

Weed is the new craft beer, says ex-Budweiser chief

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Budweiser's former chief marketing officer recently moved from beer to pot, a sign of the alcohol industry's growing interest in the marijuana-selling business.

Chris Burggraeve, 52, Anheuser-Busch's former CMO, is now on the advisory board of GreenRush Group, a San Francisco-based startup that sees itself as “the Amazon of weed,” according to [Bloomberg](#). He also co-founded Toast, a company that produces pre-rolled joints.

Burggraeve is not the first from the beer industry to jump on the cannabis bandwagon. Last month, Constellation Brands Inc., which sells Corona, invested in Canopy Growth Corp., a Canadian seller of medical marijuana items.

“This is one of the fastest-growing categories globally,” Burggraeve told [Bloomberg](#). “Why? Because people want it. When consumers want something, you ignore it at your peril.”

New Jersey's 2017 voters guide to marijuana legalization

And he seems to be correct. About 64% of Americans want the federal ban on marijuana lifted, according to a Gallup poll from October. Burggraeve is now consulting and investing in “disruptive categories,” like weed. He believes it could hit the beer industry in the same way microbreweries have over the past 20 years.

“The same way that craft beer started and, for the longest time, was ignored and then exploded, there's no reason why the same thing wouldn't happen in this space,” he [said](#). “There will be part supplementing and part complementing. The jury is out on how and where that will happen.”

That's why he's now a part of GreenRush - the company connects buyers to dispensaries and delivery people in California and Nevada. It plans on bringing its brand to New York and Massachusetts soon.

Eight states and the District of Columbia allow recreational marijuana use, and 21 states allow it for medicinal purposes. It was a \$6 billion industry in 2016, [Bloomberg](#) reported, and is forecasted to reach \$50 billion by 2026.

“It will all merge and cross-fertilize and fuse,” Burggraeve [said](#), “not because the companies want it, but because the consumers want it.”