



# PR and Marketing Report

Presented by Sian Phillips, Executive Director

## Executive Summary

This report offers a comprehensive overview of the Cannabis Trades Association's PR and Marketing efforts over the past 12 months. In a year marked by both challenges and significant achievements, the CTA has steadfastly pursued its mission to support, develop, and advocate on behalf of the UK legal cannabis industry. Through innovative marketing strategies, impactful advocacy, and consistent member engagement, we have advanced the interests and visibility of our sector.

## Achievements

### Regulatory Advancements

- Successfully lobbied for clearer regulatory guidelines around CBD products, resulting in increased market stability and consumer confidence.
- Collaborated with regulatory bodies to contribute to the development of fair and effective cannabis legislation.

### Membership Growth

Witnessed fluctuations in membership, based on FSA Novel Foods constraints on smaller businesses – they have run out of time as they ran out of money post Covid. This has strengthened our community and enhancing our collective voice.

(PAF) Pre Application Form system – streamline the membership pathway.

### Campaign Successes

- Webinars – we continue to set up a series of international webinars (Professional Series) highlighting the best of industry. (see educational)
- Received national media coverage (Financial Times Feb 2024), elevating the discussion around FSA and CBD Novel Foods, highlighting the CTA's role as an industry leader.
- Third Thursday pop in group – for all members to 'walk in' and discuss issues – and do business.
- Members have contacted our forms 2557 times over the past year!
- 136 call/video meetings arranged through Calendly.



## Marketing Innovations

### Digital Presence

Revamped the CTA website, enhancing user experience and providing valuable resources for both members and the public.

- Trebled engagement time on the CTA website.
- Increased our social media following by 20%, leveraging platforms to educate, engage, and advocate.
- LinkedIn organic impressions reached 21,500 over the past year. We've not paid for any advertising.

We have started to work with a Social Media professional who is helping us build our presence across our platforms. (Thank you Matt Clifton for the introduction)

### Educational Initiatives

Developed and distributed a series of educational webinars on topics ranging from compliance to international market trends, establishing the CTA as a thought leader in the cannabis space. All on our Youtube channel.

### Challenges and Solutions

Navigated regulatory uncertainty over the THC content of 'Portion size', CBD advisory (10mg) and other shifting market dynamics by providing members with up-to-date guidance and support through 'emergency surgeries' and calls.

There are some unscrupulous people out there who will contact members companies and involve themselves purporting to have a link to us. We are on the case. Firstly we ask members who have been contacted in this manner to check with us first.

We have, and continue to address supply chain disruptions in the burgeoning medicinal cannabis sector through strategic partnerships and collaborative solutions.

Spotler – We have now achieved a business and political database of over 3,600 companies and organisations. This gives us the ability to speak to them quickly and efficiently.

CashPLUS – are a solution partner for banking. If you wish to be referred by the CTA, please visit the information section on our website.

## Market Trends and Insights

Identified a growing consumer interest in sustainable and ethically produced cannabis products (synthetic v plant based).

Highlighted the rapid growth of the medicinal cannabis sector advocating for clarity in supply chain management and distribution.

The trend for attending Events in the UK is falling. Companies are redirecting their event budgets towards launching new projects. There have been too many over zealous event companies, latching onto smaller and smaller sectors and not fulfilling their promises of footfall at events.



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The Hemp Trades Association (trading as the Cannabis Trades Association UK) is a not for profit company limited by guarantee without share capital in England and Wales No. 10472540 incorporated in November 2016.

## Member Engagement and Value

Enhanced member benefits, including exclusive access to industry reports, regulatory updates, external event media partnerships, banking and insurance, and networking events.

B2B Introductions and networking.

Emergency Helpline – we help our members when we can (discretely).

Fostering a collaborative and innovative community.

Executive Membership Committee – set up but due to fluctuations in the market we were unable to get this up to speed.

## Advocacy and Regulatory Developments

- Played a pivotal role in advocating for hemp and CBD businesses contributing to policy adjustments and increased awareness.

Helping to establish medicinal supply chains internationally.

- Engaged with policymakers to discuss the future of cannabis regulation in the UK, emphasising the importance of industry input through the APPG for hemp and CBD products.

## Strategies for 2024

- Focus on building supply chains, supporting our members businesses and consumer protection.
- Launching a member referral program, further incentivising growth and engagement within the industry.
- MP Toolkit – to enable businesses to contact and engage with their local MPs to bring CBD, hemp and cannabis business to being about positive perception by the political classes.
- Launch a comprehensive industry-wide data project to better understand market dynamics and support evidence-based advocacy.
- Strengthen international partnerships to foster global insights and opportunities for our members.
- We have and upcoming exciting campaign to build consumer confidence across the sectors.
- Lockyer's Insurance are joining the CTA with a fantastic deal for a specifically tailored cannabis insurance.

More will be revealed in due course.

## Conclusion and Call to Action

As we reflect on the past year and look forward to the future, it is clear that the strength of the CTA lies in our collective commitment to advancing the legal hemp and cannabis industry in the UK and worldwide. Through continued collaboration, innovation, and advocacy, we can achieve our shared goals and overcome any challenges that lie ahead.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all our members for your ongoing support and dedication. Together, we are shaping a promising future for cannabis in the UK.

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*This report encapsulates the concerted efforts, achievements, and future directions of the CTA, underlining the crucial role of PR and Marketing in our journey. It's intended to serve not just as a record of what has been accomplished but also as a roadmap for continued advocacy and growth in the UK's evolving legal cannabis sector.*



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