COULD CBD BE THE NEXT BIG WELLNESS TREND?

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Cannabis. If just reading that reminds you of listening to Phish in your friend's basement, you're not alone. But thanks to the rise of CBD in the wellness industry, the wave of cannabis legalization, and the willingness of public figures to fly their weed-loving flag proudly, you might be part of an ever-dwindling subset who still associate the substance with stoner culture.

Cannabis has been experiencing a bit of a re-branding recently to become – dare we say it – chic, thanks in part to trendy CBD (cannabidiol) which is derived from hemp or marijuana plants, and does not seem to have any psychoactive effects (meaning it won't get you stoned, unlike THC). You can learn more about CBD in detail here.

Unsplash/Lucy Turner

Instead of getting you high, CBD has been shown to relieve pain and inflammation and ease certain skin conditions, which has made it a darling of the wellness world. There's Lord Jones with it's sophisticated branding, infusing CBD oil into body lotion (Mandy Moore is a fan) and elegant edibles (ingested, CBD can provide relief from pain and anxiety, stabilize moods, and alleviate pain, menstrual discomfort, and migraines, according to Lord Jones' website).

Elsewhere there's MoMaCha in New York City and Coffee Dose in Costa Mesa, which serve CBD lattes. California-based Sagely Naturals offers a CBD lotion, headache roll-on, and spray. Milk Makeup pumps CBD into its Kush Mascara in lieu of beeswax. It's being infused into cocktails and found on plates at forward-thinking restaurants.

THE ELEVATED USER

More proof that cannabis culture is not only trendy but spelling big money for those leading the charge in its cultural resurgence? Cannabis-focused digital lifestyle brand, Civilized, just nabbed a $5 million investment from Canopy Rivers, an investment firm pursuing opportunities in the cannabis sector (the fact that there is an investment firm focused solely on the cannabis sector is telling in and of itself).

"There is a new face of cannabis emerging," Civilized CEO and Publisher Derek Riedle told us, following an event at Yorkville's Diesel store to announce the investment. "Portrayals of cannabis culture in media have made the world believe that cannabis consumers are all young people sitting on their couches, eating pizza and playing Xbox. The reality is, cannabis consumers are people of all shapes and sizes, from all walks of life, from every corner of the continent. These people enjoy cannabis as a healthy part of a balanced lifestyle."

Civilized's CEO & Publisher Derek Riedle and Co-Founder/President Terri MacDonald Riedle

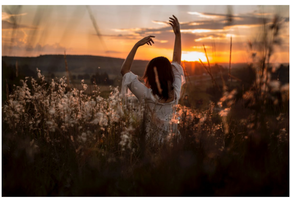
A marketing, communications, and political professional who also happened to be a cannabis consumer, Riedle started Civilized because he was "personally invested in living a more authentic life and emerging from the cannabis closet."

"It's brands like Civilized who are allowing people to have a grown up conversation about cannabis and to feel less ashamed and better about what they do," Riedle says of his company which includes a news and entertainment website with 2 million unique visitors a year, a video content network, and an events platform.

CANNABIS & WELLNESS

So why are we becoming more accepting of cannabis, especially in wellness? "I think it's because legalization has become a reality in some places, and clearly the sky has not fallen," Riedle says. "People are gradually starting to be more open about their cannabis use, and it turns out that the average cannabis user is nothing like what the stereotypes told us."

In fact, you could even call CBD the gateway to cannabis acceptance. "Not everyone is on board with cannabis yet. I don't blame them," Riedle says. "After all, they've been told it's terrible for decades. But CBD offers an interesting way in – it offers tangible benefits without the high. Once people realize that, I think that CBD could be everywhere. Of course, it has to be legalized across the board first." Good news: as long as it's hemp-derived, CBD is actually legal even in places where marijuana isn't.



Unsplash/Andressa Voltolini

So, could cannabis become as integral to a wellness practice as say, a juice cleanse or meditation practice? "For years, the stigma around cannabis was that you used it to drop out of life," Riedle says. "In reality, it enhances life.

"We've found that a majority of cannabis consumers lead active lives. People who do yoga can find a strain that helps focus. A couple of years back we interviewed an ultramarathoner – someone who runs 100-200 miles in one go – who often gets high before he runs. It's a big part of his practice. The key is to have a wellness plan in place, and then find the cannabis product that works best for you – whether it's flower, an edible or a topical."

THE FUTURE OF CANNABIS CULTURE

Riedle expects that as the popularization of CBD grows and the legalization of pot continues, the stigma about users will continue to fade. "As legalization becomes a reality, you will find that you're surrounded by cannabis consumers," Riedle says, pointing out that their Cannabis Culture Poll revealed that one in four Canadians and Americans are consumers.

"These people look a lot like your friends and neighbors," he continues. "They've got rich, rewarding lives – they aren't in the basement. And as the stigma around weed fades, people will be less afraid of talking about what cannabis really means to them."

Find Civilized here and connect with them on Instagram @civilized.life. Join them in person in St. John, New Brunswich June 10-12 for the World Cannabis Congress.

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