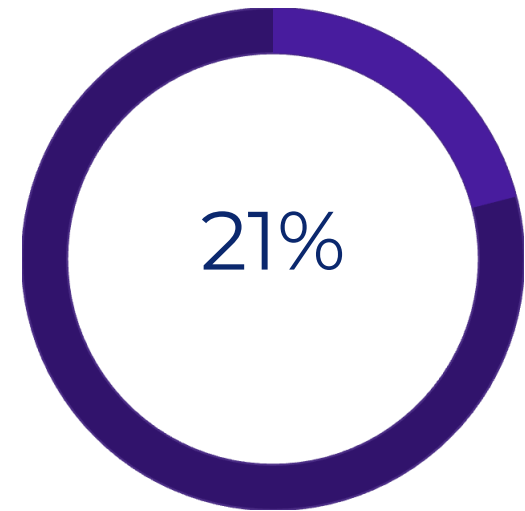
Market Scale

\$21.8 billion intoxicating hemp sales in 2025

This surpasses the combined sales of smokeless tobacco, vapor products, and cigars



Edibles
Market Share



Beverages
Market Share

The Sales Data Only Scratches the Surface...

30%

**THC Bev Shoppers are
NEW to Store**
at Total Wine

15%

2024 Sales were THC
at Top Ten Liquor

30%

Food Sales Increase
at Minnesota bars and
restaurants
for THC bev tables

50%+

U.S. Beer Wholesalers
are now carrying THC
beverages

Bump Williams Consulting Adult Consumer Study:

80%

Anticipate Cannabis
Replacing Alcohol in Some Occasions

55.5%

Were Interested in Trying
THC Beverages or Had
Tried THC Beverages

46.3%

Predict They'll
INCREASE
THC Consumption

**This was across ALL ages
and ALL genders**

Wide Market Potential vs. CPG

1

Alcohol

One Format: Beverage

One Use: Intoxication

2

Nicotine

Two-ish Formats: Inhaleables, oral

One Use: Nicotine

3

Cannabis

Multiple Formats: Beverage, Edibles, Inhaleables, Topicals

Many Uses: Intoxication, Functional, Pharma



The Intersection of Convenience and Cannabis

Why our channel may hold the key to unlocking the true potential of cannabis.

We Are EVERYWHERE and Thrive on IMPULSE

65%

Of shoppers make unplanned purchases based on “craving or desire”

86%

Of Americans live within 10 minutes of a convenience store

1.1K

Customers served daily at stores with fuel service

FUN FACT: There are 3x as many c-stores as there are grocery or liquor stores.

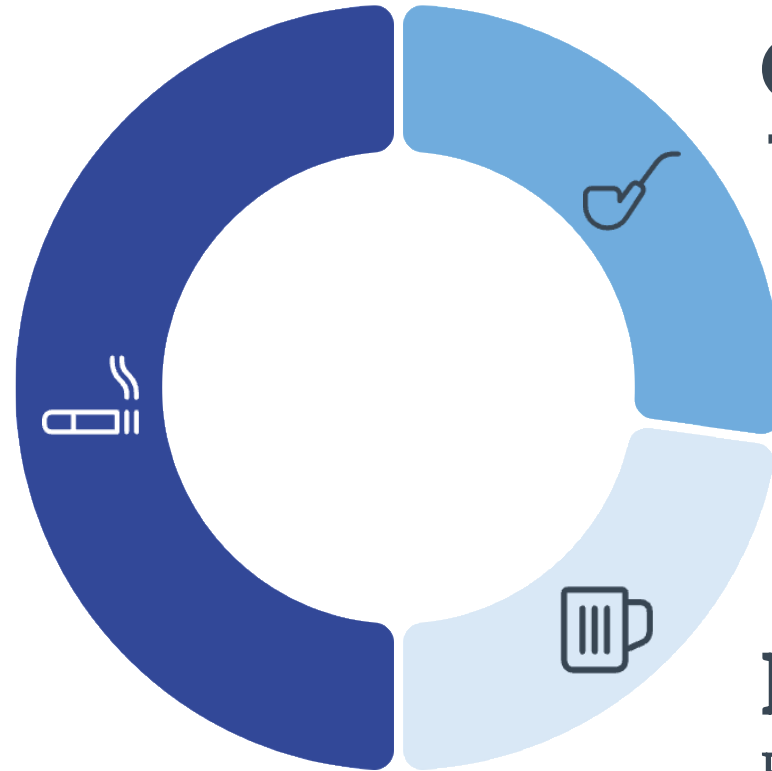


We Are Where People Buy Age-Restricted Products

CIGARETTES

Top driver of in-store sales

C-stores account for 80%+ of all U.S. cigarette sales



OTP

Third-highest driver of in-store sales

BEER

Fourth-highest driver of in-store sales

C-stores account for 43.3% of all U.S. alcoholic beverage sales

Trial-Friendly SKUS Dominate Our Stores

- ✓ 57% of c-store beer sales are singles
- \$ Nearly half of beer singles shoppers make DAILY purchases



So What's Next?

Two Paths: Our Market...Or Black Market



How Retailers Can Help

1. **Contact Your Associations:** *Ask what they're doing about federal and state hemp regs.*
2. **Leverage Your Relationships:** *If you have established relationships with your Senate and Congressional representatives, ask for a meeting to discuss how bans impact small businesses like yours.*
3. **Make Strategic Investments:** *Examples include:*
 1. Join a supporting association
 2. Attend fundraising events for champions/potential champions
 3. Volunteer to attend strategic legislator meetings—retail voices matter!

Sign up for the CSP C-Store Cannabis Forum E-Newsletter to be alerted to further advocacy opportunities!

Actionable Insights

1. The current Federal language will send ALL hemp-THC consumables to the black market—THC represents a huge opportunity for convenience, We have 8-ish months to try and save it.
2. The potential of THC products is getting too big to ignore—even if you're not in it now, consider how this will impact your business.
3. The convenience channel is uniquely positioned to benefit from THC *and* to advocate for it due to our experience with bans—educate yourself and your team on how you can best participate in this category today and in the future.

Want to Learn More?



<https://informaconnect.com/c-store-cannabis-forum/>
Michael.Marino@informa.com

Contact Me

Name: Melissa Vonder Haar

Title: Managing Director/CSP C-Store Cannabis Board Chair

Company: TradeWorks from iSEE Store Innovations

Email: melissa@iseetradeworks.com

Other Resources:

Coalition for Adult Beverage Alternatives:

<https://adultbeveragealternatives.org/>

U.S. Hemp Authority

<https://ushempauthority.org/>





**Convenience
Retailing
University**
by informa...