

New Dispensary Opening Checklist

2022



Grass Ceiling Cannabis Consulting

Hey, You.

Before we dive in, we want to introduce ourselves!

Grass Ceiling is a partnership between Janelle Mucci and Sarah Martine, two cannabis and retail experts. But, why is that important? Why should our advice matter?



Well, we've been where you likely are right now: headaches from reading the 300+ pages of cannabis regulations, uncertainty around what systems are best for your operations, and let's be real, you've probably broken down a few times trying to prioritize the endless list of to-do's.

We've been there, and more importantly, we've supported businesses just like yours, even supplying the tissues to wipe away the inevitable tears.

We've helped brand new operators navigate the volatile opening process for new shops by supporting their recruiting efforts, assisting with operational systems and implementation, compliantly leading inventory setup and flow of product, and providing full premise audits to ensure they passed their final licensing inspections.

We created this handbook to guide you through the actionable steps you can take to become organized and proactive when it comes to your new store opening efforts. We've included checklists, helpful tips, and a few of our favorite resources to ensure you're prepared for whatever comes next.

We hope this guide is a helpful resource for our team, and if you need additional support, you know where to find us!

Janelle & Sarah

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What support looks like:

You WILL need support. You've gotten this far in the licensing process, so you know that this rollercoaster of a ride isn't normal. Here are a few more teams that can support you through the hurdles and ensure you're set up for continued success, come what may.

Checklist for support:

SECURITY SUPPORT

Search "Security" in the regulations and you'll see over 80 results. Do you have someone in place to write your security SOPs? Do you have a security team in place to handle distress alarms 24/7? Per the regulations, you need a security manual in place per AU/Med license. (500.105) These reasons require an investment in security support ASAP.

HR/PAYROLL SUPPORT

Bringing on a team in cannabis requires background checks through the state & RMD badging through the cannabis commission. This combined process can potentially take 4-8 weeks to complete. If you're not setup with an experienced HR partner to accurately process onboarding paperwork, you're risking time & money from your budget.

I.T. SUPPORT

Your technology, internet, phone lines, POS systems, etc. are your lifeline in cannabis. Five minutes of an internet shortage can result in hundreds of retail dollars lost. Invest in an I.T. team from Day 1! This is a mandatory investment for you, your business, and the safety of your profit.

MARKETING SUPPORT

Marketing in cannabis requires a dedicated team to create and maintain a website, boost a social media presence and consistently communicate with customers to get them in the door.

Pro-tip: Read the regulations!

The Cannabis Control Commission Regulations are your friends! Sure, there are 300+ pages to read through, but the knowledge you gain from learning them will save time, money, heartaches, and potential deficiencies down the road.

As a business owner or operator, your understanding of, and passion for the regulations will instill that value in your leadership team to uphold in your absence. This is invaluable.



**Medical
Regulations**

**Adult Use
Regulations**



Inventory & Operations

Inventory and operations will be your top priority when setting up a new dispensary. The checklist below is a simplified run-through of areas of focus, though each item entails institutional knowledge of the industry in order to establish a compliant and smooth opening. This area is where Grass Ceiling excels and will ensure you're ready to open and make those \$ales!

Operations Checklist:

- INVENTORY SETUP**
SOPs, ordering vault supplies, & configuring your space for flow.
- SETUP METRC**
Metrc training, setup account, order metrc tags, receive IIN #'s and add employees to Metrc/Inventory ERP system.
- INVENTORY TRAINING**
Training on systems and inventory compliance
- SUPPLY ORDERING**
Cash counters, office supplies, banking setup, etc.
- BINDER SETUP**
Manifests, invoices, SOPs, handbooks, audits are ready for CCC inspection.
- INTEGRATION SETUP**
Integrating your ERP with your loyalty program, website, online ordering platform. etc.
- I.T. SETUP**
Setup of your systems, phones, internet, ATM terminals, scanners, printers, etc.
- SECURITY SETUP**
Cameras, ID readers, walkie's security team or 3rd party affiliate team.
- SHRED IT**
Third party to pickup and destroy any confidential consumer or shop data.
- TRANSLATION SERVICE**
Setup service to accommodate any spoken language in your dispensary space.
- BANKING**
Discreet, randomized times of pickups, no uniforms or marked vehicles, etc.

Systems you'll need:

- Inventory management/POS system and Online Ordering, such as [Leaf Logix/Dutchie](#)
- Route Optimization system- Home delivery operators only- We recommend [Onfleet](#)
- A virtual payment solution, such as [CanPay](#)
- Loyalty program software such as [Alpine IQ](#)
- If you are planning to operate on appointment only, provide appointment scheduling for customers. We suggest scheduling programs like [Setmore](#) to achieve this.
- Scheduling software for performance management & tracking. We love [StoreForce](#) solutions.

Equitable Recruitment

As a woman-owned business, Grass Ceiling believes in conscientious cannabis and ensuring an inclusive industry for all. Thankfully, the state of MA also believes in an equitable industry for those disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition.

A diversity plan will ensure equity amongst the below groups of individuals:

- People of color, particularly: Black, African American, Hispanic, Latinx, and Indigenous people
- Women
- Veterans
- Persons with disabilities
- LGBTQ+ individuals

Consider -

- What is your current team missing?
- Is there a gap in demographics?
- What perspectives are missing?

Tip: To diversify your applicant pool, expand your recruitment efforts by hosting hiring events, interviews and meet & greets in multicultural communities.

Recruitment to start date timeline

Interview - Offer- CSI/CORI check (3-5 wks) - RMD badging (1-2 wks) - on-boarding paperwork (start date) =6-8 weeks total.

TIP: New dispensary's should budget their labor to accommodate opening delays & ensure new hires remain on payroll.

Recruitment Resources to Consider:

- Invest in an applicant tracking platform such as [JazzHR](#) or [Greenhouse](#). Candidates have a lot of choices for employment; don't miss out on top talent by being disorganized in your search.
- Utilize the CCC website to remain up to date on equity [resources](#). The commission will expect operators to adhere to all regulation updates & be proactive in their efforts. Tip: YOU will need to educate yourself--the commission will not send updates to you!
- Ensure your payroll software allows you to keep track of compliance with badging renewal notifications & provides ease of access for on-boarding paperwork processes. We like [Wurk](#), which is an all-in-one cannabis HR partner.

Cannabis Training

At Grass Ceiling, we LOVE training and supporting the bud-tender onboarding process. We've had the honor of building retail training programs from the ground up, and we believe that a well-rounded training focuses on diligence in compliance, supporting and driving sales, and trains on inclusive and memorable experiences. Below is a sample training program that sets a team up for success and ensures customer retention!

Budtender Training Checklist:

- HISTORY OF CANNABIS
- INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE
- CANNABIS COMPLIANCE
- CUSTOMER CARE BEST PRACTICES
- SELLING CYCLE
- CANNABIS PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE
- ID VERIFICATION
- INVENTORY & METRC
- INTAKE & INVENTORY AUDITING
- POS ERP TRAINING
- RESPONSIBLE VENDOR TRAINING
- SAFETY TRAINING
- LOYALTY/DISCOUNT TRAINING (IF APPLICABLE)
- PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER WITH SCENARIOS AND ROLE PLAYS

Responsible Vendor Training:

All retail dispensary operators are required by the regulations to take a Responsible Vendor Training within their first 90 days of hire. The 4 RVT training hours will count towards the required 8 hour annual minimum that is required by the regulations. 935 CMR 500.105(2)(b).

Grass Ceiling now offers an accredited, Responsible Vendor-Basic Core Curriculum course, on demand! Bulk pricing available!



Grass Ceiling's RVT program includes:

- ✓ Effects of cannabis on the body
- ✓ Preventing diversion to minors
- ✓ Compliance & Safety
- ✓ Inclusion in the workplace
- ✓ An accredited exam by the state

Merchandising & Shop Setup

Visual merchandising in cannabis follows similar rules to traditional retail: eye-level is buy-level, ensure displays are fresh, bountiful, and create a space that's inclusive for all customers. As always, the regulations play a huge role in how you merchandise your space. Ensure you follow the CCC guidance when creating display products, storing display items, and deciding how your customers can interact with bud-bars.

TIP: the best time to contact Grass Ceiling for support is in the build-out phase. Operational flow is imperative for profitable success. We can support with floor mapping, flow, and operational setup.

Below are a few suggestions to consider when mapping out your VM vision.

Merchandising checklist:

- ACCESSORY DISPLAYS/DISPLAYS AT POS**
- PRODUCT DISPLAYS & DISPLAY REGULATIONS**
- MENU CREATION & EASE OF ACCESS FOR CUSTOMERS**
- STANCHIONS FOR TRAFFIC FLOW**
- CUSTOMER FLOW THROUGHOUT DISPENSARY SPACE**
- EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND THEIR REGULATIONS**
- PRODUCT STORAGE ON SALES FLOOR/EASE OF ACCESS FOR OPERATIONS**



Visual Audits:

Create a visual audit for your team that focuses on a few of the below;

- Cleanliness: it should be cleaner than a restaurant in your space. The CCC will look under shelves, air vents, etc. Do not get docked for cleanliness!
- Flower displays should be clearly labeled with a packed date (Per the regs). Ensure your team rotates these out every 4 weeks for freshness.
- Are your top 10 products being featured in a high traffic area? Are those items impacting your average basket size to increase sales?
- Are new products being featured? Ensure new items are at eye level for customers to see.
- Do your displays look inviting? Follow a color scheme? Ensure they're appealing and FRESH!

Thanks for stopping by!



Stay connected:



GrassCeiling.Net



857.233.0756



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