

Weedmaps addresses cannabis censorship in digital ad

March 2, 2022



By WM Communications Team

There was a lot to see during the 2022 Super Bowl event. Whether you watched the game, the advertisements, or the halftime show, the spectacle that surrounds the annual television event is always something to behold.

For Weedmaps, Super Bowl LVI was special given it was hosted in nearby Los Angeles. With all eyes on southern California, the company wanted to be part of the action, but inserting cannabis into the mainstream conversation would be a tricky one. Advertising cannabis — even non-plant touching businesses like Weedmaps — isn't allowed on network TV. In the end, the team took this opportunity to discuss censorship of the plant in a very Weedmaps way. Enter: [Brock Ollie](#).

The Weedmaps marketing team created the Brock Ollie character to showcase the illogical omission of cannabis in most mainstream advertising. (Side note: For those less familiar with cannabis culture, the [broccoli emoji](#) is often used as a stand-in for the cannabis plant.) In the ad, Brock notes the usage of his likeness as a "substitute" for cannabis, and laments the ill effects it has caused him. The call to action of [#SaveBrockOllie](#) brought a sense of humor to the issue, and helped bring the conversation to the forefront.

The digital-only spot broke through the immense Super Bowl news cycle, and helped position Weedmaps as a leader in driving progress and positive change for the cannabis industry, and raised awareness around cannabis marketing restrictions brands and businesses within the industry are faced with every day.

"Despite three quarters of the country having legalized cannabis in some form and the bipartisan enthusiasm we continue to see in support for change at the federal level, the industry continues to face roadblocks that inhibit competition in the state-legal market and stifle opportunities to educate," said Chris Beals, chief executive officer of Weedmaps. "There's an irony in the fact that the biggest night for advertising features an array of consumer brands in regulated industries, from alcoholic beverages to sports betting, yet legal cannabis retailers, brands and businesses have been boxed out."

Due to Super Bowl buzz and the growing conversation around cannabis censorship, the digital ad was covered extensively in the press, with nearly 325 million media impressions as of Feb. 23, 2022, and 235 editorial, social, and broadcast placements. Coverage of the ad included feature stories in [Adweek](#), [Forbes](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Benzinga](#), and [Digitoday](#).