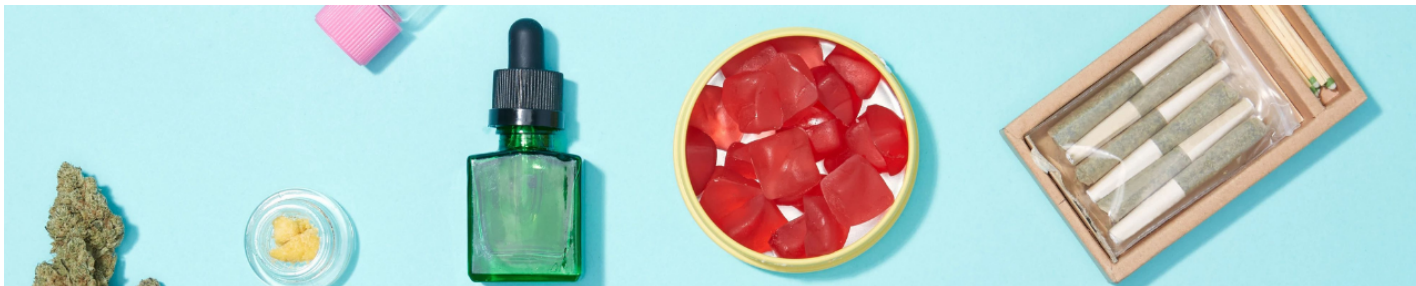


Q&A with Michele Cheowtirakul, VP and GM of Brands

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By WM Communications Team

Michele Cheowtirakul, VP and GM of Brands, leads the long-term strategic planning and execution of growth opportunities for Weedmaps. In addition to finding ways to scale the business and drive revenue, she oversees the development of Weedmaps solutions for WM Brands.



Q: Tell us about your role at Weedmaps.

I run our WM Brands business. This means I get to work with a talented group of product managers, engineers, product marketers, sales leaders, and strategy and operations leads to build and commercialize marketing and growth solutions for cannabis brands. I also get to spend time with leaders at some of the best brands in the industry, and the companies and people who have made cannabis industry history. I get to understand their story, their goals, and how we can help them grow more efficiently. In a nutshell, my role is about helping clients solve their growth problems.

Q: What aspects of the business are you working on day-to-day?

As the dedicated WM Brands team is a newer group, we're focused on addressing the needs of cannabis brands specifically. Right now, my day-to-day consists mainly of building a lot of client engagement. I'd break it down into these three things:

Product roadmap and development: This involves work with our talented Product team, developing, launching, and testing brand-specific products — we recently launched Brands Insights, Weedmaps' first data product. Given the expanse of Weedmaps' menu and interaction data, we had to think carefully about where to focus our v1 and what use cases we could knock out of the ballpark. I'm also spending a lot of time talking to other leaders about product and go-to-market strategy on products critical to the brands offering, like Ads, Sprout/CRM and WM Store.

- **Go-to-market strategy and enablement:** We recently launched a sales enablement series to launch our new paid listing product suite, and it's exciting to see the ingenuity and work of the product teams come alive commercially in the hand-off to sales. It's been important to build excitement internally with our sales team first. It's been some time since we've had this much new Brands product rolling off the line. The early client response has been positive and we want them to be ready before we tell our story externally.
- **Meeting with clients:** This is a highlight of my role. I get to talk to leaders and talent who are building an industry as they build their brand, and doing it in each state they set their sights on. Amidst the building activity, I try to spend as much time as possible listening in on calls or connecting with clients, who in several cases have become friends, to understand where they are trying to go and how we can help them get there.

Q: What predictions do you have for the future of cannabis brands becoming mainstream?

As markets mature, consumers in newer cannabis markets are more quickly educated by retailer and brand marketing efforts, and as cannabis companies access media with broader reach, the cannabis consumer will increasingly shop by brand and product preferences — and Weedmaps will be there to meet them.

We've already seen in our own data an increase in brand and product-first use cases. There is work on our site to be inclusive of these purchase habits, and our investment in helping to enable Brands ecommerce with consumers speaks to a generation of consumers who not only know what brands and products they like, but also commit to them via a direct relationship with the brand.

I think consumers will shop for cannabis the way they shop for less stigmatized items sooner than we think, as companies like ours normalize access and improve online transactions, resulting in more and more cannabis brands becoming household names. But this also means a raised bar for the thousands of brands competing for that consumer. Luckily, we have a few tools that can help!