

ENTER THE CBD MARKET

Know the facts when selling CBD in your store.

BY HEIDI HILL



Heidi Hill founded Holistic Hound as a retail pet store in 2003 in Berkeley, California, blending her two passions: animals and holistic healthcare. Ten years later, after seeing the dramatic benefits of using CBD on pets, she introduced the Holistic Hound line of phytocannabinoid-rich (PCR) hemp and medicinal mushroom supplements for dogs and cats, now available at retailers nationwide. Hill was named one of Pet Age's 2018 "Women of Influence," and the San Francisco Chronicle recognized the Holistic Hound line of supplements in the GreenState Cannabis Awards for "Excellence in Pet Products."

When I started selling CBD products in my retail store in Berkeley, California, about five years ago, we were the first in our area to carry these types of products. I had always been focused on health and wellness and decided to formulate my own line of phytocannabinoid-rich (PCR) hemp and medicinal mushroom supplements, which I launched about a year later.

CBD is now getting a ton of positive buzz, especially as products become more readily available at mainstream retailers nationwide and the category begins providing significant revenue opportunity. Now, more than ever, it's really important for retailers to understand how to differentiate and select the products that are the best fit for their customers. Here are some key considerations when researching and selecting CBD products:

QUALITY AND TESTING: It's important to research and choose reputable brands with quality, integrity and transparency. Products should contain hemp that is organically grown; provide clear labeling and independent third-party testing for potency, residual solvents and pesticides; and meet the quality standards of your store and your customers. Look for brands that are members of the National Animal Supplement Council (NASC), an organization that requires compliance with its rigorous and strict quality system before receiving its coveted Seal of Quality.

DOSING: In the pet world, it is important to understand how dosages and ratios affect animals differently from humans. Choose products with clear dosing instructions geared specifically to animals, not just transposed from human dosing recommendations. Even small amounts can be extremely effective so I recommend starting with a small dosage and increasing incrementally to achieve desired results.

HEMP VS. MARIJUANA: Cannabis products can be derived from either

hemp or marijuana. Products that contain less than .3 percent THC (Holistic Hound products contain 0 percent THC) meet the definition of "industrial" hemp and are legal to sell in retail outlets nationwide. We derive our PCR from non-traditional industrial plants that have been bred and cultivated to include higher levels of CBD. Products derived from marijuana plants are bred with higher levels of THC and can only be sold through dispensaries.

FULL SPECTRUM VS. ISOLATE:

Consider products that are made with full-spectrum phytocannabinoid-rich hemp oil, which contain CBD as well as additional cannabinoids, terpenes, flavonoids, fatty acids and other beneficial constituents. All of these work together synergistically to provide what is known as the "entourage effect," which provides greater and more effective benefits than an isolate product that contains CBD alone.

RETAILER EDUCATION: As retailers, we can become more knowledgeable by trying the products on ourselves and our animals, carefully considering the information provided by the manufacturer and/or distributor, and taking advantage of ongoing sales support (such as in-store trainings) from both.

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT: It's helpful to engage consumers by offering samples at the front counter or register, along with brochures and signage about the benefits of PCR hemp. Customer feedback forms are a great way to gain valuable information on their experience using the products. Email blasts to customer lists are also very effective; so many customers are curious about these products and may not know that they are available outside of dispensaries. Organizing a talk or lecture by a local expert is another great way to educate and create interest and demand.

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