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# with Substance: Naming Trends in the Marijuana Industry

Posted March 10, 2015 by [Caitlin Barrett](#)



When it comes to marijuana—whether medical or otherwise—Americans’ attitudes have mellowed significantly over the past decade. And as legislation makes marijuana-related businesses legal and viable, branding and naming trends are fascinating to follow.

A review of publicly traded canna-businesses shows that the dominant naming trend is to directly reference the category. That means a lot of brands—and their holding companies—inevitably start to sound interchangeable, such as Advanced Cannabis Solutions, American Cannabis, Med-Cannabis Pharma—you get the picture.[more]



And while we're on the subject of marijuana-based holding companies, those curious about investing in the "greener good" can do so through the Viridian Cannabis Stock Index.

Speaking of green, another popular naming trend is to overtly reference the color. So don't be surprised to find similarly named brands such as Green Cures & Botanical, GreenGro Technologies and American Green, and the list goes on.

Some businesses avoid mentioning marijuana completely, and rely on semiotics and messaging to signal the cannabis industry. From the name Abattis Bioceuticals, for instance, you might never guess that the company caters to "medicinal and adult marijuana markets in North America." But a quick glance at its website's green color palette—and portfolio of less-subtly named subsidiaries like iJuana Cannabis—and there's no mistaking its focus.



Others business are more direct, with jargon-based names like The MaryJane Group and Mountain High. But for the most part, the top money-makers in the space skip the slang references.

Still, many brands try to distance themselves from the stigma of the drug—and the reality that it's still illegal in most states. For example, marketing agency Cannabrand uses a website pop-up to make it clear that it does not manufacture, distribute or dispense marijuana-related products.



This response underscores the challenges facing legitimate businesses in a space that's still tightly associated with illegal substances. But many people feel it's just a matter of time before ads for marijuana brands become commonplace, like those for coffee or auto insurance.

Leafly, whose name might suggest health and vitality, placed ads in major publications in 2014 and promotes itself as “the world’s largest cannabis information resource.”



In the short term, we expect to see brands walking the fine line between openly identifying and emphasizing product benefits and cautiously tip-toeing around industry-safe vocabulary.



We'll be watching this space closely to see how trends develop. Will established brands from other categories cross over? If so, what will that mean for naming? How much slang will "go straight" and make its way into everyday brand conversations? And how long until everyone is too mellow to worry about it?

***—Caitlin Barrett is a New York-based word wrangler. Follow her on Twitter: [@badnewsbarrett](https://twitter.com/badnewsbarrett)***



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