

Seeking Stress Relief

Consumers turn to CBD products to relax during these stressful times

NEARLY HALF OF consumers (48 percent) are interested in trying products or dishes that contain CBD, according to Datassential research. So, while this is still an early-stage trend in the Inception stage, it has plenty of room to grow. And we know that consumers are more stressed than ever in 2020, so there likely will be increased demand for products that help them relax.

Cannabidiol (CBD) and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) are natural compounds found in the cannabis plant. According to Food and Drug Administration legal requirements, CBD is a single compound of hemp, while marijuana is a specific type of cannabis plant that

includes both THC and CBD. Studies have shown that CBD can improve inflammation, anxiety, seizures and pain management based on the impact from the endocannabinoid system. Because CBD has no psychoactive properties, but still a euphoric effect, it is legal in most states.

Nearly two-thirds of consumers are aware of CBD, and 21 percent of consumers have tried it. Among those who have tried it, two-thirds like it or love it. This points to a huge growth opportunity once more trial is achieved. Millennials are driving the trend as they have a significantly higher affinity for CBD than the average consumer.

CBD Beverages Take the Stage

While CBD currently has low penetration on foodservice menus, it has had more success in the retail world thus far, likely due to regulatory hurdles.

Ready-to-drink CBD-infused beverages are predicted to be the largest CBD category in the food and beverage world, as these products are already taking off in the space. CBD beverages fit into existing beverage trends such as functional ingredients, sparkling drinks, and playful flavors like tropical fruits, botanicals and savory notes that add interest to these refreshing drinks.

For example, Recess sparkling waters incorporate other adaptogens — ingredients like ashwagandha that are believed to improve the body's reaction to stress — as well as trendy flavor combinations like peach ginger, blackberry chai, and pomegranate hibiscus.

CBD beverages also play into the sober curious movement, offering an alternative, spirit-free way to relax that is perceived to be healthier than drinking alcohol. And perhaps most importantly, CBD beverages command a premium price point and can elevate convenience store beverage offerings. Capitalize on this trend today! **CSN**

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