Weedmaps + SXSW 2022: Key Takeaways

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"Combatting the Censorship Crisis" from L to R: **Ronit Pinto** (Honeysuckle Media), **Javier Hasse** (Benzinga, El Planteo), **Juanjo Feijoo** (CMO, COO, Weedmaps)

By WM Communications Team

SXSW was back in 2022, and dare we say, better than ever? The Weedmaps sponsored **Cannabis Industry Evolution Summit** provided an incredible opportunity to connect in-person with attendees who share the Weedmaps vision of propelling the industry forward, and building a more inclusive cannabis economy. Whether it was in the Weedmaps Lounge or at a panel featuring a Weedmaps exec, there were a ton of great takeaways. Here's a recap of the event, and our takeaways from the summit.

- **Panel**: Technology: **The Key to Growing the Cannabis Industry**, featuring Chris Beals, CEO of Weedmaps
  What we learned: Cannabis is a complex industry that's only becoming more complex as new states enter the market, products hit the shelves and consumer behavior evolves. From SKUs, pricing, and potency to clinical effects, compliance and regulation–technology is streamlining the consumer and operator experience.

- **Panel**: **Global View: Weed on the World Stage**, featuring Bridget Hennessey, VP of Public Affairs at Weedmaps
  What we learned: Nations and states looking to enter the market don't need to reinvent the wheel, but rather learn from the successes and failures of others, including the US. Mexico, where legal recreational cannabis has been signed into policy nation-wide–is largely expected to become a major cultivation, innovation and consumption hub in coming years.



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"Rewriting Cannabis Drug Testing Policies" with (from L to R)
Shayda Torabi (Restart CBD), **Rich Kleiman** (35 Ventures + Boardroom),
Chris Beals (CEO, Weedmaps), **Ricky Williams** (Highsman, former NFL player)

- **Panel**: **Combating the Censorship Crisis**, featuring Juanjo Feijoo, COO and CMO at Weedmaps
  What we learned: Censoring cannabis marketing is not just hindering business growth, but is also preventing new consumers from educating themselves about how to consume new, legal products safely and enjoyably. While advertising isn't without its challenges for us now, we are confident that cannabis will have its own emoji (other than broccoli) in the near future. **Watch a recording of this panel on YouTube.**

- **Panel**: **Rewriting Cannabis Drug Testing Policies**, featuring CEO, Chris Beals. **What we learned**: The conversation around sports and cannabis is (finally) changing. Panelist and former NFL player Ricky Williams, who was suspended from the league for violating its drug-abuse policy, shared how different the public reaction to Sha'Carri Richardson's Olympic ban was to his own experience. Ultimately, the sports world, and world at large are becoming more tolerant.