

**WE HAVE THE DATA.  
NOW WHAT?**



# WE HAVE THE DATA. NOW WHAT?

The Study data shows that these women are powerful individuals who WANT to make a difference.

We need a reminder that we can harness that power—both individually and as a collective—so that we can put that power to use and make change.

The shared experiences of women in this space can unite the community in ways many may not have realized. We hope business leaders, regulators, professionals, and consumers alike take the information within this report to help guide policies and procedures that will truly make this industry inclusive.

We are at an important time in history. We now have the hard numbers that demonstrate that the industry is not equitable, and in some cases not safe, for women. And the issues that exist are even larger issues for Women of Color, the LGBTQIA+ community, and disabled women.

**What changes are necessary to move the industry towards equity and inclusion for women and marginalized populations?**



*You have to continue to not get beat down by an industry that is still building the car.*

***We have to pivot a lot to account for what the industry hasn't necessarily built a foundation for yet.***

*I am a big proponent of federal legalization because it'll clear a lot of that up.*

BUSINESS OWNER, MA



# MOVING FORWARD

Creating a more inclusive and equitable industry will require introspection, self-reflection, education, personal responsibility, active allyship, systemic changes and BIG ideas.

Change must begin at a personal level.

We must each take personal responsibility for our own actions that contribute to upholding a system where women and marginalized populations are not provided the same respect and opportunities as others.

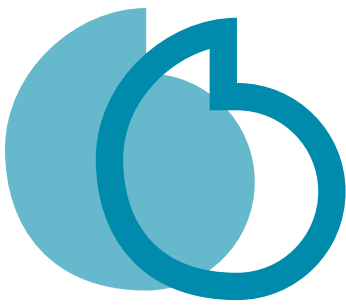
That personal responsibility begins with self-reflection and education.



*The “bro’s club” culture that often exists within cannabis companies is more so a lack of understanding of how to change or how to create an environment that women can feel safe and appreciated.*

BUSINESS OWNER, CA





## IN MY WORDS...

*I have 20+ years of HR experience and was excited to join a new industry and even more excited that it was cannabis.*

***The level of unconscious bias masked as liberalism is disheartening, and the sexist comments for externally-facing positions was cringe-worthy of an era that I thought had gone by.***

***The women working in cannabis are fighting the good fight, facing microaggressions and outward sexism that will have the same impact that it had in tech—underrepresentation. Yet, we are 51% of the buyer market.***

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, OR

*I don't know what the future holds, but I know what I need to do next: Use the education and skills I own to give voice to women-centric businesses in the emerging cannabis industry.*

*There are so many cannabis stories to tell and I feel honored to be one of the storytellers. Casting myself as a maternal voice of the cannabis industry is not really a natural fit, but I've found a community in cannabis that encourages me to use my legal and advocacy skills to give women in this emerging industry a voice, and support their dreams.*

***We never get to be part of something new and make the rules, that is what I find most exciting about this new industry.***

*I was indoctrinated into this industry through men who chose not to value what I had to give, so I left them and started my own thing. We'll see how it goes!*

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, MA

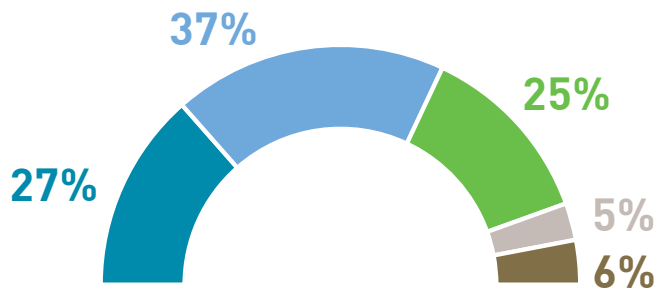


# ACTIVE ALLYSHIP: STANDING TOGETHER

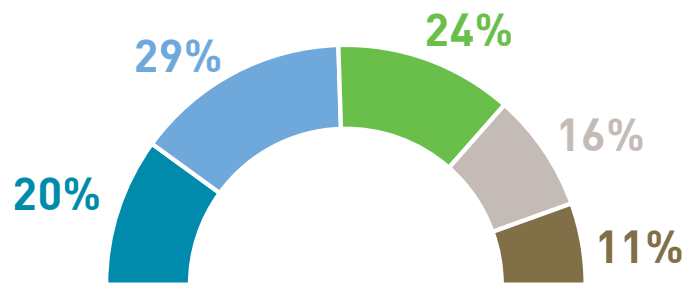
As the data has shown, the obstacles and barriers faced by women and marginalized populations are significant.

63% of respondents agreed that overall, male allyship is critical to women's success in the cannabis industry. However, just 49% agreed that male allyship was helpful to *their* career. What we can further explore is why so few women find male allyship has helped their own careers, despite being viewed a critical element.

### ALLYSHIP IS CRITICAL TO WOMEN'S SUCCESS



### ALLYSHIP WAS CRITICAL TO MY SUCCESS



● Strongly agree    ● Agree    ● Neutral    ● Disagree    ● Strongly disagree



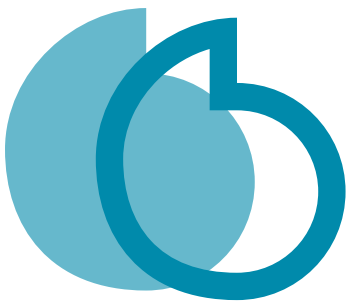
*I am blessed to have incredible male colleagues who value my work and who have mentored, coached, and trained me in areas that I have struggled with.*

CF0, CO



What can you do to help remove obstacles for others?

Q30. How much do you agree with the following statement: Overall, male allyship is critical to women's success in this industry.  
Q31. How much do you agree with the following statement: Male allyship has been critical to MY success in this industry.



## IN MY WORDS...

*I've had male colleagues that I've talked to about what happened with me [in terms of sexual harassment].*

***I feel like they could have been more supportive. They kind of brushed it off... [Men] could speak up more.***

*A lot of people don't want to speak up [about sexual harassment] just because it's cannabis. Both genders are still leery about that.*

MANAGER, CA

***Ways men can help are backing women when they make suggestions.***

*Not giving in to sexist jokes at work.*

*Calling out the sexist terms given to women (emotional, aggressive, etc.) when their male counterparts act the same.*

MANAGER, OR





## IN MY WORDS...

*Overall, my experience in cannabis has more robustly informed my knowledge of inherent white male privilege and the ability of men to network and gain trust in this industry (it's easy when you don't grow up hearing "no" or experiencing career-related microaggressions due to your gender).*

*This is true of almost any industry, but **the cannabis industry has a greater responsibility/opportunity due to its youth and lack of existing inhibiting structures you find in more traditional industries.***

BUSINESS MANAGER, WA

*Any help I can give to my fellow cannabis women and men, I am more than willing to talk to them about.*

*It's not about hoarding information and letting people struggle.*

***There's enough to go around for everyone and by working together, we can make sure our cannabis industry survives.***

REAL ESTATE BROKER, CA

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# PAY

# PROMOTE

# PARTNER

# PROTECT

## Women Working In Cannabis

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**WEIC**<sup>®</sup>



WOMEN EMPLOYED IN CANNABIS

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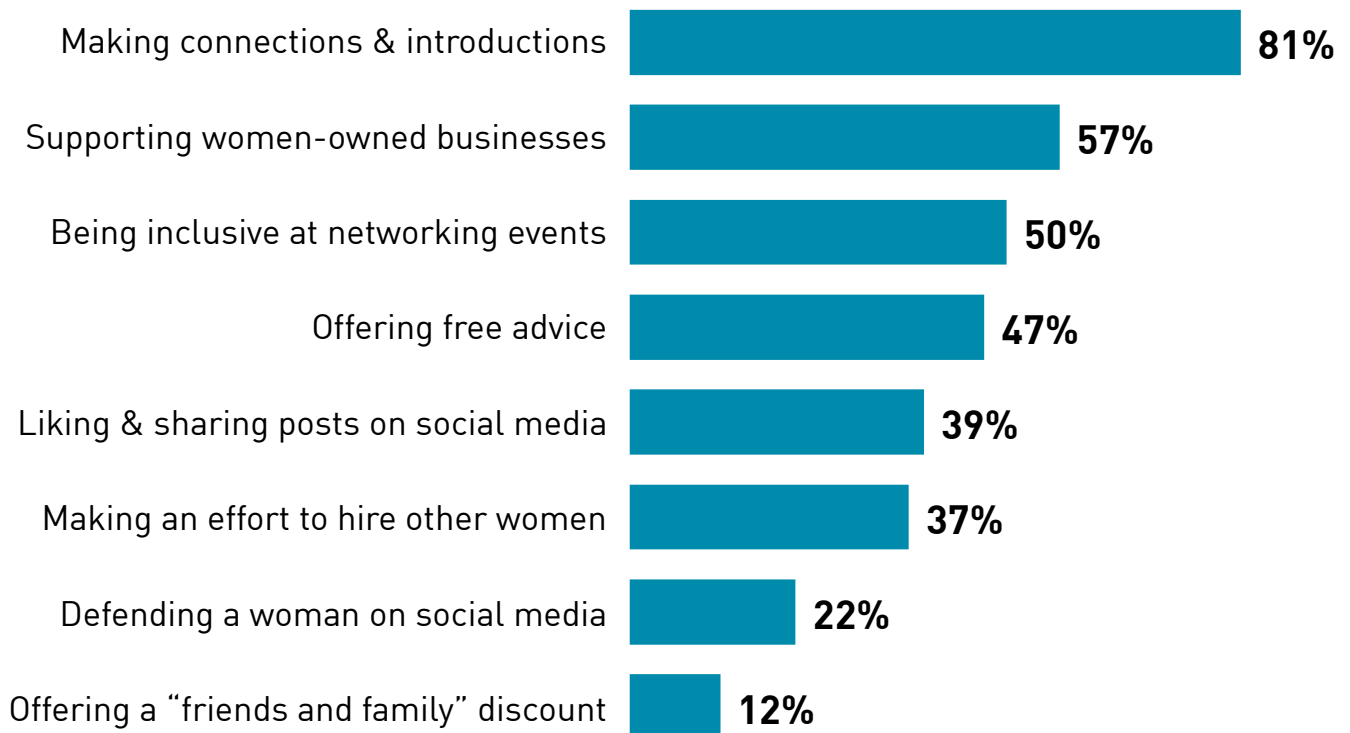




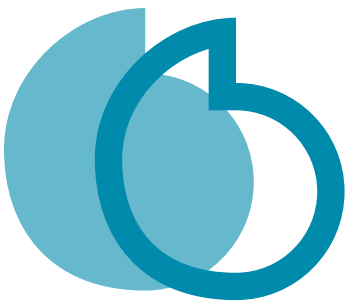
# ACTIVE ALLYSHIP: STANDING TOGETHER

Women supporting women is an equally important measure in the path to success, as women look for more direct support from allies in the cannabis industry.

We asked women the type of support from *other women* has been most helpful in their career and perhaps not surprisingly 81% said “Making Connections & Introductions” was most helpful. Additionally, over half of respondents noted “Supporting Women-Owned Business” and “Being Inclusive at Networking Events” highlighting the importance of women focused programs to encourage stronger women allyship.



What support can you provide to women in cannabis as an ally?



## IN MY WORDS...

*To be honest, I just don't know very many women in the industry, and the ones I do know don't seem particularly interested in connecting.*

*The only women in the industry I have are my employees, so I'm mostly in a mentorship role for them, but **I have a hard time finding any mentorship at higher executive levels.***

BUSINESS OWNER, OK

*Unfortunately, I think we all need to be more supportive of each other.*

*I find myself offering help to others, but I'm yet to feel like other women support me.*

*This survey made me realize that. **We're so quick to cut each other down, it's time to start lifting each other up.***

MANAGER, MA

*Find a mentor, a partner – somebody who can help you navigate the intricacies of all of this.*

*The thing is, working in the cannabis space is not like working in any other industry.*

CEO, IL



# SYSTEMIC CHANGE

How do we collectively make change as an industry?  
We take ACTION.

It's not enough to TALK about how we want the cannabis industry to be equitable for everyone. We need to do the work, whether it's supporting political changes, providing alternative models for capital and resources, redefining organizational structures or providing safe spaces for marginalized employees.



***Disruptive Capitalism is fun....let's do this!***

BUSINESS OWNER, OR

*I resigned from a C-level position due to disagreements with the investors that came into a successful startup.*

CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICER, CA

*There are a lot of issues when it comes to power dynamics nowadays, and **unless we have a broad coalition that expresses the interest of laborers in cannabis, then we will continue to be exploited.***

SALES ASSOCIATE, CA



There is much work to be done to support positive change.  
What can you do?

## The Cohort

The Cohort is an incubator and peer to peer community that pilots revenue generating social responsibility and sustainability initiatives.

We take guesswork out of where to start and reduce the financial commitment in seeking out expertise. Our '21/22 Cohort discovered:

- That a waste audit enables organizations to discover cost savings, and create new revenue streams by selling waste.
- How a stakeholder analysis creates the foundation to access impact investing and social finance capital.
- That employee engagement surveys help correct pain points to reduce absenteeism and turnover.

## Retail Disclosure Initiative

The Retail Disclosure Initiative is a turnkey solution to help retailers become more transparent to consumers to build loyalty.

Sustainability transparency closes the intention-action gap for consumers and draws in a totally new market of sustainability seekers.

- 60% of consumers are willing to change their shopping habits in an effort to become more sustainable
- 98% of a retailers environmental impact occur outside of their direct control
- 96% of consumers would like retail brands to help them lead a more sustainable lifestyle



## IN MY WORDS...

*There aren't enough equity programs in CA, and those that exist don't work well, with the exception of maybe Oakland.*

***We have SO much to do to even begin righting the wrongs of the war on drugs; at an absolute minimum, we need to free people from jail and expunge their records, but we also need to support them and help them get their lives back.***

*This includes prioritizing equity applicants for cannabis licenses of all kinds.*

COO, CA

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*I've worked for several companies in the cannabis industry.*

***One thing that's been apparent is that there are few resources employees have at their disposal when bad things happen.***

*Whether it's sexual harassment, contract breach, or manipulation/lying, I've seen so many women in this industry feel dejected and frustrated because of employer misbehavior.*

*Many cannabis businesses are small startups run by folks who have not run a business before.*

***When they fail to execute the basic business tasks necessary to run a successful business, it's usually the employees who experience hardship.***

SALES & MARKETING DIRECTOR, OR





# IN CONCLUSION...

The Women in Cannabis Study revealed many fascinating insights and touchpoints, offering an eye-opening perspective on what it's really like for women working in this space.

It showed us that despite our differences, we are more alike in our experiences than we may have realized, both good and bad. We have learned:

- Most women in cannabis have a personal connection to the plant, and many smoke every day.
- Women are everywhere in the vertical, from the boardroom to the greenhouse to the dispensary and everywhere in between.
- Lack of economic opportunity, harassment, discrimination, and bullying are real problems facing many women in the space.
- Nearly all women in cannabis surveyed reported dealing with self-esteem issues of some kind.
- Despite an overwhelming number of respondents believing the cannabis industry is not equitable, the vast majority consider themselves to be successful.



**What were your big takeaways from the data & stories?**

These and the many other lessons learned through the Study are indeed compelling and provoke further inquiry into **what comes next**.

Our Founder, Jennifer Whetzel, refers to the Oracle archetype when describing this research project:

*The Oracle does not intervene; action always comes from the seeker. The question then will be: How do we proceed — how do we use the information we have to shape our destiny?*

Our initial goal with the Women in Cannabis Study was to develop a living history, utilizing the power of storytelling to deliver crucial data to the world. However, it soon became clear that this research has the ability to impact the way we think, change how we do business, and set the bar higher for our industry as a whole.

The work is only just beginning. It's time to take what we have learned and put it into action. Ask yourself what you can do better, and continue to sound the alarm when injustices occur.

**Be bold, lift one another up, and remember we are on this journey together.**



*Change takes time, but we are on the right path.*

*Celebrate how far you've come, look forward to the successes ahead, and lean on each other in dark times.*

*And at the end of the day, **don't forget that you are enough.***

JENNIFER WHETZEL, AUTHOR



# REPORT CHAPTERS

Interested in learning more? Download additional results at [womenincannabis.study/study-chapters](https://womenincannabis.study/study-chapters).

Introduction

Methodology

Who are the Women Working in Cannabis?

Which Roles do they Play in the Industry?

Why Work in Cannabis?

What Relationship Do Women Have with Cannabis?

What are the Barriers to Success?

What Else Holds Women Back?

BIPOC Women in Cannabis

LGBTQIA+ in Cannabis

How do Women Define Success?

We Have the Data, Now What?

Leverage the Power of the Data

Profiles of Women in Cannabis

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# THANK YOU

WOMEN IN CANNABIS  
*a Living History*

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