

11 Cannabis Predictions for 2019

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January 1, 2019 5 min read

It looks like 2019 may be a blazing year for cannabis. We asked a bunch of successful entrepreneurs what to expect.

1. Cannabis will become more mainstream.

"Thought leaders, CEOs, government officials and local community leaders will continue to drive the new and emerging narrative in mainstream media: Cannabis is here to stay and the people buying the products are our neighbors, physicians, stay-at-home parents, young adults, seniors and more," says Nick Kovacevich, CEO of [KushCo Holdings](#).

2. Latin America will make a big play.

"Colombia and Mexico are poised to establish their global dominance in short order, which leads to my prediction that cannabis will soon become a very valuable, sizeable addition to Colombia's legal agricultural exports and local economy," says Jessica Billingsley, co-founder and CEO of [MJFreeway](#).

3. Big Pharma will join the CBD party.

"While beverage and alcohol companies are joining the CBD bandwagon, it makes sense that big pharma will step in, too," says Dr. Jonathan Rothbard, senior research scientist at [Katexco Pharmaceuticals](#). "Many pharmaceutical companies have identified small molecular weight and orally bioavailable agonists of cannabis. Of course, there will be a plethora of start-ups, but relatively few serious companies designing cannabis-derived drugs will make it far for the obvious reason that unlike "natural products", new pharmaceuticals will take an average of 10 years to develop."

4. New Jersey will be next state to legalize recreational marijuana.

"New Jersey is most likely going to legalize adult-use cannabis, becoming the second state after Vermont to do so through legislative means, and the first state through legislative means to

create a retail market for it," predicts **Joe Lusardi, President & CEO of [Curaleaf](#)**. Indeed the New Jersey legislature is closer to passing marijuana legalization bill, [S-2703](#), which would make it legal to possess up to 1 ounce of marijuana and consume it at home or in specifically designated areas.

5. More demand for transparency.

"Millions of Americans and Canadians will try cannabis for the first time or returning after a decades-long hiatus. In both cases, they don't know what to expect, and frankly, the well-intended information provided on websites and in dispensaries doesn't go far enough," says [PAX](#) CEO Bharat Vasani. "The next big hurdle for the industry is to provide our consumers with quality, transparency and predictability in their sessions. Technology can help."

6. Expect lots more consolidation.

"As the industry matures, larger businesses are buying up smaller ones in order to increase operational efficiency and profitability," says Neil Yorio, EVP Agricultural Lighting at [BIOS Lighting](#). "The evolution of the grower from the clandestine operations during prohibition to a legalized market today garners the influx of science and technology experienced growers from more traditional horticultural or farming backgrounds."

7. Look for CBD to pop up in mainstream stores.

"We will begin to see CBD-infused drinks become the norm at big box stores, and a rush of CBD infused topicals make their way onto the shelves of our familiar pharmacies and big brand name beauty counters," says Cynthia Salarizadeh, Managing Partner of [KCSA Strategic Communications](#).

8. Vapes, terpenes and edibles on the rise.

According to Kevin Ahaesy, CEO of [EcoCannabis](#), "Vape pens and edible products will continue to rise in popularity, as flower sales decline. Terpenes will become increasingly important to those seeking specific effects from the plant. We will also see a sharp increase in senior consumers, with CBD products being the main driver for this increase."

9. California will get its act together.

"This is going to be the year of the legacy California cannabis brands/companies, as many have weathered the storm and tumult of adapting to regulations in 2018 and now with a more clear path forward will be able to refocus on continued growth and expansion into new markets," says Bryce Berryessa, President of [La Vida Verde](#).

10. More much-needed research.

"As a result of a more open regulatory environment, we will also see increased research, which will drive innovation. The passage of the Farm Bill, which will open up the CBD market in 2019, will help accelerate research that will support cannabis overall. As we start to uncover the power of each specific cannabinoid, we will see more targeted treatment through very specific combinations of these cannabinoids," says Nancy Whiteman, Founder and CEO of [Wana Brands](#).

11. Banks will finally get on board.

"I predict in 2019 that we will see some sort of banking reform at the federal level for cannabis companies allowing licensed companies to acquire a bank account," says Taylor Blake, co-producer of [The Emerald Cup](#).

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