

# Perfect Cannabis Delivery

A comprehensive guide to the budding cannabis industry

March 2023

A wave of cannabis legalization is washing away more than 80 years of prohibition in North America and beyond. As the tide recedes, a budding industry is emerging. The total economic impact of legal cannabis sales [will] increase from \$38 billion - \$46 billion in 2019 to \$106 billion-\$130 billion by 2024 – a 181% increase” [1] and the cannabis industry as a whole is slated to reach \$30 billion in value by 2025 [2, 3].”



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# Cannabis, Mary Jane, Pot, Herb, Reefer, Bud...

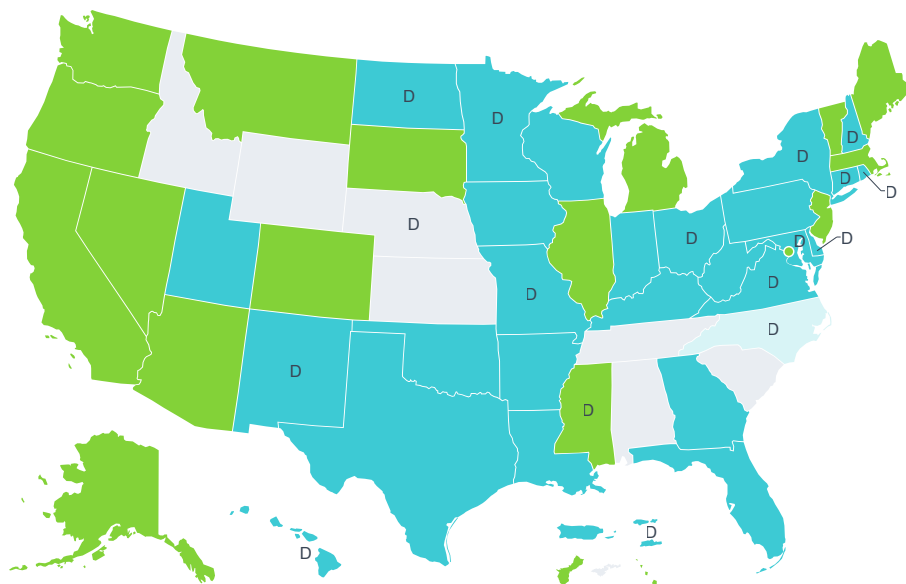
## An Overview

Cannabis is one of the first plants to have been cultivated by humans over 2,500 years ago, and it has been used for ritual, medical, and recreational purposes ever since [4]. In America, cannabis was one of the most commonly used ingredients in patent medicines from the mid-19th century until federal cannabis prohibition began with the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act [5].

Despite a limited federal medical cannabis program starting in the mid-1970s, it took until four years after that program was closed to new patients in 1992 for any state to legalize medical cannabis [6]. In 1996, California became the first state to allow patients legal access to medical cannabis, blazing the trail towards some sort of

cannabis acceptance in every state across the country except for two (South Dakota and Idaho) [7]. Now more than ever, it is clear that cannabis will soon be widely available nationwide, following in the footsteps of low-THC, CBD-rich hemp products which are already federally legal under the 2018 Farm Bill [8].

Election Day November 2020 was a big win day for cannabis, with legalization passing in Arizona, Montana, Missouri, New Jersey, and South Dakota. More than one-third of the country — over 111 million people — now live in a state with legal recreational cannabis [9].



### Legality of Cannabis in the United States

- RECREATIONALLY LEGAL
- LEGAL FOR MEDICAL USE
- LEGAL FOR MEDICAL USE (Limited to THC Content)
- PROHIBITED FOR ANY USE
- D DECRIMINALIZED MAP  
Includes laws which have not yet gone into effect.

Source: Data obtained from National Conference of State Legislatures.

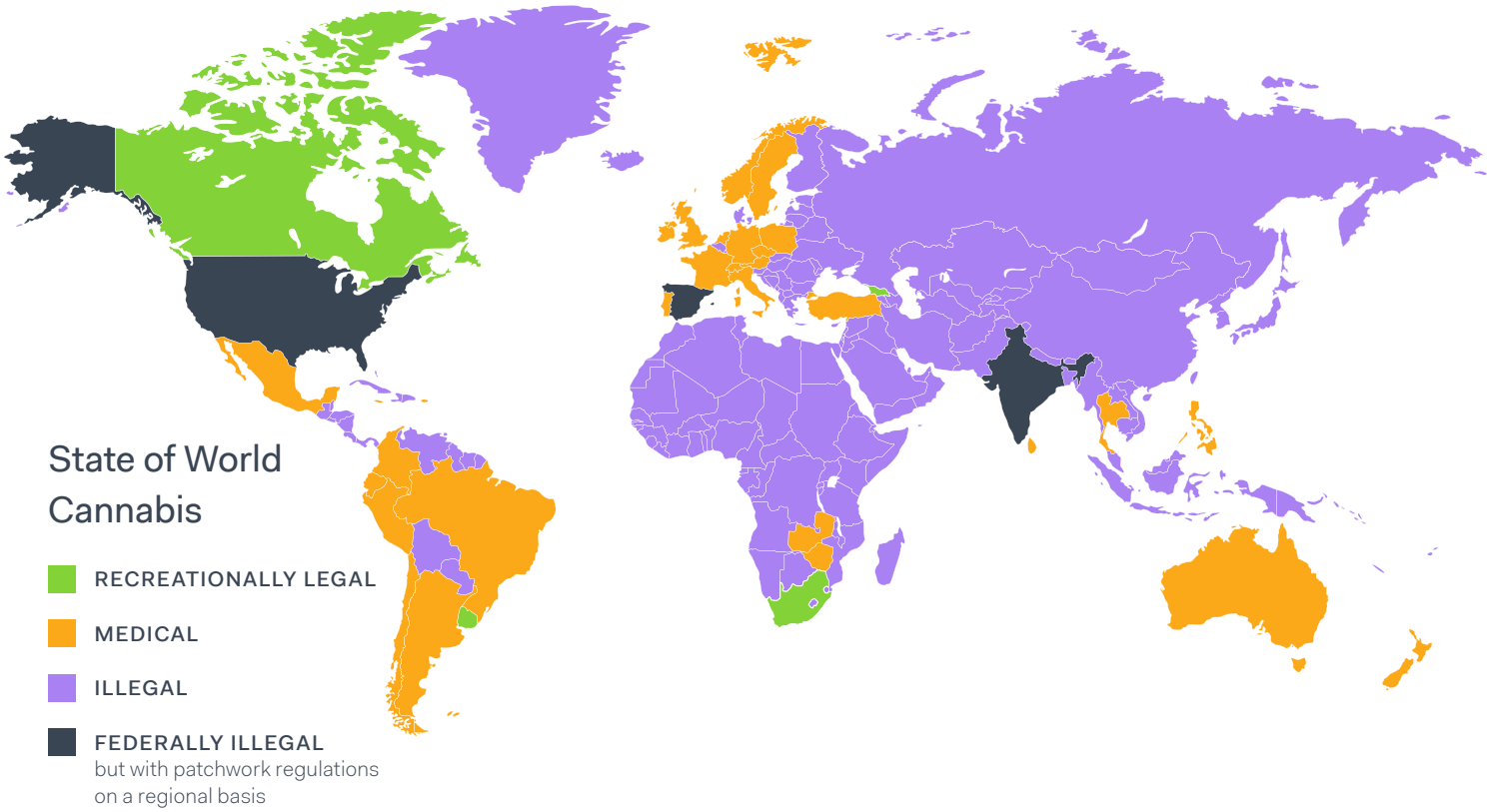
## Historic and Projected Global Legal Cannabis Spending (\$USD Billions)



Source: Arcview & BDS Analytics Cannabis Intelligence Briefing 7

In America, this legalization has taken four main forms, listed in order of most to least restrictive:

- 1 Decriminalization
- 2 Medical access to low-THC products
- 3 Medical access to whole-plant cannabis
- 4 Recreational adult-use



# Beyond the United States

20

countries currently with medical regulation in force

Looking beyond the U.S., both Mexico and Canada have legalized cannabis, and legalization of some form has spread to every continent other than Antarctica [12 13 14 15]. South America is quickly catching up to their Northern neighbors with Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay all having legalized cannabis in some capacity (mostly limited medical programs). In Europe, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland,

Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland all have some form of legalized cannabis. Other notable transitionally legal cannabis countries include Israel (the home for international cannabis research), China (producer of more than half of the global hemp supply), and Lesotho (the first African country to legalize growing medical cannabis) [16].

# Market Consolidation and Major Players

Along with the recent global spread of cannabis legalization has come a wave of massive cannabis market consolidation, especially from public Canadian conglomerates [17].

The trigger for this flood of investment is investors' changed perception of the risks involved with funding plant-touching cannabis businesses. For years, institutional money was not comfortable "touching the plant," and instead invested in ancillary businesses like packaging, consulting, or legal services, where returns on investment were more limited. Due to this perception shift and various forms of legalization in many countries, major investors have jumped on board.

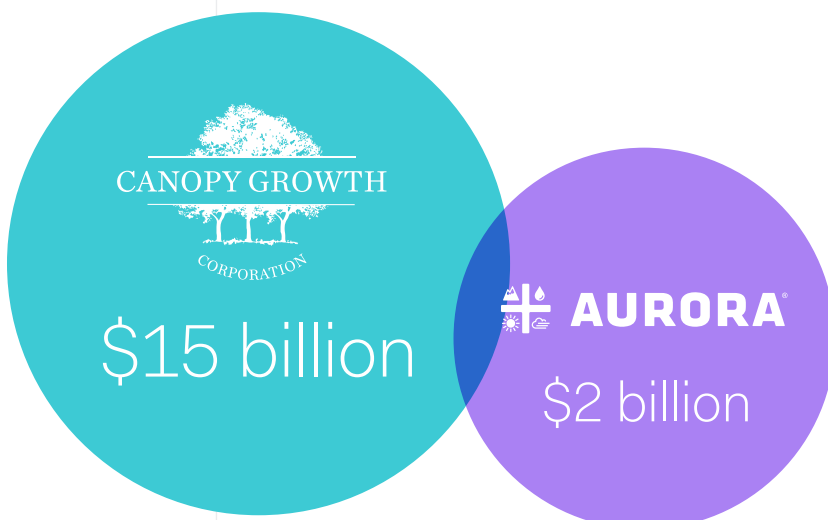
The Canadian company Canopy Growth is by far the largest cannabis company in the world, with a \$15 billion market cap [18] that is more than 7 times its closest

Canadian rival [19], Aurora Cannabis (\$2 billion), Canopy has leveraged its huge market cap to purchase US-based Acreage Holdings (which almost made the top ten list and includes former House Speaker John Boehner on its board). While most of the top ten largest cannabis companies are Canadian, UK-based GW Pharmaceuticals has a market cap of \$7 billion [20], US-based Green Thumb Industries is at \$10 billion [21] and Harvest Health and Recreation made the list with a market cap of \$1 billion.

In addition to the market consolidation, we have also witnessed many state-specific brands grow into multi-state operators (MSOs). This makes compliance imperative as these operators expand their footprint across multiple municipalities

(see section Compliance: Your First Priority).

"The year 2021 started with varying degrees of legalization for unrestricted-THC content cannabis in 34 states, or over half of U.S. states, and continued federal prohibition except for low-THC hemp. Several states considered candidates for 2021 legislation to legalize cannabis for adult use included Connecticut, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, and Virginia, some of which like New York had already decriminalized. At the federal level, the Democratic party's majority in both houses of the 117th United States Congress was cited by Politico as a likely precondition for Federal legalization in 2021, with the SAFE Banking Act likely to pass [22 23].



Source: The Motley Fool <sup>12</sup>



# Delivery and Cannabis:

## Two Peas in a Pod

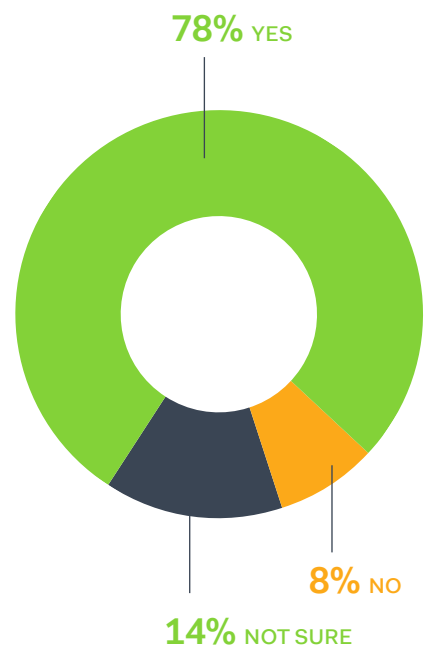
Cannabis sales in the aforementioned legal markets are conducted through storefronts and increasingly some form of delivery.

In general, online shopping and delivery have been embraced by the modern consumer in verticals beyond just cannabis. An Onfleet survey of 1,000 US based participants found that due to ecommerce, only 16% of people said they exclusively shop at physical stores. Furthermore, 78% of those respondents have raised expectations for all types of delivery specifically because of Amazon's fast and free delivery services [24].

Relating those customer expectations back to cannabis delivery, Howard Hong, CFO of Jane Technologies, said, "It's inevitable that delivery is going to be the winner." If your business intends to remain relevant in an increasingly competitive and lucrative cannabis landscape you will need to include delivery in your offerings.

Would you be more likely to order from a local restaurant or store that always provided an accurate ETA and delivery updates?

Would you be more likely to order from a local restaurant or store that always provided an accurate ETA and delivery updates?



Source: I Heart Jane Industry Survey

"The beauty of delivery is that it hits such a wide variety of consumers."

ROBERT BRAUN, SR. OPS MANAGER,  
RETAIL DELIVERY, CALIVA





# Where Cannabis Delivery is, and Where it is Going

Currently some form of delivery is allowed in almost every state where recreational cannabis is legal. It's important to note, the limitations and regulations on delivery can differ dramatically from one state to another [25]. In many states, cannabis delivery has found inroads serving seniors and patients who may be mobility impaired.

Delivery is also influencing customer buying trends. A study conducted by Jane Technologies on over 5,000 ecommerce cannabis orders revealed that customers on average are adding significantly more items to their online delivery orders than orders picked up from the dispensary. This is resulting in considerably higher checkout totals on those delivery orders, to the tune of 80% larger basket sizes. Interestingly enough, while it's probably too early to draw conclusions, Jane Tech also sees almost 10% more female placed delivery orders versus in store pickup orders.

Jane Tech's data also shows that cannabis flower has always been the top seller in the traditional cannabis market, and it has continued to be the largest market category for delivery sales as well.

Additionally, cannabis customers are willing to pay higher delivery fees for a number of reasons including high basket sizes, necessity and convenience.

“We’re seeing delivery fees of \$25 across the country. When considering basket size, customers are willing to pay prices like that to get cannabis delivered.”

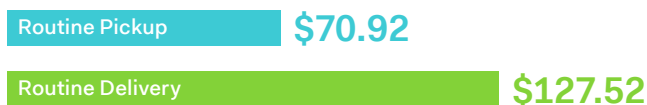
ERIK FRODLE, CO-FOUNDER,  
BALANCED ADVISOR

## Routine Users: Pickup vs. Delivery

### PRODUCTS PER CART

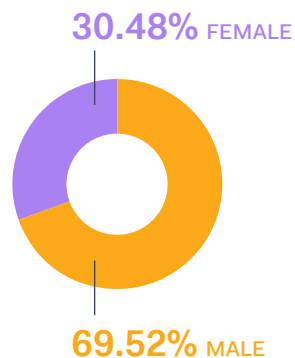


### AVG BASKET SIZE (PRE-TAX)

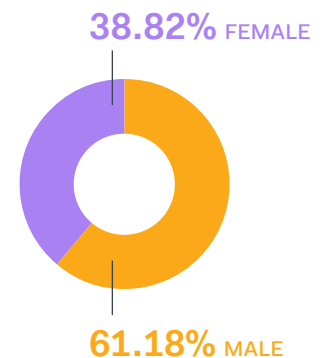


Source: I Heart Jane Industry Survey

### MALE VS FEMALE PICKUP STATUS



### MALE VS FEMALE DELIVERY STATUS



“Retail locations bring the customer into the brick and mortar, and once you have the cadence they shift to the delivery model. But only good operators know how to do that.”

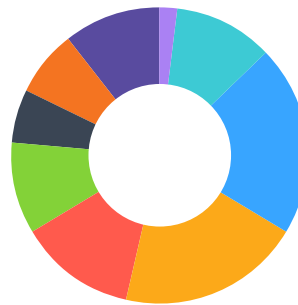
HOWARD HONG, CFO, JANE TECHNOLOGIES

California is the first state to have fully legalized and licensed cannabis delivery as its own distinct business type. However, delivery licensing depends on the type of service being offered by the company. Eaze is a prime example, while they may appear to be a licensed cannabis delivery service, they are actually categorized as a technology company that provides a software platform for cannabis businesses [26]. Sava, on the other hand, is a state-licensed cannabis delivery service providing actual delivery services, thus they are bound by significantly more regulations [27].

According to data from Jane Technologies, 63% of people who regularly use cannabis delivery services are between 26 and 45. While the bulk of delivery consumers are working-age people with presumably busy schedules, more than 10% of people who use delivery are over 60 (compared to just 5% of seniors who picked up their cannabis in stores) [28].

Caliva's Braun notes that “Accessibility is a huge focus for the industry,” which means both that patients need access to delivery services and those services need to be accessible to all types of patients, especially seniors.

### Sales by Age: Pickup vs. Delivery



DELIVERY

<b>2.08%</b>	< 25
<b>10.94%</b>	25 - 29
<b>20.83%</b>	30 - 34
<b>19.79%</b>	35 - 39
<b>13.02%</b>	40 - 44
<b>9.90%</b>	45 - 49
<b>5.73%</b>	50 - 54
<b>7.29%</b>	55 - 59
<b>~10.4%</b>	60 +



PICKUP

<b>11.76%</b>	< 25
<b>18.55%</b>	25 - 29
<b>16.72%</b>	30 - 34
<b>16.35%</b>	35 - 39
<b>11.51%</b>	40 - 44
<b>8.33%</b>	45 - 49
<b>6.74%</b>	50 - 54
<b>5.02%</b>	55 - 59
<b>~5.02%</b>	60 +

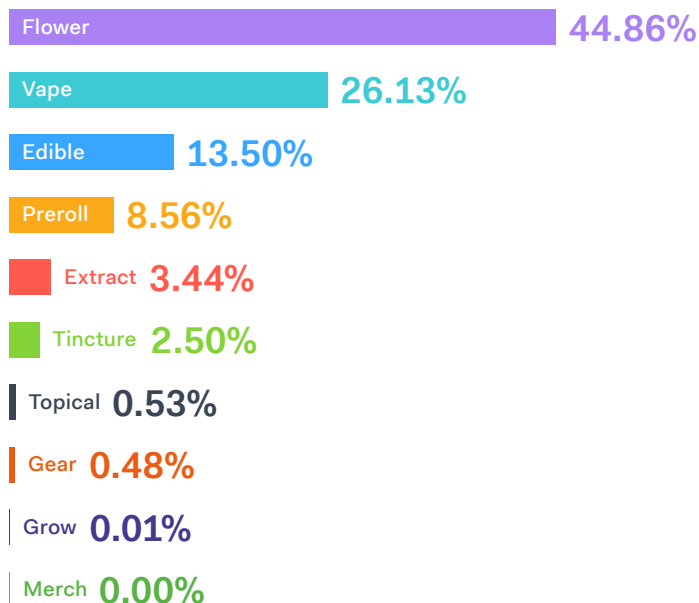
Source: I Heart Jane Industry Survey

Caliva's Braun expanded on the issue of accessibility, saying "You have cities that don't allow physical dispensaries, so delivery is the only way consumers can receive their products." A good example of this is Marin County, California, where Prop 64 passed with "more than 69 percent" of voters supporting cannabis legalization. Despite overwhelming support for legalizing cannabis, when Marin first took applications for dispensary licenses they rejected all of them under intense NIMBY ("Not In My Back Yard") pressure from residents [29]. Now, many cities in Marin still have bans on storefront dispensaries and the county is finalizing the licensing for their first medical dispensaries, but there is a thriving delivery market. Many of the same cities that have opposed storefront sales have welcomed delivery because it is seen as having less of an impact on youth cannabis use through reduced visibility.

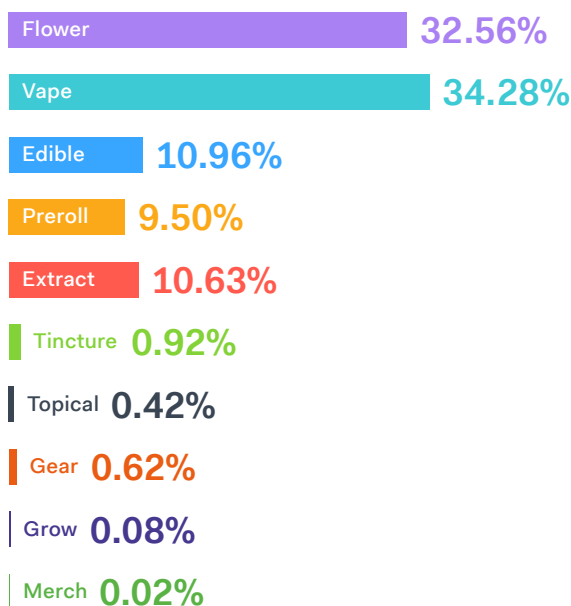
The cannabis industry is rapidly evolving, and delivery will be keeping pace with those changes. It's worth noting, while many states, like California, do not currently allow delivery by bicycle or drone, many cannabis operators are interested in pursuing those greener delivery options once regulations allow it. Since airplanes and trains are federally regulated modes of transportation, it is currently illegal to transport cannabis using those modes. Despite that, some operators in Alaska are already pushing the limits of what is allowed and are delivering cannabis by plane to remote areas that could not otherwise be accessed [30].

## Sales by Category: Pickup vs. Delivery

### DELIVERY



### PICKUP



Source: I Heart Jane Industry Survey



# COVID's Effect on Cannabis Delivery and Consumption

COVID halted business operations across nearly every industry beginning in March 2020, forcing unemployment and closures at astronomical rates. However, like grocery stores and hospitals that were deemed essential businesses, cannabis retailers remained open and consumers appeared around the block to stockpile their herb. According to a report published last year by Leaflink, Flowhub, and Vangst, “the period between March 16, 2020 and March 22, 2020 alone saw significant sales increases compared to all of 2019. States like Alaska increased by 11%, Colorado by 25%, California by 70%, and Oregon by 74%.” Over all, cannabis saw a record-breaking year with sales hitting \$20 billion — a 50 percent jump over 2019 [31].”

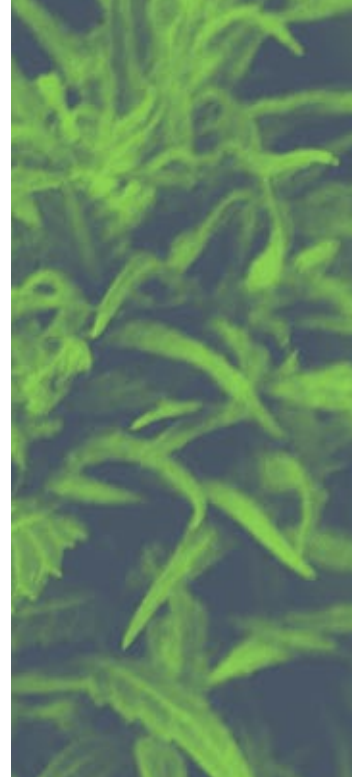
As summer 2020 approached, a new interest and adoption of behavior became clear to cannabis retailers as online demand surged. Due to stay at home orders and social distancing protocols, customers were opting for delivery and “online shopping jumped from 17% of dispensary revenue to over 52% as customers stayed out of retail stores in favor of curbside collection and delivery”, according to MG Magazine [32]. Methods of operation adapted to capitalize on delivery demand. This massive consumer push cemented COVID's effect on cannabis delivery and the focus on the way cannabis products are sold and purchased.

Technology enables retailers to meet demand and engage customers. Onfleet partner dutchie is a software platform that connects consumers to local cannabis retailer menus to order both pick-up and delivery. As partners, Onfleet and dutchie work together to enable efficiency of delivery for thousands of cannabis retailers across the country. By August 2020, dutchie alone “experienced a 700% surge in online orders and a 32% increase in average order size,” said Ross Lipson, dutchie CEO [9].

This shift into a more delivery-focused customer experience also influenced consumer buying habits. Average purchase amounts for online orders increased as delivery orders came with minimum cart size requirements. The range of products diversified. More robust and detailed online menus provided consumers more time to make a considered purchase without risk of COVID exposure and the natural anxiety felt when taking “too long” to decide on a product while physically in a store. This surge in delivery demand promises to continue to dramatically change how cannabis retailers serve their customers for the foreseeable future, well beyond COVID. Experts estimate the pandemic accelerated the shopping shift to e-commerce by five years as these habits have become permanent and will most likely influence behavior as legalization comes to more and more states [9].



# Compliance: Your Highest Priority



Regulatory compliance should be a primary concern in any industry, but it is especially important in the cannabis industry that remains illegal at a federal level. A 2019 Onfleet survey of cannabis operators found that about 40% of industry professionals said ensuring regulatory compliance was their single major operational challenge. Thus, the two most important hires for a new cannabis business are an attorney and an accountant.

One quirk of federal law is that, even though cannabis is federally illegal, cannabis businesses are still required to pay federal taxes. Due to the hazy legality of cannabis, federal taxes are subject to an obscure area of the tax code known as 280E. This area of the code was originally passed by Congress and Ronald Reagan in the 1980s in response to a cocaine kingpin claiming his travel, scales, and packaging as business expenses on his taxes [33]. What 280E says is that no business that profits from federally scheduled substances can make any standard business deductions, like rent, healthcare, and payroll - effectively taxing state legal cannabis businesses out of existence [34]. In practice, this means that the so-called Green Rush has proven to be a myth for many operators, as they struggle to cover expensive taxes. Efforts are underway in Congress to remove cannabis from the

“The biggest industry changes on the horizon are federal legalization and keeping up with the different rules when trying to enter new markets.”

**SARAH LOREK, MJ FREEWAY**



“Onfleet delivers a very solid mix of features that enabled us to serve our internal operations, drivers, dispatchers, and customers, while complying with a mix of federal and state regulations.”

MIKE LANE, CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER, MEDMEN

Controlled Substances Act, which would mean 280E would no longer apply. Additionally, operators in California got some tax relief when Governor Newsom signed AB 37 into law earlier this year, which creates a 280E exemption for state taxes [35].

Aside from 280E, cannabis operators have many other regulations to comply with. These include restrictions on marketing (i.e. no ads that can appeal to kids, limits on billboards) and zoning regulations when it comes to where they can make deliveries.

Delivering to certain restricted areas is the most difficult compliance aspect of delivery. For example, in California, the City of Alameda requires licensed cannabis delivery services located outside the city to obtain a special permit in order to deliver in city limits. Braun says that cities like Alameda are why you “can’t have just one model and you have to tailor to every city you plan to operate

in.” The best advice is to find the most restrictive jurisdiction you plan to operate in and exceed their regulations, then your business will be above and beyond what is required of you everywhere you operate.

Onfleet is a tool that hundreds of cannabis operators have been using to not only manage and scale their operations, but to help confront the challenges of constantly changing regulations. Onfleet provides delivery management software that includes route optimization and dispatching, real-time tracking, proof of delivery, age verification, analytics and anonymized customer communications. Using a tool like this can assist operators to comply with local law enforcement, which typically requires timestamps of every event throughout the products' chain of custody, from door to door. It's important to note, however, that a tool like Onfleet won't guarantee compliance and all local ordinances should be followed.



# Cannabis Software Tools

There are a number of tools that professional cannabis operators should consider when setting up their operations.

When evaluating technology partners, it is important to consider whether the companies are friendly to the cannabis community and cognizant of the challenges it faces. Brandon David of [investingincannabis.tv](http://investingincannabis.tv) said, “When it comes to cannabis technology, there’s a fight for the soul of the cannabis industry and it’s playing out now. Are you building tools to help the little guy or are you one of the ten companies that have raised millions of dollars attempting to crush the independent operators?”

Some tools to consider include:

72%

of cannabis delivery operators said having a delivery management tool was critical to running delivery operations

Marketplace

♥ Jane

greenrush

Leafly.

weedmaps®

Nugg

STICKYGuide

eaze

dutchie

amuse

Menu/POS/Compliance

Meadow

BLAZE

green bits

COVA

dataowl

olla

flowhub

MJ FREEWAY

Background Checks

Checkr

GoodHire

HIRE RIGHT

Applicant Tracking

fountain

Instawork

breezy

Delivery Management

onfleet

OnTime 360®  
Smart Courier Software

Route4Me

Cannabis Couriers

blackbird

ESI  
ELYSIUM SERVICES INC





# Caliva

“Onfleet was flexible and willing to work with us to make sure all our compliance bases were covered.”

ROBERT BRAUN, SENIOR MANAGER FOR RETAIL DELIVERY, CALIVA

Caliva, one of the largest vertically integrated cannabis companies in California, is the market leader in California for branded cannabis products. From its facility in San Jose, Caliva produces top-quality flower and cannabis oil, manufactures products, and distributes them throughout the state. Caliva-branded products can be found at their flagship dispensary in San Jose, dispensaries throughout the state of California, and purchased online at [www.caliva.com](http://www.caliva.com).

**PROBLEM:**

## Managing growth while ensuring compliance

Caliva opened its delivery operations in 2017, about one year after its founding. Even though delivery volume was initially light—a few deliveries a day—Caliva employed full-time delivery staff because it needed to control the entire process, primarily for compliance reasons. In California, cannabis companies must comply with certain regulations related to delivery and are subject to audit at any time. Among them:

- All delivery staff must be W2 employees, not contractors, and must be age 21 or older.
- The location of every delivery vehicle must be tracked at all times (when on deliveries).
- Drivers must deliver product directly into the hands of customers, and must verify each customer's identity and age.
- Companies must keep meticulous records on the contents, whereabouts and dispensation of every delivery, including any product returned as undeliverable (if, for instance, the customer isn't home to accept delivery personally).

“Because of all the regulations, off-the-shelf logistics software that isn't tailored to our industry really wouldn't work for us,” said Robert Braun, senior manager for retail delivery at Caliva. “To manage our delivery operations compliantly, Caliva needed a solution tailor-made for cannabis companies. Not all software companies are interested in working in the cannabis space, but Onfleet was, and they were really flexible and willing to work with us to make sure all our compliance bases were covered.”



## Enter Onfleet

Caliva's delivery volume has grown swiftly - the company now runs multiple delivery teams across several cities in the Bay Area, and Braun says, "Delivery management is mission critical."

Caliva now uses Onfleet to manage orders, bundle deliveries into time slots and routes, develop each route, track inventory within each delivery, record completion of deliveries, and check drivers (and inventory, if applicable) back in at the warehouse. Onfleet also calculates delivery ETAs and provides real-time alerts to customers so they know exactly when their driver will arrive: "Happy customers make for a happy company," says Braun.

All records are kept electronically. Drivers use the Onfleet app on their phones, and dispatchers use Onfleet's desktop software.

Caliva has found Onfleet's smart routing and route optimization features especially helpful, as they allow Caliva to consolidate runs, reducing emissions and saving fuel.

## Looking Ahead

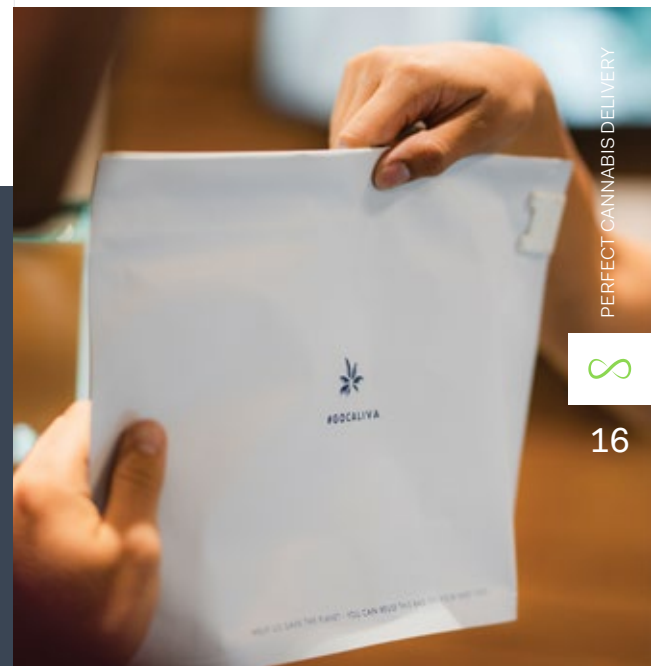
Caliva is currently working with Onfleet to test a new ID verification feature that would enable the company to do more within the single Onfleet platform and retire another third-party tool. Caliva also has its eye on expanding its delivery deeper into California. "Onfleet is pivotal to our ability to expand delivery," said Braun.

### SOLUTION:

## Using data to fine-tune operations

Onfleet's reporting tools have become essential as Caliva is continually looking for ways to improve efficiency. Some of the metrics Caliva evaluates daily are deliveries per day and on-time delivery rates. Additionally, the company is constantly optimizing routes to increase its delivery capacity.

"The cannabis industry is young, always changing and adapting," Braun adds. "Onfleet has been right there with us, developing new features that we need and that our industry needs. They have been a great partner, dedicating resources to us and growing with us."





“When it comes to delivery logistics, Onfleet integrated with Meadow, makes ordering and receiving cannabis a quick, delightful, and seamless experience for customers.”

DAVID HUA, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, MEADOW

# Meadow

Y Combinator-backed [cannabis retail software](#) startup, Meadow, turned to Onfleet to help ensure customers across California receive their cannabis products seamlessly and, of course, delightfully.

## PROBLEM

### Problem: Streamlining Compliant Cannabis Deliveries

As many local delivery startups across a variety of industries—from food & beverage to laundry & dry cleaning—are quickly discovering, today’s on-

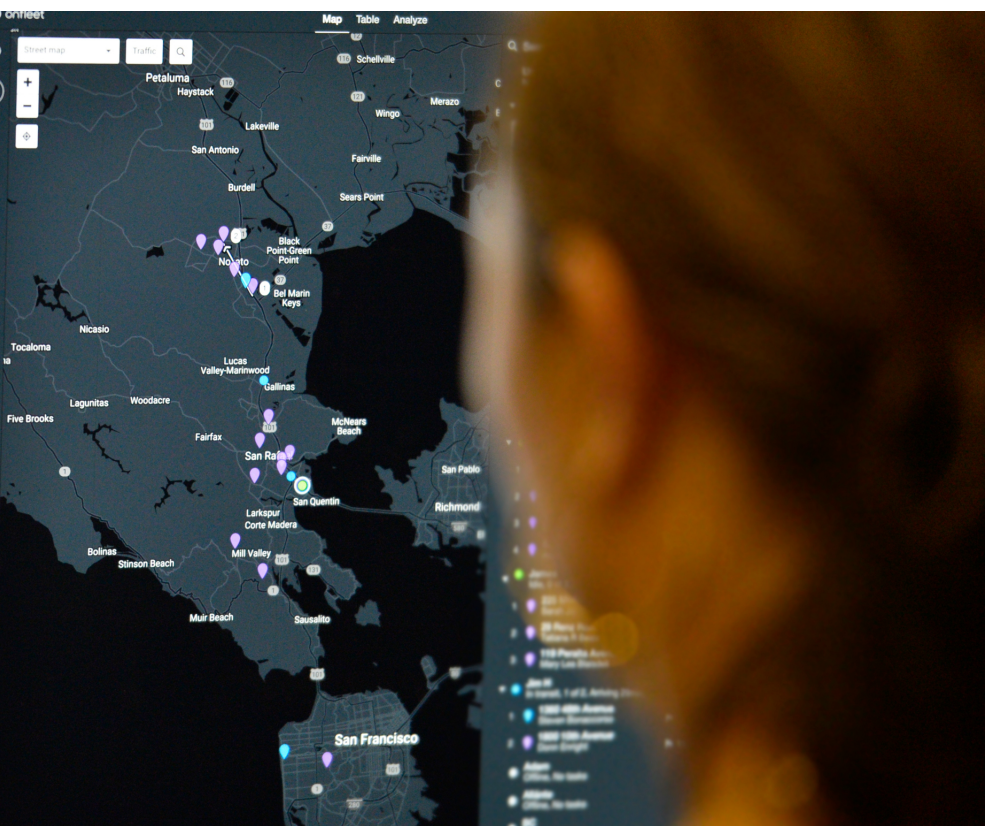
demand consumers have high expectations and little patience when it comes to turnaround time. Hua points out, “Consumer expectations for cannabis delivery are no different, and there’s a whole list of compliance requirements from the government that other industries don’t have to consider.”

“The big thing is meeting customer’ expectations when it comes to quick delivery, and making sure the delivery operators are following all of the regulations and requirements for licensed operators,” says Hua.

“When it comes to cannabis delivery, there is lots of red tape in terms of how cannabis products move through the supply chain and can be sold. Our aim is always to simplify compliance and increase efficiency.”

DAVID HUA, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, MEADOW

Since its founding in 2014, the Meadow team has had to diligently adhere to the strict legal requirements surrounding this highly regulated product, while conducting their service as efficiently as possible. With a focus on reliability, compliance, and customer satisfaction, Meadow now powers licensed cannabis deliveries and dispensaries across California.



## SOLUTION

Compliance regulations are easy to navigate with Meadow and Onfleet.

The two-way integration makes it easy to manage orders, optimize traffic routes, assign and schedule deliveries, track driver locations, communicate with customers, and review delivery data. The integration makes cannabis delivery seamless with real-time automated and custom updates between driver, customer, and dispatcher.

The delivery driver and inventory's exact location are always pinpointed on the dispatcher's map. Drivers can easily print compliant delivery receipts that include customer name, ID, who prepared and delivered the product, items ordered, signature, date, and time of delivery, which are all required by California state law.

“With Meadow and Onfleet, dispensaries don't have to stress about compliance requirements; we take all of that worry away to allow them to focus on creating positive customer experiences. It's easy to optimize routes for distance or traffic and you can easily assign and schedule deliveries, track driver locations, and meet all necessary state and local requirements.”

## Enter Onfleet

After an initial round of research, the Meadow team discovered Onfleet, which not only offered the most user-friendly product to streamline their delivery processes but also included critical capability not found in any other delivery management software. Onfleet's Connections feature, for example, allowed Meadow to connect their Onfleet integration directly to their dispensary partners' Onfleet dispatch dashboards. Hua and his team soon arranged a sit-down to discuss Meadow's needs.

“We had a meeting with the Onfleet team at their office,” says Hua. “My co-founders and I thought, ‘They're building an amazing system here.’”

When it came to providing the fastest, most reliable system to meet customers' needs Meadow and Onfleet immediately saw eye-to-eye. “The fact that we—the Meadow team and the folks at Onfleet—are all like-minded in this sense,” states Hua, “and that Onfleet really supported our business model, made it a solid match.”



If you are interested in learning more about Onfleet, get in touch with our cannabis delivery specialists at [onfleet.com/cannabis](https://onfleet.com/cannabis).



# Conclusion

With cannabis laws rapidly loosening around the country, and indeed the world, a greenfield opportunity has emerged. If one considers the hemp industry as well, it is conceivable that cannabis will be a \$130 billion dollar industry by 2024, if not sooner.

Cannabis businesses need the right tools, strategies, and processes in order to be competitive in this new global market. Thankfully the budding landscape has resulted in many software platforms that can help cannabis businesses out, from seed to sale and through the last mile of delivery.

## Estimated Cannabis Industry Growth







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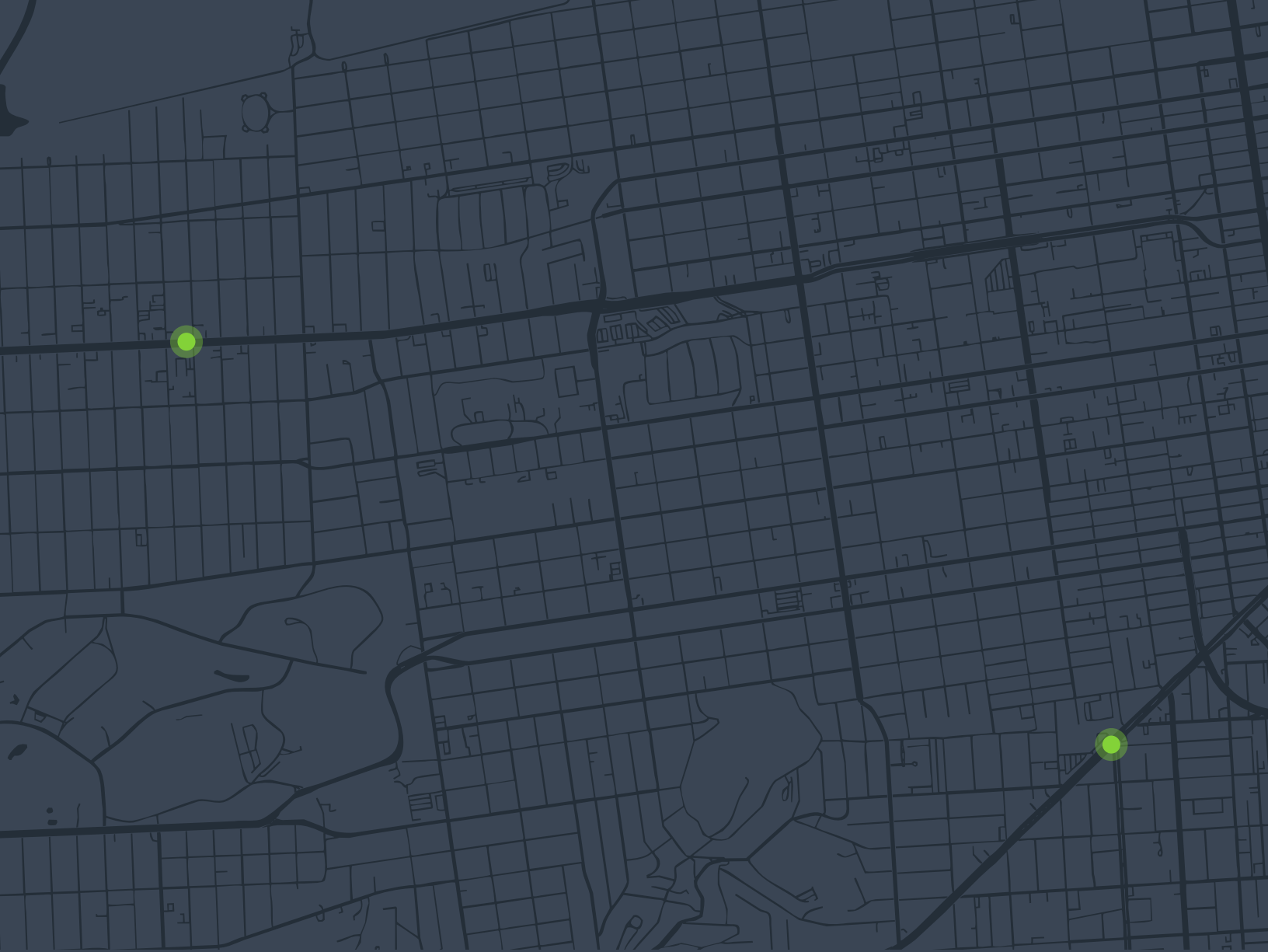
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## NOTE

The contents of this document should not be considered legal advice. You should consult with a lawyer familiar with cannabis legislature in your jurisdiction for up to date legal information.







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