

Ideabar's Cannabis Media Survival Guide

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Cannabis marketers are experiencing the marketing version of a survival TV show.

Instead of, “How do you survive in the wilderness without food and water, a road map and modern conveniences?”, cannabis marketers are asking, “How do you build brand awareness and grow market share without the duopoly of Facebook and Google ads, mass media and most programmatic buying tactics?”

Only the strong, clever and resourceful will survive.

Those who thrive will cut a new path by building their own channels, forming strategic alliances with the right influencers along the way, scanning the horizon for daily changes and keeping their eyes fixed on the horizon.

Their packs are full of killer content, SEO, UX, PR and the buzz factor. And they navigate the media landscape with care, mindful of ever-changing and conflicting regulatory guidelines and conditions.

A warning about those conditions: Some media channels are wide open, but many have conditional acceptance requirements that are so varied and shifting that you've got to go old school from a buying perspective and roll your own media plan.

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Here's a guide as of July 20, 2020:

Regulations are always evolving. The below represents platform acceptance as of 7/20/2020.

Product Category	National Linear TV	Video (CTV, OTT, etc)**	Spot TV	TrueView	Print	Outdoor	Terrestrial Radio	Pandora + Spotify	Sirius XM	Streaming Audio
Medical	✗	🌱	✗	✗	🌱	🌱	✗	✗	🌱	✗
Recreational	✗	✗	✗	✗	🌱	🌱	✗	✗	🌱	✗
Dispensaries	✗	🌱	✗	✗	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	✗
Cannabis-Based CBD	✗	🌱	✗	✗	🌱	🌱	✗	🌱	🌱	🌱
Hemp-Based CBD	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱

Product Category	Google + Bing	Programmatic DSPs	Ad Networks	Native	amazon	f Instagram	Twitter	Pinterest	Snapchat	TikTok	Twitch	Reddit
Medical	✗	✗	🌱	🌱	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Recreational	✗	✗	🌱	🌱	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Dispensaries	✗	🌱	🌱	🌱	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Cannabis-Based CBD	✗	✗	🌱	🌱	✗	✗	✗	✗	🌱	✗	✗	✗
Hemp-Based CBD	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	🌱	✗	✗	✗

🌱 - Conditional Acceptance ✗ - No

*Streaming audio examples include: iHeartradio, TuneIn & LiveXLive

**OTT/CTV can include: Roku, SlingTV, hulu, AppleTV & Amazon Firestick

Amazon has an unenforced "no CBD" policy - however, the majority of sellers appear to sell low-quality products or ones that were later tested to not contain CBD.

Facebook & Instagram have relaxed their "no CBD" policy to allow topical CBD products, but the ads can't feature the product, and similar to Google, the landing pages must be scrubbed of cannabis content.

Vendors cannot sell CBD products with Google Ads, but there have been cases of sellers being able to use Google Shopping Ads & Display Ads to sell hemp-based CBD products - as long as the landing page & copy does not reference cannabis / marijuana or illegal drugs.

Bing is similar to Google - they do not allow CBD benefits or health-related claims in copy or on the landing page.

Digital Audio channels that allow for geographic targeting can advertise because they are not necessarily subject to the FCC as a "broadcast service."

For OTT/CTV advertising, medical cannabis, dispensaries & cannabis CBD must be geo-targeted to states where it is legal - hemp-based CBD products that are applied topically can be advertised nationally as long as cannabis is not included in the verbiage.

Laws around CBD Cosmetics advertising are more relaxed as they are not subject to FDA approval as long as they are not misbranded or intended to affect the structure or function of the body. <https://www.mondaq.com/unitedstates/advertising-marketing-branding/902880/cbd-cosmetics-advertising-guidelines>

If you are looking for details on cannabis advertising best practices, check them out here:

<https://ideabar.agency/expertise/cannabis/>

Please note: This material is for reference only and is not legal advice; publishers and marketers should consult counsel before proceeding.