

# SMOKE & VAPE

## BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

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# CBD

*Vape Pods*



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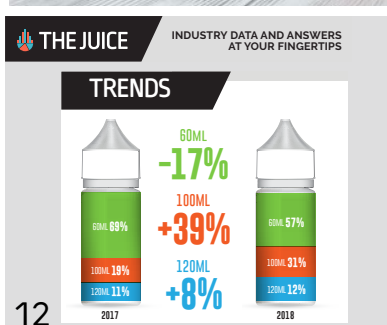
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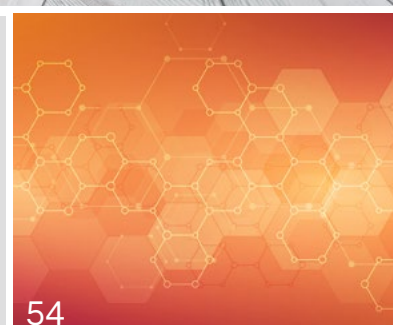
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# SMOKE & VAPE

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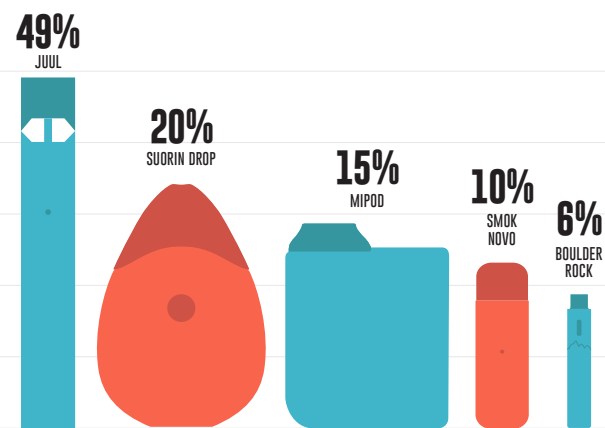
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### TOP 5 MOST POPULAR POD SYSTEMS

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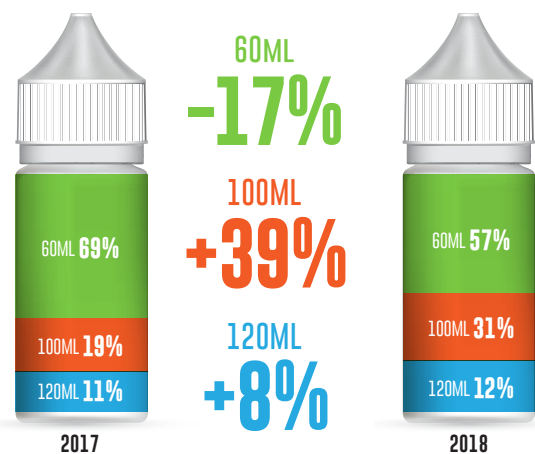


Data is based on wholesale purchases of pod replacement cartridges over the last 90 days. Juul is dominating the pod system sales with 49% of sales.

Suorin drop has grown in popularity and has taken the second position with 20% of total sales. The most notable appearance is the Smok Novo. Based on total unit sales, the Novo has grown in popularity over the last few months. If you're wondering which pod replacement cartridges to stock in your shop, we recommend using this infographic as a reference.

### BOTTLE SIZE TRENDS: 2017 VS 2018

#### TRENDS



Data is based on 2017 and 2018 annual unit sales by E-liquid bottle size. During this period there has been an interesting decline in 60ml sales with 12% sales in 2018. The decline in wholesale 60ml bottle sales may be due to the significant increase in the, recently created, 100ml size option. The wholesale purchasing move to 100mls has been a notable and popular trend. This data should help store owners better understand vaping consumer preferences and trends as it relates to E-liquid bottle sizes.

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#### ASK THE EXPERT

##### Q: Which products should I always have in stock?

A: Coils and replacement pods. Store owners will often find their coils inventory at low levels or out of stock before they even have a chance to reorder because, unlike E-liquid preferences, coils are more universal to your customer's tank or device. In addition, coils have a high consumption rate based on the ingredients found in E-liquid (and probably by design from the manufacturers). They also make an ideal upsell item as your customers will appreciate the uninhibited flavor of the E-liquid that you just sold them as well as not being out of coils when they need them. Make sure to have plenty of stock of coils and replacement pods that are in line with the most popular devices on the market or in your local area. Customers will often come in to your store just to pick up a pack or coils or replacement pods. Make sure you don't lose these sales because you are out of stock of these items!

##### Q: Should I carry Salt Nic products?

A: Salt nicotine, which typically contain higher levels of nicotine, are increasing in popularity. So, it wouldn't hurt to stock a few of the more popular flavors in your shop. You may want to consider carrying the salt nic version of some of your best selling freebase flavors. One thing you should consider about salt nics, especially if this is your first time carrying them, is that they tend to be consumed over a much longer period of time. So, you may see a reduction in purchase frequency from these customers. As with most products, it is recommended that you have the appropriate selection of inventory available based on the preferences of your customer base, the trends in your area, and the vaping industry as a whole. After all, the goal is to make a sale and satisfy your customers. One key ingredient to this goal is to have the right products available at the right time.

##### Q: I keep hearing the term 'dropshipping'. What is it and how can I benefit from it?

A: Dropshipping is the ecommerce method of consolidating inventory from many different vendors into one site. When an order is placed for products the order is sent to the vendors for fulfillment and shipment directly to the customer from the vendor's shipping location. The most common example would be Amazon who hosts thousands of products and only carries a small percentage of them in their own warehouses. This allows wholesale customers to purchase all of the juice they want in their shop from one source instead of having to place and track separate orders with each individual vendor. It also means that all shipment tracking will be handled by one company. Dropshipping allows a much larger inventory to remain available to customers without the seller having to carry an immense amount of inventory in one place.



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# INDUSTRY ALERTS



## BLU LAUNCHES “PLEDGE WORLD” CAMPAIGN TO HELP ADULT SMOKERS AND VAPERS EMBARK ON LIFE-CHANGING JOURNEYS

*Campaign Empowers Real Adult Consumers to Own Their Choices and Seek Something Better*



Charlotte NC — blu, a leader in the electronic cigarette industry and trusted consumer choice, launched a new global campaign, “Pledge World,” which seeks to fulfill the dreams of real consumers as they embark on a potentially life-changing journey - whether it’s overcoming a fear, chasing a dream, or achieving a longtime

goal. Born from the desire to help adults have the confidence to own their choices for a more positive life, blu invites adult smokers and vapers over the age of 21 to make their pledge via Pledge World for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make their ambitions a reality.

“For ten years, blu’s mission has always been about giving adult smokers the confidence to choose what works for them, which has resulted in millions of people enjoying our products,” said Greg Moser, VP of Marketing at original vapor brand, blu. “We know that making changes in life can end up taking you on a wild ride full of ups and downs before you get to the place where you really feel the benefit. This is the same journey smokers take when they choose to transition to vaping and blu, which is why we’ve launched Pledge World to share genuine stories that showcase how people have chosen to make a change. Whether it’s learning a new language, conquering a fear of heights, or making that promise to progress from cigarettes to vaping, we want to be part of the adult consumer’s journey to making a positive life change. We want to help them own it.”

A team of Pledge World Panelists comprised of cultural adventurers, lifestyle philosophers, and thrill-seekers will assess pledges against the contest criteria to help select winning consumer pledges. Panelists will also embark on a thrilling journey, making pledges of their own. The panel includes Professional Surfer Anastasia Ashley, Reality TV personality and Cosmetic Company owner Corinne Olympios, Cover Model and Tattoo artist Jessica Wilde, Teacher and Model Josh Mario John.

blu will be accepting entries on Pledge World now through March 2019 and will help make life-affirming, and potentially life-changing, experiences a reality for 30 adult smokers and vapers. Winners, who will get the chance to take on a personal challenge that could change their lives for good, will be announced every 2 weeks. During this time, blu will also be taking Pledge World on the road with live experiences, where adult smokers and vapers can make pledges, and, for the really brave, there are opportunities to do some challenges right on the spot. This road show will visit Miami, Nashville, New Orleans, and Austin.

### About blu

Designed for smokers, by smokers, blu has been a trusted leader of adult consumer satisfaction since launching in 2009 – long before ‘vaping’ was a word in the Oxford dictionary. blu’s top priority and mission continues to be exceeding the needs of adult smokers with high quality vapor products and e-liquid flavors. blu is available online and in stores across the four largest vapor markets worldwide, including the USA, UK, France, and Italy. The brand is owned by Fontem Ventures, a subsidiary of the Imperial Brands Group, with international headquarters in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and Charlotte, North Carolina. To discover blu and experience blu satisfaction, visit their website at [www.blu.com/en/US](http://www.blu.com/en/US).

For more information on Pledge World or to make your own pledge, visit [www.Pledge.World](http://www.Pledge.World). For more on blu, visit their website at [www.blu.com](http://www.blu.com).

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# MARKETING LIKE THE BIG BOYS

THE TOP MARKETING TRENDS THAT ANY SMALL BUSINESS CAN DO

BY BRANDON DORFMAN

What does your smoke or vape shop's marketing strategy look like for the next year? Has your marketing team begun to integrate the latest emerging technologies and trends into your plan? Do you even have a marketing team (don't fret if you don't)? What worked last year is yesterday's victory, and will not guarantee your shop today's customers. You need a marketing strategy set up for the long-term, one that is sustainable.

Even when it comes to small shops and businesses, marketing is trending more and more digital and will continue to do so over the next few years. Your everyday customers want quality service in new and innovative ways, through the use of visual content and cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Intelligence. And while that may sound like a tall order, it's actually quite simple, even for the smallest of businesses.

"Small business owners think that their options are limited," says Adam Mizrahi, founder, and CEO of Creative Propulsion Labs, full-service marketing solutions firm in Miami, Florida. "The truth is, your small business can go beyond the typical — there's more out there than just Facebook and email."

So, is your small business prepared for some of these new trends? Well, you may be more prepared than you think.

Below we will discuss everything your business needs to know to survive, and thrive in the age of small business marketing over the next year and beyond. So, put away those direct mailers because here are the top small business marketing trends for 2019, all of which are easier than you think:

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

We've written about this before, but in 2019, customer experience, or CX, is no longer just the purview of large conglomerates like Amazon and Google. Increased competition everywhere, from online to local brick and mortar shops means your company needs to build a sustainable CX to stay competitive. More importantly, your CX needs the right digital platform to engage your audience.

"Customers want a place where they feel welcome," says Mizrahi. "The retail experience is no longer transactional, it's functional. Customers want to feel welcome, and what's familiar makes them feel welcome."

Businesses today are transforming from simple supply-chain managers to productivity providers — and this goes for small businesses as well. They offer up digital platforms that furnish advice and support, forging partnerships that take a holistic view of the old retail model.

## CONTENT IS KING

Here is something for you to consider, content marketing is a significant cost saving over traditional marketing, and it brings in three times as many leads, according to statistics over at DemandMetric. And the market for it will only grow

more prominent in 2019. Believe it or not, even your small business needs a quality pipeline of content combined with a well-planned SEO strategy.

"Start a blog," says Mizrahi. "Starting a blog is one of the easiest ways to keep your customers engaged with content. You don't have to post every day, but every few days, or at least once a week to start. These days publishing platforms make posting a blog simple, and the return on investment is beyond what you could imagine."

For those of you that are daring, you may want to go beyond just text. While great writing helps, customers want interactive formats that are media-based, like video. Remember, you are selling to a mobile generation. Over ninety-three percent of marketers use content marketing, which means if you are not in that group, you are not competing.

## CUSTOMER SEGMENTATION

In the digital landscape, content alone is not enough. Your marketing strategy needs to serve up the right content to the right customers, and you need to do it in a timely fashion. In 2019 it is imperative that you use marketing automation to segment your customer base; the more data, the better.

"Again, this is not a complicated process, even for small businesses," says Mizrahi. "If you're having a sale on vape products, you don't want to waste resources notifying all of your cigar purchasers, for example. This is why even small businesses need to segment their customer base. A targeted marketing campaign will do wonders for both your budget and your revenue."

For your strategy to work, you need to send targeted messages to the correct customer segment. Gone also are the days of reams and reams of useless data. Today's small businesses need to use real-time data analytics to be one step ahead of the competition. You need to pay attention to the analytics provided by Facebook and other services. The data means something and can be useful.

## A.I. (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

One of 2019's sizeable innovations will be A.I. or artificial intelligence. It is one of the top ways you can sift through all of that data that you are going to collect this year. Using chatbots for your sales and services will help your business grow one step ahead of your competition. IoT devices can help provide user insights, and virtual reality devices are changing the user experience.

"These may sound complicated and out there for the local vape shop," says Mizrahi, "and for many small businesses

that may be true. But if you have plans to grow your business in 2019, then you'll want to look into the latest in A.I. It's the fastest and easiest way to streamline — well everything!"

## FACEBOOK AND LINKEDIN

In many ways, social media in 2018 is a case of "what goes around comes around," or "the old becoming new again." Facebook Ads have upped their targeting capabilities at a very affordable cost for your business. Meanwhile, LinkedIn is about so much more than Inmail ads that no one reads. New algorithms that target the right customers have turned this stale networking site into a customer engagement paradise.

"As much as the new shiny toys will help your small business get to the next level, it's still the basics that got you there," says Mizrahi. "Facebook and LinkedIn work. Instagram is great. These are tried and true mediums, so use them."

## INNOVATION IS KEY

Successful small businesses take risks. You will need to step out of your comfort zone and begin to embrace new technologies as well as new strategies. Resist the urge to say, "but that's how we've always done things." Doing so could be the death of your business.

"What's most important is that you don't let your business strategy get stale," says Mizrahi. "And don't be afraid to try new things. Just because you run a small business or local shop doesn't mean some of the latest trends and technologies don't apply to you."

The possibilities to reshape your business in 2019 are plenty. Other things your team will want to explore include:

## LIVE STREAMING

forget about webinars and online open house events

## VISUAL CONTENT

infographics and other content made for mobile

## PODCASTS

they have been around forever, but are emerging in the marketing field

## ACCOUNT BASED MARKETING

target high profile accounts and cut through the noise

## SEO

the rules are changing, make sure you keep up

Marketing in 2019 means throwing out everything you learned last year. Your business needs to embrace change and be ready to disrupt — or else face being disrupted. **SVBS**

Brandon A. Dorfman is the Senior Writer/ Project Manager for Creative Propulsion Labs, a Miami-based marketing firm that provides comprehensive solutions in web, print, and digital marketing. Their services include user interface design, application design and development, web design, branding, corporate design services, digital advertising, social media marketing, content development, SEO, affiliate marketing, conversion optimization, and more. You can reach Creative Propulsion Labs at (786) 360-1669 or via email at [info@creativepl.com](mailto:info@creativepl.com). Or you can visit [www.creativepl.com](http://www.creativepl.com) for more information.



# THE CBD CRACKDOWN

BY JOSHUA WARIHAY



## Feb 5<sup>th</sup> - New York, NY

City officials ordered restaurants to stop adding CBD to its food products. Stores have already had their CBD consumables embargoed, and more restrictions are yet to come. A DOH Spokesperson told Inverse "Restaurants in New York City are not permitted to add anything to food or drink that is not approved as safe to eat,". While unlabeled CBD food products were targeted first, it appears they'll be going after CBD edibles whether they contain a nutritional label or not.<sup>1</sup>

## Feb 11<sup>th</sup> - Boise, ID

Court hearings ensue over 7,000 pounds of industrial hemp seized by the Idaho State Police. The shipment was on its way to Colorado when it ran into issues. Even though industrial hemp is legal at a federal level, state laws are making things confusing even for lawmakers. Idaho has some of the strictest CBD regulations making it virtually impossible to possess or sell CBD in the state.<sup>2</sup>

## Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> - Sarasota, FL

The Sarasota State Police Department puts a temporary hold on it's efforts to crack down on CBD. The hold is only in place until the Police Chief signs off on the cease and desist letter that will be issued to CBD retailers. In response to public complaints about consumers getting sick after consuming CBD products, efforts have begun to restrict sales in this area to licensed dispensaries.<sup>3</sup>

## March 4<sup>th</sup> - Columbus, OH

Highway patrol seizes \$165,000 in CBD oil being transported in a U-Haul truck. It's unclear the exact reason the cannabidiol was seized.<sup>4</sup>

What does this mean for the future of CBD?

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I want to make this abundantly clear that I am no expert in law, let alone the laws surrounding controlled substances. The information in this article should not be considered legal advice, only observations based on industry experience.

With the passing of the Farm Bill many CBD advocates exhaled a huge breath of relief, but the abatement didn't last long. With all the legal advances in the cannabis industry over the last few years these most recent crackdowns have people more worried than ever... but how bad is it? If we look back to before the farm bill passed, you won't notice too much of a difference.

State and federal agencies were still seizing shipments of CBD products at a relatively similar pace before the Farm Bill passed, but it was much less surprising since the legality of these products differed from state to state and were blurred into a grey area. The passing of the farm bill should have cleared a few of these issues up but has only made it more complicated. People are transporting CBD products or industrial hemp assuming, rightly so, that the federal government has their backs and supports their efforts. What people fail to realize is state laws have been much slower to change, and CBD is still illegal in certain states. For example, the Idaho incident where 7,000 pounds of industrial hemp was seized.

Even though the hemp was bound for Colorado, where CBD is legal at a state level, Idaho has much more strict regulations. While generally anything under 0.3% THC is legal, Idaho recognizes anything above 0.00% THC as a controlled substance. Not only that but it must have been cultivated from a plant not defined as "marijuana" under Idaho code 37-2701(t), which in short declares about 95% or more of CBD products as a controlled substance as far as we can tell.

With these new laws in place many people see the same dilemma; can you transport a federally legal substance across state lines where the product is illegal? Well, in the past the answer has been yes. Think about the 21st amendment and how it affects prohibition. Even in dry counties where hard liquor or even beer consumption is illegal, you'll notice distilleries and liquor manufacturers that set up shop knowing their product can never legally be consumed in

that area. Now the 21st amendment was specific to intoxicating liquors but it's a good example of how our government would deal with cannabis in a dream world.

#### Where do we go from here?

To be completely honest the biggest hurdle we have to overcome is time. States like Idaho need to come up with new legislation in response to the Farm Bill to clearly define its relationship with hemp in the future. There are a few things you should be thinking about yourself if you're selling CBD.

Get politically active. Find out what the laws are in your state regarding CBD, and if they aren't favorable talk with your lawmakers and politicians to see what can be done. Make groups or movements to push for CBD laws on your next ballot.

Only carry legitimate products. Be careful of generic, non-tested CBD that could contain above the required legal threshold and turn possession or sales into a felony. We as sellers of CBD can certainly help set a standard and prevent a lot of what the FDA and DOH are worried about.

Don't make unsubstantiated claims. The FDA has only evaluated one CBD pharmaceutical and that's Epidiolex. It's used, quite successfully, for the treatment of seizures. It's also being prescribed for off-label use which is the practice of doctors prescribing drugs to treat conditions outside of the ones it is approved for. This practice is legal and common, but you cannot market CBD for any purpose outside of what the federal government has approved. **SVBS**

#### Editorial Notes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.inverse.com/article/53053-wait-so-is-cannabidiol-legal-or-not>

<sup>2</sup> <https://idahonews.com/news/local/cbd-supplier-asks-judge-to-let-hemp-shipment-proceed>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20190223/cbd-crackdown-by-sarasota-police-delayed>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.wowktv.com/news/ohio/police-seize-165k-worth-of-cbd-oil-during-ohio-traffic-stop/1825646034>

Joshua Warihay started with Vapor Outlet in 2015 before the company merged with Windship Trading. In his first year he sold half a million dollars in product working part time as a sales representative. He now heads up the marketing department as Windship's Marketing Manager and looks forward to using his position to set a new standard in the industry. For inquiries please email [Josh@windshiptrading.com](mailto:Josh@windshiptrading.com) or call 512-216-6281 x306.

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# WHITE HORSE VAPOR

## VAPOR SHOP SUCCESS STORY

**At White Horse Vapor, they know just how difficult the journey from smoke to vapor can be. Over the years, the shop has been walking customers through this process with a primary goal of providing the absolute best vaping experience. It doesn't matter which location you visit; your experience will be the same. You will be treated with the upmost respect while shopping for quality products at fair prices.**

"When we first started about six years ago, we were hand injecting disposable ecigarettes in our local neighborhood. We were then wholesaling them to local convenience and liquor stores - even a few bars and night clubs," begins Dino Baccari, President and Owner of White Horse Vapor. "Once we got our hands on the products we fell in love and it became a labor of love," he continues.

From there, the small neighborhood business really began to take off. Soon the products were on the shelves of 7/11 and major liquor stores throughout the state of Rhode Island. Dino's passion for the industry continued to grow each day. As he saw more and more of his customers choose to make the switch from smoke to vapor without looking back, he was motivated to open a retail location.

"Today we have three stores of our own corporately here in Rhode Island, where we call the shots and make all the decisions. We also started a franchise model a few years ago that allowed White Horse Vapor locations to be run independently in Texas, Ohio, and Colorado," explains Dino.

The most important thing that the shop offers goes far beyond just making the sale. The team loves to support customers on their journey to become smoke-free, whether that is a check-in over the phone, email updates, or during a visit. Customers love WHV for the quality products, knowledgeable staff, and overall comfortable atmosphere.

"The buying experience for our customers is what makes us really stand out from other shops as well as the quality of our own line of juice. Our juice line has put us on the map and made us very well known to a large array of customers. We have used only the best ingredients since day one and that's not always the case in this industry. We put our customers first and constantly deliver a consistent experience," says Dino.

In an industry this competitive, standing out amongst other vapor shops requires close attention to detail. As Dino always says, "detail rhymes with retail for a reason." White Horse Vapor makes sure the atmosphere of each location is fresh and inviting as soon as customers walk through the doors.

"We like to maintain an energetic atmosphere here at White Horse Vapor. We want our customers to instantly feel comfortable. Our staff is always approachable, friendly, knowledgeable, and ready to help in any way they can," he explains.

In order to have a team that shines above the rest, all staff members are required to complete a cycle of responsibilities similarly to how a restaurant trains employees by starting them as hosts, then servers, then bartenders, etc.

"Anytime someone applies for a job with us, whether that is for a sales associate position or a manger position, all employees will have to start with the basics. This means helping with the products we produce, restocking shelves, and cleaning the shop. Implementing this model has allowed for our team members to get a very well-rounded understanding of our products and how the shop is expected to be run," says Dino.

White horses have always been a symbol of strength and the balance between wisdom and power. So, it is truly the perfect fit for a business that has maintained a strong presence in the market. Horses in general are also universal symbols of freedom without restraint, because riding a horse makes people feel they could free themselves from their own bindings. That is just what White Horse Vapor does on a daily basis - free people from their bind to traditional cigarettes. Additionally, the name also has a more light-hearted meaning behind it as well.

"When we first started, we had these light up displays in nightclubs that said White Horse, and they really stood out in the dark clubs. And to be honest the displays kind of reminded me of bright white lines of cocaine in the club, so the White Horse name was fitting from the beginning," laughs Dino. "The club is where it all began, and the name is rooted in that. When we first started, we didn't ever even want to go into retail, we just wanted to be in nightclubs and be a nightlife brand. But as our brand grew and we evolved, the White Horse name still worked," he continues.

Looking forward to the future, Dino is excited to grow the business, meet new customers, and convert every JUUL user out there to a White Horse Vapor customer. **SVBS**



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# Light Up Sales With the All New Juul-Compatible Vape Pods from Diamond CBD

It's the CBD product customers have been waiting for — CBD Vape Pods, ready-to-use CBD pods made to be compatible with everyone's favorite e-vaping device, the JUUL. It's the number one CBD sold by retailers combined with the number one vape pen on the market. Made from organic hemp oil, CBD Vape Pods from Diamond CBD are pre-filled cartridges that make vaping CBD a breeze. And it will have customers rushing through your doors.

There's no mess, no fuss, just the smooth relaxation of CBD.

## The CBD Vape Product Your Customers Will Crave

Diamond CBD Vape Pod cartridges come pre-filled with a whopping 100 mg of organic hemp CBD. They make vaping CBD a breeze. There's no messing around with bottles of vape oil. You just pop the pod into the battery pack and your customer is ready to go. They'll love the fact that there's no messy setup or mixing, just the instant satisfaction of smooth relaxation that CBD provides.

Diamond's ready-to-use CBD pods are compatible with JUUL pens, everyone's favorite line of e-vaping devices, and the number one vape pen on the market. These disposable cartridges are compact and fit in a pocket or purse. They're perfect for people on-the-go.

Diamond CBD Vape Pods come in four highly popular flavors — Mango, Watermelon, Blueberry, and Strawberry.



**COMPATIBLE  
WITH JUUL\***

## Elevate Sales with CBD Flavored Vape Pods

With the acceptance of CBD on the rise, vaping has emerged as a popular form of consumption because it allows for direct absorption into the bloodstream through your lungs. For many, this means feeling the soothing sensation of CBD quicker than through an edible, which releases the benefits through the body's digestive tract.

While vaping devices vary, Diamond CBD Vaping pods are created as a universal fit so that your biggest worry is figuring out which of the four refreshing flavors will deliver the CBD you love.

They're perfect for any on-the-go occasion and can fit right in your pocket or purse. Just as important, when you're done, you just throw it away.

## Third-Party Tested; Customer Approved

Most importantly, when customers try one of our new CBD Vape Pods, they also purchase the Diamond CBD guarantee. It's a guarantee that not only are they purchasing some of the best, all-natural CBD on the market today but that they're buying the safest. All of our products are tested by third-party labs to ensure that there are absolutely no illegal substances and no synthetics whatsoever.

But that's not all! Diamond CBD has taken things even further to ensure that we're not only meeting safety standards but that we're setting them for the industry. All of their products include special QR codes to help customers and retailers look up the ingredients. They have a special repository of lab tests online so customers can verify that the CBD they purchase is of the highest quality. It's part of Diamond CBD's challenge to the industry to help make things better.

These new CBD Vape Pods are helping to set the standard in another way as well, giving people a choice in how to consume their CBD. They are an opportunity for customers to try CBD on their terms. Retailers can sell them as perfect for on-the-go. They fit right in one's pocket or purse, and most importantly, when done, users just throw it away.

It's the perfect way to use CBD with the world's number one e-vaping device, the Juul.

## A Profitable Step Into the Vaping Industry

Analysts at Grand View Research, Inc. project the global e-cigarette and vaping market size to reach \$47.11 billion dollars by 2025. Much of that rise is due to the belief that vaping is considered to be an effective method to quit smoking. Vaping is also considered to be less toxic to both the body and others outdoors because it creates vapor instead of smoke.

Future growth of the vaping industry is aided by the increasing popularity of hemp-based oils, edibles, and creams. A growing body of research evidence finds consumers confidently using CBD not only to relieve mental and physical conditions like anxiety and muscle inflammation but also choosing it to therapeutically treat conditions ranging from autism to Alzheimer's.

Financial analysts and mainstream news sources like Forbes and CNBC have taken notice, noting the strong growth in the product's acceptance among a number of key demographic groups, as men and women of all ages search for the benefits of hemp without any of the unwanted side effects of other products. In fact, cannabis industry analysts at the Brightfield Group report that the hemp-CBD market alone could hit \$22 billion by 2022.

## Made For Wholesale

Extensively tested to ensure purity, potency, and freshness, Vaping Pods are just the latest profitable innovation from Diamond CBD. Wholesalers and distributors looking to take advantage of the current profit opportunity should waste little time and create an account at [www.DiamondCBD.com/dcbd/wholesale](http://www.DiamondCBD.com/dcbd/wholesale). Once this simple process is complete, retailers can start earning profits from Diamond CBD's entire catalog of products.

Diamond CBD products have some of the best prices in the industry today, with savings passed on directly to the store. Products ship to retail locations in all 50 states, as well as internationally. Diamond CBD retail partners also earn special pricing, discounts, incentives, and profits from a fantastic line of products.



**JUUL-COMPATIBILITY MAKES DIAMOND CBD VAPE PODS A DELICIOUS BREEZE TO ENJOY\***

## The Endocannabinoid System

Both science and anecdotal evidence continues to open up the human experience to the possible power that CBD holds. Diamond CBD employs a team of skilled researchers to test and perfect their products, providing only the best CBD for the consumer market today.

## But How Exactly Does CBD Work?

Everyone has an endocannabinoid system. When it is not balanced properly, a whole host of ailments such as inflammation, chronic pain, headaches and more may occur. Science refers to it as Clinical Endocannabinoid Deficiency (CECD).

CBD, which is a cannabinoid (one of many), shows great promise in fighting many of these ailments. Classic products like Diamond CBD Creams for beauty and wellness may aid in combating CECD while helping retailers maintain a strong customer base.

## Why Sell Diamond CBD?

Diamond CBD is a leading supplier of a complete line of CBD products, from vapes and crystals to gummies and drinks. Diamond's quality CBD brands create an accessible pathway for retail outlets through an innovative distribution model designed to meet the needs of customers first. Retailers enjoy a whole host of benefits, including premium access to

exclusive pricing deals, wholesale discounts, and some of the finest incentives in the business. Diamond CBD controls their entire production chain - it's the reason why Diamond CBD is a trusted wholesaler everywhere.

Everything produced at Diamond CBD is 100 percent all-natural CBD made from quality extracts and advanced processes honed by chemists and scientists in their research and development labs. They use non-GMO organically grown plants and select only the highest-quality raw materials. Furthermore, everything Diamond CBD uses goes through strict testing to ensure it meets the highest standards for when it arrives at the store.

Diamond CBD performs supercritical CO2 extraction, which helps to retain the naturally-occurring beneficial molecules in the hemp plant. As part of their guarantee, they supervise the entire process, from growth to manufacturing and all the way through to distribution.

To verify these statements, they recently had an independent 3rd party laboratory test all of their products, with the results proving the validity of their claims and ingredients. The lab tests are available on their website, [www.DiamondCBD.com](http://www.DiamondCBD.com), and are listed under each product as well as on their lab testing page.

To learn more call us at (305) 363-4646 | email us at [wholesale@DiamondCBD.com](mailto:wholesale@DiamondCBD.com)  
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# WYZO'S TOBACCO & ACCESSORIES

Located in Atlanta, Wyzo's Tobacco and Accessories has continued to impress customers since the very first day the shop opened its doors for business. The Georgia shop offers an extensive selection of vape products and smoke supplies. From water pipes and bubblers to grinders, hookah, kratom and rolling papers the shop's wide range of products has something for everybody and every budget. Wyzo's also carries a variety of select e-juices in various nicotine levels and flavors, featuring their own Wyzo's brand, which has become a best seller. If they don't have what you are looking for, they will do everything they can to help you find it or get it in the shop.



"It all started a few years ago when I had several ideas floating around in my head for businesses I wanted to start. I was doing some research and watching businesses - similar to my ideas - open and then fail shortly thereafter," begins Leonard Rodda, Owner of Wyzo's Tobacco and Accessories. "Then one day a friend of mine suggested I open a smoke shop, and that really peaked my interest. I could not be happier that was the route I chose to invest in, he continues.

Wyzo's first opened in a small location in town with low foot traffic. So, after three years, when Leonard noticed a new space that opened on the main drag, he moved Wyzo's to a new location - where it still is today.

"Our current location is close to my home and makes it easy for me to walk into work and be there quickly if I need to be," mentions Leonard.

The Atlanta smoke shop has a great vibe and the long list of positive online reviews reflect that feeling. In addition to the cool atmosphere of the shop, extensive collection of products at great prices, and nice location in the city, Wyzo's is known first and foremost for their service.

"I have a woman who works for me her name is Keyan Hawkins, and she is absolutely great with the customers. She has an amazing personality and she really knows her stuff. She is constantly mentioned by name in our online reviews for her knowledge and kindness when working with customers. I am really proud to have someone like her representing my shop. My team is what makes us who we are, and the

## SMOKE SHOP SUCCESS STORY

shop would not be what it is today without them," says Leonard.

Since joining the industry, Leonard had really enjoyed his time working with customers and learning about all the products on the market.

"Meeting customers and forming lasting relationships is honestly the best part about owning a smoke shop. I've learned a lot over the years about this industry, but the relationships with my customers allow me to continue to improve the shop year after year. I take the time to listen to what they need which they really appreciate, and it teaches me a lot about the industry and ways I can better serve them," explains Leonard.

Top sellers at Wyzo's in recent years include kratom and CBD products. Leonard pays close attention to changes in the industry and makes sure to stock items his customers want. Playing a very active role as an owner and listening to customers wants and needs has kept the shop a favorite in the Atlanta area. In an industry that is ever-changing and sees new products coming and going at a rapid pace, Wyzo's continues to stay ahead of the curve and stock and large collection of relevant products year after year. Leonard's carefully curated inventory gives the shop a leg up on the competition in the area. Products are tried by Leonard and his team before making it to shelves which ensures customers are going to get products worth buying.

"I originally planned on continuing to work my day job in addition to the shop, but after being let go, I now work at the shop full time. It was quite unexpected,







but I love working at the shop. It's something I am really proud of and a place I thoroughly enjoy going each day. Many of my customers know my name and I know theirs - we have a really good family vibe here - I can't imagine doing anything else," he mentions.

While Wyzo's offers great pricing on all of their products they also offer stamp cards and loyalty programs to keep customers coming back for all their smoking needs.

"We offer a stamp card and a 5-star loyalty program. I fully believe in giving back to my customers and that is why we also offer these additional discounts. Without my customers, I would not be in business. The stamp card and loyalty program are just simple ways of saying thank you for their business," explains Leonard.

Looking forward to the future, Leonard is excited to continue to grow his business, meet new customers, and learn about new products.

"I am always trying to find new products and locate

products customers request. Our product lineup is ever-changing based on our customer's wants and needs. We keep a notepad next to the register and take notes on what customers are looking for if they cannot find it in the shop. Then at the end of the day, I go home and look into getting these products on our shelves. Our customers drive what we carry and usually if one person is looking for a certain product and we do get it in the shop, it sells well with other customers too," adds Leonard.

Wyzo's Tobacco and Accessories has found a proven recipe for success. By listening to customers, maintaining a cool atmosphere, and offering great products at fair prices, Leonard and his passionate team continue to be a top choice for smokers and vapers in the Atlanta area. Customers come in to shop but stay for the conversation and information offered by the team. With such a great group of people running the shop, it is no surprise that Wyzo's has been successful. By putting the customers first and taking quality seriously, it is safe to say that Wyzo's will have a long life in Atlanta and continue to be a model for other smoke shops to follow. **SVBS**

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## THE TRUTH ABOUT CASH DISCOUNTING & CREDIT CARD PROCESSING

BY ELLEN CUNNINGHAM

*As noted in a November editorial, credit card processing fees aren't cheap, especially for smoke and vape shops. That leaves some businesses wondering how to cut costs. If you've researched ways to reduce your processing fees, you've probably come across companies promising that cash discounting is the solution to your problems. The fact is, it's not quite that simple.*

### What is Cash Discounting?

True cash discounting simply means that you price all products assuming customers will pay with a credit card. You build the cost of credit card processing into the shelf price. Then, when a customer wants to pay with cash, you offer a discount (typically the amount you pay for credit card processing) to that customer. Since you won't pay credit card processing fees on a cash transaction, you pass that savings back to the customer.

For example, if you pay a rate of 2.75% for credit card processing and a customer pays with cash, you would discount their purchase by 2.75%.

Cash discounts are legal in all 50 states and are permitted in merchant agreements with the card companies provided you follow guidelines for implementation. The discount must be on the shelf price, not an "immediate discount" after imposing a service fee at checkout.

### Cash Discounts or Surcharges?

Cash discounts are different than credit card surcharges, even though they sound similar. A surcharge is when you

add a fee at checkout if a customer chooses to pay by card. Your shelf prices are the cash price.

For example, if you pay a rate of 2.75% for credit card processing, and a customer pays with a card, you would add a 2.75% fee to their purchase.

Surcharges are legal in all but a handful of states, and are likely to become legal everywhere over the next few years as court battles progress. They're also permitted by merchant agreements with the card companies provided you follow guidelines for implementation. Individual states may also have requirements on how the surcharge must be handled.

According to card brand rules, surcharges are capped at 4% of the transaction price, or the actual cost of processing, whichever is lower. You'll also need to inform the card brands that you intend to surcharge and must post approved signage at entrances and cash registers disclosing that you surcharge. The charge must also be a separate line item on receipts.

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Misleading Programs

The problem is that some processing companies are misleadingly calling surcharge programs “cash discount” programs. This is an issue because surcharging is not permitted in some states and it’s never permitted on debit cards. Surcharging in those situations can open you up to fines or loss of your merchant account. In late 2018, Visa issued a bulletin warning processors that it could take action on “non-compliant” cash discount programs that are actually surcharge programs.

Spotting a Surcharge Program

Fortunately, these “non-compliant” cash discount programs are usually easy to spot. They will reference things like posting the cash price on shelves or say that you’ll impose a “service fee” at checkout and offer an “immediate discount” if the customer pays with cash. A simple way to remember: if you’re adding a fee at checkout, it’s a surcharge program, even if you immediately remove that fee as a ‘discount.’

A cash discount program is only truly a cash discount if you provide customers with a discount on the shelf price, not if you remove a fee you just added at the register.

How do customers feel?

Various industry sources like creditcards.com have done studies and found that most consumers don’t like the idea of paying more for using their card – that is, they don’t like surcharges. Customers would rather fees be built in to the price.

The flip side is that many customers aren’t swayed by the minor savings of a cash discount, especially since more and more people carry cards for convenience and security.

That indicates that many businesses will be fine simply including the cost of credit card processing into their shelf prices and not bothering with cash discounts. But if you’re going to do one or the other, you’ll receive less pushback by offering a cash discount instead of imposing a surcharge.

What’s in it for the cash discounting companies?

Companies that offer cash discounting programs are still credit card processing companies. They’ll set you up with a merchant account to enable you to take cards, but also allow the option to provide cash discounts. They know that many customers don’t bother with a cash discount for the minor savings it brings. They still make money on the card transactions, which they know will keep coming.

In the case of surcharging programs (and also non-compliant cash discount programs that add a ‘service fee’

at checkout) the processing company knows that you’re offloading the processing fees to your customers. In many cases, the processing company will charge higher processing fees than it otherwise would, because it can get away with charging more to the customer (who can’t directly fight it) than they could charge you.

The cap on surcharges is 4%. That’s why you’ll often see processing companies saying they’ll do surcharges or “service fees” at 3.85 – 3.95%.

In the case of vape shops and “high risk” businesses, there are some circumstances where your actual processing fees could be higher than 4%. However, the cap still applies. You could impose a surcharge of a cash discount of 4% to offset a portion of your fees, and pay the remaining amount.

However, if your processing fees are over 4%, it’s a good idea to check to make sure you’re not being overcharged. There are services that allow you to easily compare credit card processing companies and get pricing, so it’s a good idea to look deeper if your fees are on the high side.

Is surcharging or cash discounting a good idea for smoke and vape shops?

It can be. As with many things in processing, the answer is that it depends on your specific business. In-person smoke shops may not be subjected to more expensive “high risk” processing rates. If you run a brick-and-mortar shop selling tobacco and non-vape items, your processing costs will typically be lower than an online tobacco vendor or any type of vape shop. So it may not be necessary to surcharge.

On the other hand, vape shops will have higher processing costs. Implementing a cash discount program may encourage your customers to pay with cash, reducing your processing fees. Implementing a surcharge could help you recoup processing costs. (Though remember, customers are generally more averse to the ‘punishment’ of a surcharge.)

Cash discounts don’t really work for online businesses, as they would be inconvenient (for both you and your customers) and less secure.

In any case, if you accept credit cards, it’s important to factor them in to your prices. Credit card processing fees are a cost of doing business, just like labor and marketing. Use credit card processor comparison sites to find the lowest processing fees possible, and then account for the costs when you set prices. **SVBS**

Ellen Cunningham is the Marketing Manager for CardFellow.com, a free service where businesses can easily compare credit card processors to find the right solution. Certified quotes through the marketplace include CardFellow’s business protections, including a lifetime rate lock, no cancellation fees, independent statement monitoring, and more. Both high and low risk businesses can use CardFellow to see real costs for accepting cards and to get advice from independent processing experts. Ellen can be reached at (800) 509-4220 or you can contact CardFellow on Twitter or Facebook.

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# CANNABIS DISPENSARY PACKAGING & LABELING

BY ALEX MIRZAIAN

Ever since the mid 1990's, dispensaries, or formerly known as marijuana clubs started springing up in California. This really started off the revolution of legalizing marijuana which we're still going through and fighting even harder for. It seemed that for the next 15 years or so, it will be the wild wild west of cannabis. Not many people knew about these clubs in the beginning but since 2007, they have gained a wide notoriety.

With no rules in place, many clubs were operating illegally by just letting anyone in. Others wouldn't know how to package up their materials. Edibles did not come in pre-packaged labels with active ingredients written on it. This led to many people taking more than they should. Nothing was regulated nor was it tested. Nowadays, we have the luxury of hopping onto Leafly and checking out the strains or products active ingredient count.

## What are Dispensaries

Dispensaries are cannabis stores that sell legal or medical marijuana depending on the state or county. Since it is federally illegal, the authority is left up to the individual states. Depending on the owner, area or the local laws, not all dispensaries will be carrying the same items. Some clubs will carry waxes or concentrates while another one won't. Some states have enacted laws that prevent the legal edibles to go above 100mg in potency. Dispensary supplies may also vary, depending on what the local growers are growing. You generally don't have the same strains all over the state like you would with alcohol. Walking into a liquor store, you expect them to have your favorite alcoholic drink but clubs don't carry all the same stuff.

Dispensaries have gone through different phases with different names. They also have gone through many different regulations. One thing they all share in common is the fact that they are generally cash only because there

isn't a marijuana banking system yet. Depending on the use of the store, the laws will be different.

**Medical:** Medical dispensaries are going to be a bit more relaxed because patients do need their medicine. The way people will need their medicine will look different for everyone. Some patients will only use edibles because they have an illness or disease that gives them irritation in their throat. This will stop most people from smoking or even vaping. For this reason, they often don't put a specific law on edible potency.

Medical clubs in most places are 18 and over to get in with a medical recommendation from a doctor. Prices are also a bit lower too because patients are on a donation base rather than a price plus tax. Medical patients don't pay tax.

**Recreational:** Recreational is a little bit more strict overall but it has opened up a world to many people who never considered it. It requires you to be 21 and over in age with a valid ID. Some states only allow its own citizens with that state's ID to be only able to purchase. Recreational dispensaries are usually very strict in the way they work their procedure. From the moment you step in, to the moment you step out, you are usually accompanied by someone or you're instructed on when to go in or out. This is because of the strict state regulations just like the tobacco, alcohol and firearms industry is.

## Cannabis Packaging & Labeling Compliance

Sales of marijuana are expected to rise to \$22 Billion by 2022 but as that grows, there are other industries growing with it too. For example, as you sell more flower cannabis which is the original way most people use it, they come in pop top vials. These pop tops come in different sizes and colors depending on how much flower you buy. These are starting to get phased out as a lot of states are going towards pre-packaged bags of specific measurements of flower and wax.

Wax is another big portion of sales at a marijuana store. There is such a wide variety of them from crumble, shatter, rosin, run, wax, concentrates and more. Concentrate oils have been very popular recently because of their discreet and ease of use. CBD has also been a very big popular item. It has been gaining popularity mainly in the past 5 years because of its vast amount of products that you can get with it. CBD also has a ton of benefits that you can't get from other cannabinoids.

**Conclusion:** Cannabis is slowly becoming legalized all throughout America but the laws on it are still very strict. It's likely to remain this way as individual states start implementing their own laws and see what works. Some states are more strict than others. For example, Oregon, Colorado and California had medical marijuana for many years prior to legalization for recreational use. This helped them set up previous laws to get them up to date. **SVBS**

Alex is the SEO and marketing manager of the Smoke Tokes ecommerce operations. They are a wholesale and distribution company for smoke shops, vape accessories and dispensary supplies. With over 7,000 products, Smoke Tokes is ready to help with any smoking or vaping accessory.

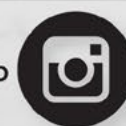
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# WHY SOME BUSINESSES SUCCEED- & OTHERS FAIL

BY NORM BOUR

In the Batman trilogy series, butler Alfred asks young master Bruce, "Why do we fail?" And the response is, "So we can learn to pick ourselves up." His father, Thomas Wayne, shared the same sentiment as have millions of people who have fallen and mistakenly considered themselves a failure.

Failing is different, however. A failure is one who makes mistakes, sometimes stupid mistakes, and sometimes selfishly, but does not learn from them. They give up.

The vaping world is one of the riskiest businesses these days. Regulations. Online competition. Media backlash. The reasons for the challenges are many, yet some survive, succeed, and thrive. Others wallow, struggle and eventually give up. What separates one group from the other?

## A Personal Story

The study of success and failure in business is very personal to me, primarily because I have experienced both.

As an entrepreneur for forty years, there are patterns that I see that can make the difference between the two. In my younger years I made all the classic mistakes and learned my lessons the hard way.

- Being attached to your own bad ideas (ego)
- Not acknowledging, looking for, or accepting help
- Resistance to change
- Not paying attention to the signs
- Being overly optimistic- and over pessimistic

1) After the 2008 recession I saw scores of businesses fail. In most cases it was not the recession per se that took

them down- it was ego. They were attached to their own bad ideas.

"This is the way I always did it, so it should continue to work."

"This is the way that I think it should be done, so I will keep at it until my customer's understand."

We've heard them both before, but have you said either of these statements yourself? If you think Vape 2019 is the same as Vape 2015, you're in trouble.

2) Part II of the ego dilemma is the resistance to seeking help or getting feedback. When we are young, we are blinded by our youth. We think we will live forever, never get hurt and every idea is brilliant. Many of my failures in my thirties were because I never sought out a second opinion or a mentor.

3) In my decades of entrepreneurship, no business I have seen is as dynamic as this one. A business model that worked last year, or even a few months ago, may be shot. Liquids change, new devices (legal or not) continue to entice, plus other revenue channels, like CBD, Kratom, glassware, and such continue to complicate the game.

4) Another aspect of ego and resistance to change, is to ignore or not look for signs. In the surfing parlance the surfer's goal is to "catch the wave" at just the right moment. Too soon and the wave breaks ahead of you, too late and you can get thrown off the board. Business has its ups and downs and cycles. Look for those cycles and pay attention to "signs."

5) Optimism is a wonderful thing! We all want that glass to be half-full rather than half empty, but we can also be blinded by our own sense of positive. The inverse of that is thinking that "nothing will work," and giving up too quickly. The line between the two can be slight, but steering more toward the positive will usually steer you right.

## Today's World

If you look back over the years, many brands have come and gone, and some new ones have taken over. How does that happen?

Scalability is one of the most difficult things in business and growing outside your skill set is a common occurrence. Some brands have been merged with another and taken new directions. Space Jam is now more corporate, ditto Avail, now partially owned by Altria.

The question is, "How will you grow? How big do you want to grow?" Success is not always measured in dollars, but by your own measure of whether you are a success or not. **SVBS**

Norm Bour is the founder of VapeMentors and creator of the VAPE U and Vape Shop Certification online programs. They offer services & resources for anyone in the vape space, including vape shops, online stores and e-liquid brands and work internationally with an office in Europe. They also work with CBD and helping retail shops convert over from vape. He's also the host of Vape Radio, the largest vaping radio show in the world with more than 1.3M downloads. Contact him at [norm@VapeMentors.com](mailto:norm@VapeMentors.com).

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# BILLY WILSON

## INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL SPOTLIGHT

### How did eCig Distributors get started?

It all started in 2012, at a small vape shop in Orange County, California. My partner, Paul Davey, had just opened The Vapor Loft. At the time, it was the third vape shop in all of Southern California.

Prior to opening his shop, Paul had been a pack a day smoker for more than 20 years. That all changed after he was introduced to electronic cigarettes. In a short amount of time, using nothing more than his e-cigarette device, Paul was able to quit smoking cold turkey. At the time he quit smoking, he was managing a large facility for a pharmaceutical manufacturer. Paul's co-workers saw that he successfully quit smoking cigarettes by switching to vaping. They were desperate to get their hands on these devices as well. Then, about a year after switching to vaping and encouraging a handful of others to make the switch, Paul thought it would be a good idea to open a vape shop - and he was right.

The store was an immediate success. Shortly after opening his doors, he was able to quit his day job to focus 100% of his efforts on his shop. The business continued to grow and additional locations were opened, he quickly realized there was a need for a strong domestic supply chain for these products. Paul and I had been friends for a while and he knew I had an extensive background in entrepreneurship. He reached out to me to help him solve some of the growing pains he was experiencing and to get the store running as efficiently as possible.

By the end of 2012, we both realized the disruptive effect



PAUL DAVEY



vaping was having on the analog cigarette model. We decided to put together a really simple website to determine just how big the demand was for these products. Back then, there were very few vape shops and the industry was relatively new.

In 2013, the business started to see really significant growth. Originally, we were operating primarily as a traditional brick-and-mortar shop for local, end-consumers, that was secondarily engaged in distribution to other shops near and far. We were able to purchase hardware and E-liquid products and turn them around quickly. It didn't take long for it to become abundantly clear that once people were educated on how to vape properly, the business could shift to an e-commerce model rather easily.

We purchased a few domains in an effort to build a, non-branded, little amazon-esque website for E-liquid. Our "little" website grew rapidly to offer over 100 brands. That's when we began getting phone calls from all over the world. We quickly became known for having one of the largest selections of E-liquid anywhere. These callers wanted to buy everything we had at wholesale rates, but at the time we were buying everything at wholesale rates and selling it at retail. We were, and still are, self-funded and have never had any investors, so when Paul and I realized just how expensive this endeavor was going to be we thought it would be best to find an efficient way to connect brands to wholesale buyers. We ultimately came up with ejuices.co. From these origins, ejuices.co now takes everything that we sell on our retail websites, and make those same products available for wholesale purchase. Today, this amounts to over 2,200 E-liquid brands and more than 100 hardware brands which are currently being shipped to customers worldwide.

### What makes eCig Distributors stand out in such a competitive industry?

Hands down, our data. Our collective data is really unique because we have been selling B2B and B2C since 2013. A big part of our value proposition, because we digitized very early on, is that we have consumer and wholesale behavior data since we began. Today, with our data warehouse, we can plug in a zip code and tell you what the bestselling products are in that area. From a shop's perspective, this is extremely valuable in that we are a totally unbiased, third-party data source. Since we don't sell our own brands, we are able to treat all brands equally. Also, because we have so many brands listed on our websites, we are able to aggregate that data and provide some unbeatable data metrics.

Above and beyond that, there are many different problems that our industry is currently facing. Our mantra is to help solve these problems through the use of our technology, our data, and our people. One common problem is how much product a shop can physically stock. A typical shop may be limited to stocking only 40 or 50 brands due to capital





restraints or space limitations. For this reason, we created poweredbyjuices.com which allows store owners to use any web enabled device to take an in-store order from a customer for products they don't physically stock. This product will then ship from our warehouse, white labeled with their vape shop branding. Each sale earns the shop a commission and they retain a satisfied customer. It's a great way for stores to earn incremental revenue from sales they would have lost without any inventory risk.

#### What is your favorite thing about working in this industry?

My favorite part about working in this industry is that we get to solve a lot of very big problems. Not just from a technology perspective, but additionally because we are at a unique place in history where we are seeing a 100+ year old industry, in terms of nicotine consumption, get completely disrupted. I love being a part of this change and it's motivating to hear from our retail customers online as well as our wholesalers about the physical, financial, and emotional impacts of this new industry.

Considering that we have been operating in the industry since the beginning, it has been really cool to see everything change and continue to improve. We have the mantra here that people don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it. For us, the "Why we do it" is an easy answer. Paul literally changed his life by switching from cigarettes to vaping. I too used to be a heavy social smoker and was able to quit with vaping. We are both driven by a passion to help others do the same.

Seeing all the positive impacts vaping has had on so many people over the years we have been in this business is what constantly motivates us to put in crazy hours to make the industry better every chance we get.

#### What do you feel has been the most important factor in your success?

Customer service has to be the priority. I like to say ... my employees don't work for me, they work for our customers. We always knew that if we developed a loyal customer base, success would follow. In fact, we created a dedicated customer service team before we even had an in-house sales team. That illustrates just how important customer service is in this industry.

While the industry has changed over the last few years, and sometimes overnight, we have had the ability to stay nimble and adapt to the changing marketplace. This type of flexibility has allowed us to continue to offer our customers an excellent purchasing experience backed up with top-notch customer service.

#### Looking forward to the future, what are you most excited about moving forward?

Now that there are some truly mass-market products out there - by mass-market, I mean something that grandma can put in her purse and be comfortable with - I'm looking forward to what's next. When things like that happen, the stigma around vaping starts to wane and people start to fully recognize, regardless of what is being said in the media, that this really is a great harm reduction product with the potential to change the future of nicotine delivery.

To further that, a lot of the real information that is coming out in terms of the use of vaping devices to quit smoking is getting more prevalent. We are starting to see real evidence and real studies that have several years of data and are empirical - I find that very exciting.

#### Do you have any advice for other business owners in this industry that might be struggling?

We have a saying here, "you don't run out of resources, you just run out of resourcefulness." For us it has always been about creating tools to help other stakeholders solve problems. Whether it's our PoweredBy setup or using our data to make more intelligent purchasing decisions at the wholesale level, there are a lot of resources out there if you know where to go and how to find them. So, as a business owner, you need to make sure you are staying up to date on what tools are out there and make use of the resources available to make your business the best it can be. Each day is an opportunity for improvement.

Additionally, vape shops shouldn't just stock the items you like. People used to come into our shop and ask what my favorite flavor was and then make a purchase based on my personal preferences. I would always tell them, "I don't like Diet Coke but I wish I owned it." Use real market data to drive your business and make more intelligent purchasing decisions, Try to forget your personal preferences. SVBS

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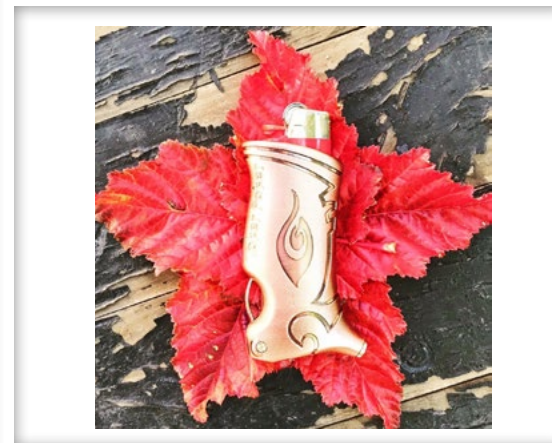
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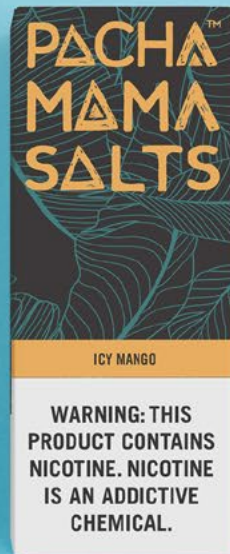
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