



NorthernHelm | cure8
CANNABIS

Northern Helm Case Study

Background

Northern Helm is a new and fast-growing cannabis retail company in Ontario, Canada, led by CEO David Cote, that describes their stores as "simple, celebratory, and current," and as "normalizing the cannabis retail experience." They're seeking to launch stores in over 30 communities in the province by 2024.

They want to make retail cannabis accessible and un-intimidating to everyone, including first time users, with a "simple and modern industrial aesthetic" and "curated selection of products in various formats" (not just smokeable flower or "plain old pot"), as well as tightly-controlled branding, cozy and economical interiors, and consistent processes across all their locations.

Summary

Type: Dispensaries

Locations: 6

Key Needs:

- A Reliable Tech Partner
- Install & Manage Their IT
 - POS
 - Network
 - Back Office IT
- Smooth, Modern Customizer Experience
- Consistency Across Locations
- Opening Multiple Stores Simultaneously

Problem

The leadership of Northern Helm knew from their background at other cannabis retailers that they would need help with the rollout and management of the tech at their dispensaries.

It's not just that setting up and managing tech at a dispensary can be a handful, especially for busy dispensary executives and managers. The company wanted tech that was professional-grade and consistent across all stores, ensuring a modern image and stellar customer experience throughout the franchise. Plus, the company was looking to scale and scale quickly, opening 5 or more stores in just a few months in different locations throughout the province, with many more stores planned.

It would have been hard for them to accomplish all these things internally without a dedicated IT department.

The team at Northern Helm was aware of this, which is why they reached out to the team at Cure8. Northern Helm knew us from our work with Tokyo Smoke, one of Canada's largest cannabis retailers. They were confident we could deliver quality results at a large scale, within a tight timeframe, and at a competitive price point.

Solution

Planning & Site Design

Northern Helm brought us in when many other clients do, as they were drawing up their site designs. That way we can advise on things like camera, low voltage cabling, rack, wireless access point, and drop placement, to avoid mistakes and redos that can add to your costs.

We also use this stage to learn what we need to know about the client and their IT, including any existing POS system and other software, ISPs, etc., and their planned locations and open dates, and adjust our internal plans accordingly.

Procurement & Installation

Based on information we gathered in the planning stage, we obtained the hardware needed for Northern Helm's dispensaries, including tablets, tablet stands, receipt printers, a networking switch, a firewall appliance, and a UPS. We have a dedicated procurement team working hard to ensure that missing IT hardware is never the reason for a missed launch date, even with global supply shortages.

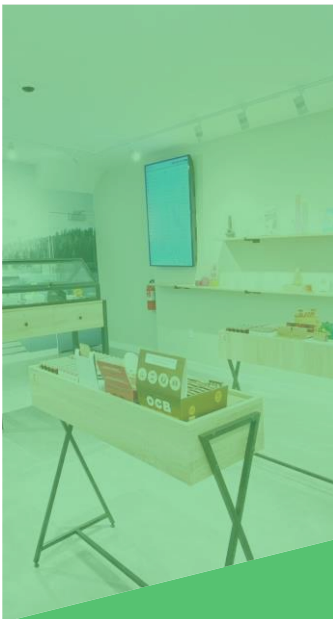
In addition, we coordinated with the ISPs for each location to set up the appropriate internet, always checking with multiple vendors to make sure our clients got the best bandwidth at the best deal.

As for the actual installations, we coordinated both with Northern Helm's leaderships as well as individuals at each store - managers, assistant managers, and other vendors including ISPs, contractors, and electricians - to ensure our installers came in at exactly the right time (usually, after electricity and internet is in but before products, because products have to be entered into the POS as soon as they arrive), and to avoid interfering with any other vendors' work and generally getting in the way.

Our installers typically spent as little as a few hours to a full business day and a half, depending on the complexity of the install.

The install often involved:

- Unboxing and assembling all of the hardware
- Installing all the hardware in the networking rack
- Installing the POS tablets, tablet stands, receipt printers, and cash drawers
- Installing and testing the POS software
- Installing and testing dutchie online ordering system
- Installing wireless access points on the ceiling
- Running and organizing low voltage cabling
- Setting up the network - including setting up and verifying WiFi access, segmenting and protecting the POS system network as required by PCI DSS, and configuring the switch and firewall
- Setting up the manager's laptop and printer



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- Larry Cote, Store Owner

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Solution (continued)

IT Management, Security, & Support

Cure8 has had Northern Helm's IT ready to go on-time in every case so far, but that's only the start of it. The team at Northern Helm, being experienced in cannabis retail, knew the importance of maintaining their tech in the long term. Dispensary tech doesn't manage and maintain itself, and if left alone it can cause issues such as POS outages, internet outages, security breaches, and lost surveillance footage, which can result in everything from lost sales and customers to lost licenses (and therefore entire locations).

Northern Helm contracted with Cure8 for Cure8 to manage its IT, including these specific responsibilities:

- 24/7/365 network monitoring
- Mobile device management - updating, securing, & monitoring POS tablets
- Manager PC management - updating, securing, & monitoring the managers' PCs
- Surveillance system management - monitoring and troubleshooting the company's surveillance system
- 24/7/365 tech support

Result

Cure8 has helped Northern Helm launch and manage their 6 existing stores, and we look forward to working with them with their further expansion in Ontario and New York.

