



cure8

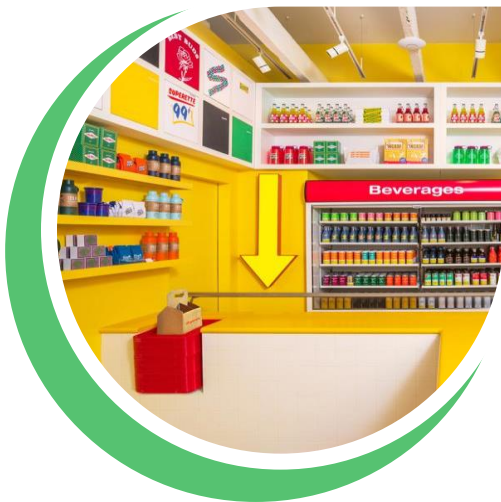


CASE STORY

Executive Summary

Superette's founders had a unique and bold vision for their cannabis retail stores. To make it happen, they needed an IT partner that thought outside the box and shared their obsession with quality, detail, and customer experience.

Here's the story of how Cure8 helped Superette to launch and grow into one of the cannabis industry's most distinctive, respected, and successful companies.



Superette - the People-Focused Dispensary Making Buying Weed as Fun as Using It

Around 2018, future Superette CEO Mimi Lam and Chief Brand Officer Drummond Munro were executives at Tokyo Smoke, the Canadian cannabis retailer, when it was acquired by cannabis industry behemoth Canopy Growth, at the time the largest cannabis company in the world.

Most people in that position would have stayed on, but Lam and Drummond had other ideas. They wanted to strike out on their own and create a retailer that, as they would say, made “buying cannabis as fun as using it.”

These days Superette is one of the most recognizable and respected names in cannabis retail. They're well-known for their quirky, well-designed stores, with 50's

soda shop decor (lots of red and white tiling) and fun little touches like marquee-style menus, shelves that look like a flower shop's, ID check-ins that look like a photo booth, and color-coded shopping baskets that signal to budtenders whether you need help or not.

Their stores have won Clio and Dispensary of the Year awards, their company and founders featured in every cannabis publication you can name. Their store in the Ottawa neighborhood of Glebe received a lot of glowing coverage in cannabis, Canadian, and art and design media. They've opened six stores so far, with plans to open four more by the end of 2022.



Seeing the Need for a Tech Partner, Almost Too Late

Lam, Drummond, and the rest of the Superette team are geniuses when it comes to retail customer experience, branding, marketing, and more.

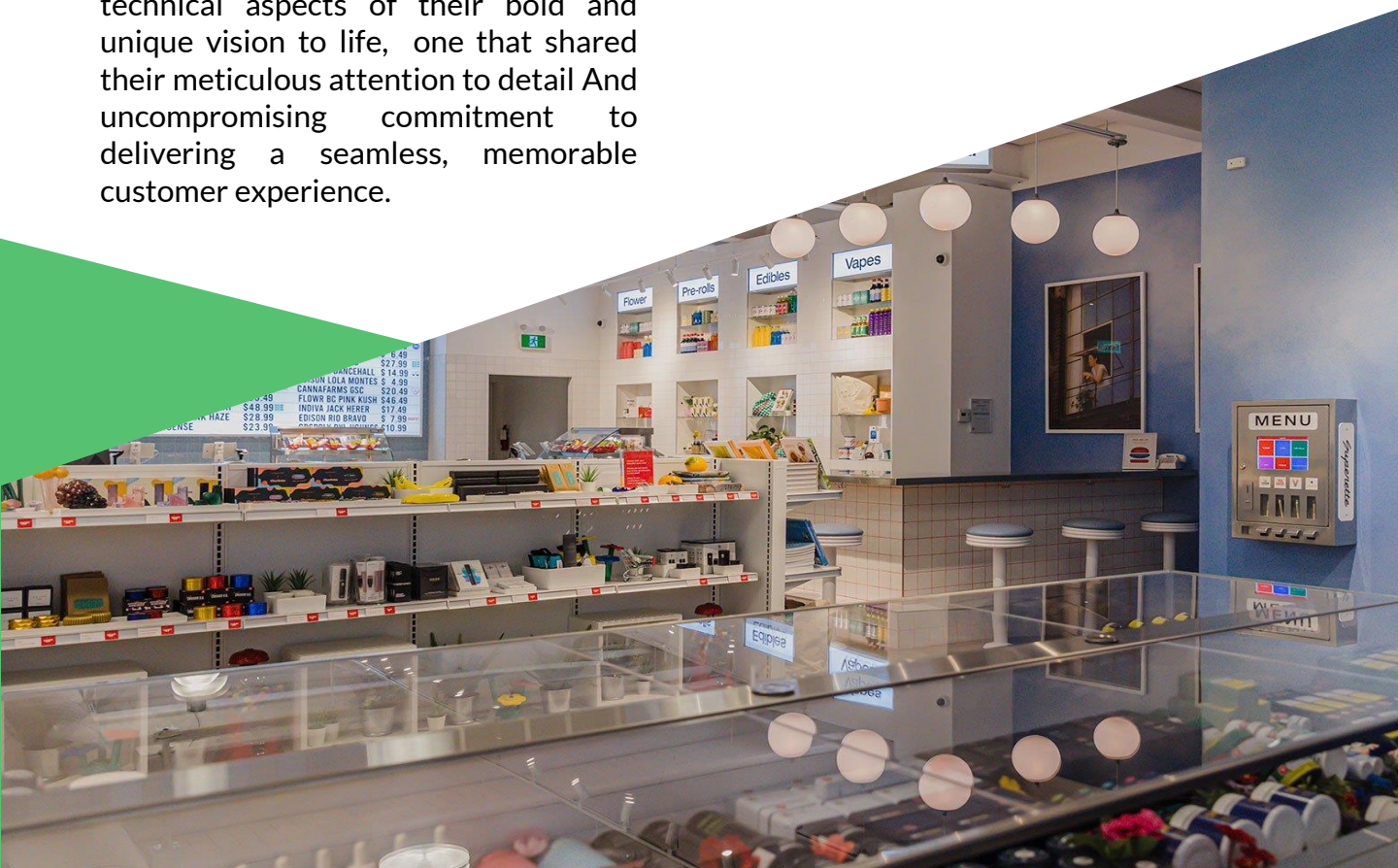
But one thing they didn't have a handle on when first starting out, which became clearer as they came closer to their inspection and launch days, was their IT. It wasn't in their wheelhouse, and they had a million other aspects of their business where their focus and skills could be put to better use.

Looking around at the available IT resources, they didn't want just any IT partner. They needed one that didn't just offer cookie-cutter IT services but could work with them to bring the technical aspects of their bold and unique vision to life, one that shared their meticulous attention to detail and uncompromising commitment to delivering a seamless, memorable customer experience.

And oh, because they were opening their stores in Ontario and the regulators there often gave extremely short notice for inspection and launch days, their IT company needed to be able to move quickly and on short notice, too.

And because they were a fairly small company at least partly funded from their founders' own personal savings, they didn't have a billion dollars to spend on tech or the leeway to botch their initial rollouts either.

They faced a choice: hire internally or look into finding an IT services company to partner with.



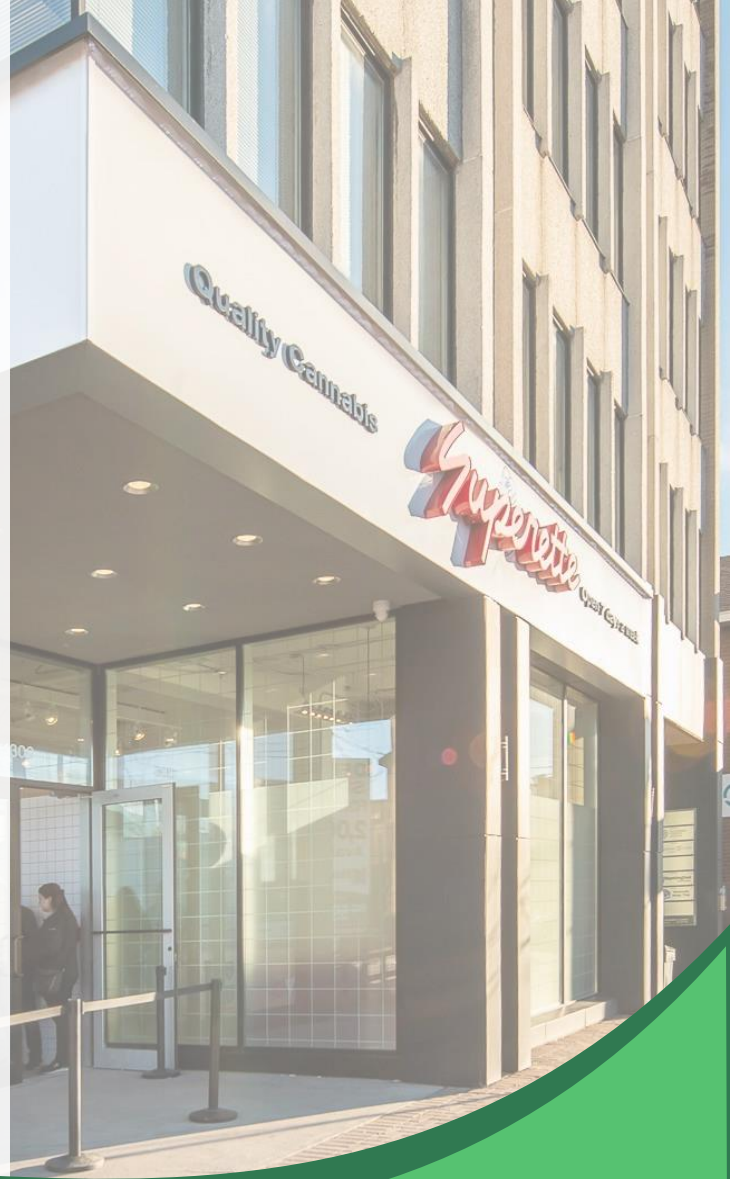
Not Meant to Be?

They didn't go with Cure8 at first.

Superette is a very locally-driven company and they wanted their IT partner to be a local business. They launched their first store in Ottawa with an Ottawa-based IT provider.

But Superette quickly realized as it began working on rolling out its next set of stores that this IT provider wasn't going to cut it. Their provider had a limited number of people, and they were spending too much of their time traveling from one location to the next, fixing a problem here and setting up something there.

At the same time, it didn't make much sense for them to take on the overhead of two or more internal IT people as a relatively small company.



Now the managed services of Cure8 made sense.

This is often the most common point when cannabis retailers first reach to us. They have a few stores, and they're able to manage their tech internally or with a small local IT company well enough, though it feels like things can be smoother. They want to get their IT in order and under control before continuing to grow even further.

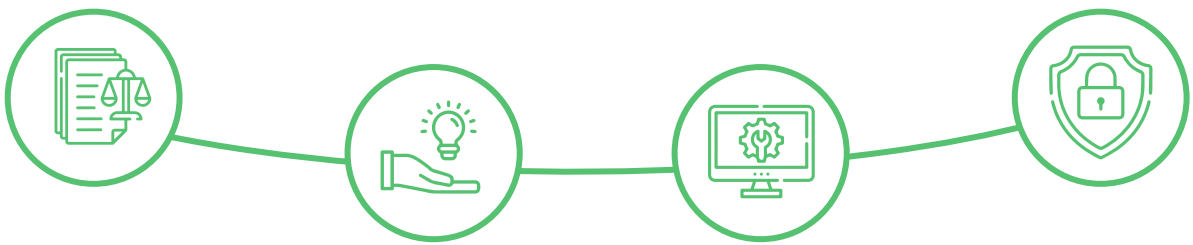
What Are Managed IT Services, Anyway?

If you're not familiar with the concept of managed IT services, it's when a company outsources the management of its IT. You pay the managed services provider (MSP) a certain amount per month to monitor, manage, and protect your IT, which often includes a certain number of hours of on-demand tech support. Pricing can be based on the number of users, devices, locations, etc.

There are literally thousands of MSPs out there and probably at least half a dozen of them within 10-20 mins driving distance of any given urban area.

Some of them are good, some of them aren't so good. In certain cases the best MSP for you depends on personal preference and the relationship built between the MSP and the client rather than purely technical considerations.

MSPs are especially beneficial for "tweener" companies like Superette that aren't small lifestyle businesses or huge mega-corporations, but somewhere in between. They have significant IT needs, but not enough to justify hiring an in-house team.



Plus, MSPs usually:

- Are less expensive than hiring internally
- Offer more flexibility in terms of cost (you pay on a per-user, per-device, or per-location basis as you grow, while internal hires are lump sum that can handle what they can handle and no more)
- Have more people available to help at any given time
- Have wider and deeper technical knowledge and experience than any single person (especially important now as IT continues to get more and more complicated and specialized)



Why Superette Ended Up Choosing Cure8

Partner-Like Approach

When it came time to select an MSP, there were a number of things about Cure8 that appealed to Superette.

For one, the team already knew and trusted Cure8 from working with them when they were at Tokyo Smoke.

Second, there's our partner-like, consultative approach. Our first meeting with Superette was an informal discussion with our head of operations, Munir Haque. Munir always starts with clients by asking them about their biggest tech problems, trying to get an understanding of both their day-to-day and long-term needs. Munir and the Cure8 team also genuinely care about understanding and fixing our clients' tech problems, which came across loud and clear to the Superette team.

After that initial call and through onboarding, Munir and other Cure8 advisors remained available for discussions, collaboration, and planning, working together on site designs, project plans and schedules, and more.

This reassured Superette, who were worried about giving up the flexible and consultative, hey-let's-chat-about-this-and-figure-it-out-together aspect of having an internal IT person. They realized that with Cure8 they had this level of flexibility and control and also gained a lot more, including true CIO-level expertise and an enterprise IT department-sized team of technicians, engineers, and project managers, available 24/7/365.

A key part of our discussions with Superette was developing their standard IT template or stack, which we do with all of our multi-location clients. We work with the client to select the hardware and software that works best for them and fits their style, budget, technical requirements. This standardized stack - standardization being a must in any rapidly-scaling organization - makes it a lot easier to set up, procure, and manage the tech later on.



Willing to Break the Mold

Also, Cure8 didn't bat an eye when Superette talked about its plans for things like a Munchie phone that when picked up automatically orders a burger or pizza from a nearby restaurant, or a preroll dispenser that looked like an old school slot machine.

Or when Superette mentioned that unlike a lot of dispensaries like MedMen that modeled themselves on the Apple store, and had a bunch of tablets everywhere, it wanted the center of attention to be its store design, products, and people, not their tech.

They didn't want zero tech, but wanted their tech to be understated, playful, and deliberate, like the preroll dispenser.

We were more than happy to help Superette make this vision happen. We don't come into projects with preconceptions or biases, and aren't afraid of new technologies we haven't dealt with before; whatever our clients' vision is, we'll do whatever it takes to make the technical aspects of it work.

The Trial: Our First Store Rollout Together

The initial engagement began with the rollout of their second store. Cure8 handled all the following aspects of the rollout:

1. Site design, including diagramming of their security cameras, wireless access points, point of sale stations, and low voltage cabling
2. Phone and internet setup, including helping to select a plan that matched their bandwidth needs and coordinating with the ISP
3. Procurement of all the needed hardware and supplies, including tablets, cash drawers, receipt printers, barcode scanners, and networking and back office IT hardware.
4. Installation of all hardware, including mounting the network rack on the wall, cabling, and mounting the wireless access points.
5. Setting up the point of sale system, networks, surveillance system, and back office IT, then testing everything and making sure it all works and performs as expected.
6. Handoff - making sure the Superette corporate team as well as the store manager and employees are set up and satisfied with everything



Though we're always careful to ensure our installations look clean and in line with our clients' aesthetics, we took special care with Superette knowing how central the look and feel of their stores is to their customer experience.



Result

How did the installation go? We assume pretty well, since the store opened on its target launch day, has had few tech problems (we know because we manage it ourselves, as we'll discuss in the next section), and they've brought us back to rollout the next seven of their stores, including four currently in the works.

Continuing the Relationship: Ongoing Management and Support

The other part of our engagement with Superette comes after the launches: we monitor, manage, protect, and support all their IT 24/7. Our managed services plans with Superette include:

- 24/7 uptime monitoring
- 24/7 security monitoring
- Incident response (if an outage or security alert occurred, we would immediately investigate, confirm it, and set about fixing it as quickly as possible)
- Software updates - we apply software updates to ensure you're getting the latest features and protections; we do this after hours to avoid disrupting your workflow
- Mobile device management - we ensure devices are locked down, updated, and not being used for non-work purposes
- 24/7 onsite and remote tech support via phone and email
 - Common issues solved: account lockouts, hardware compatibility issues, connectivity issues
- Network management
 - IP address management - helping to avoid IP conflicts that can result in disconnects as devices are moved or connected into different devices
 - Collision detection - preventing interference that can slow down WiFi networks severely

Even in a dispensary like Superette that doesn't necessarily emphasize its tech, tech is still necessary for a smooth customer experience - including a quick and problem-free checkout and digital menus and signage that work flawlessly and look great. Our 24/7 IT monitoring and management help them avoid outages and problems as much as possible, and we provide quick, friendly, and helpful support if trouble does arise.

We also monitor and manage their surveillance systems for them, including:

- Providing clips of incidents to managers and authorities in an expedited timeframe
- Checking outage alerts
- Ensuring cameras were free of obstructions
- Troubleshooting malfunctioning cameras

As anyone in the cannabis industry knows, surveillance systems are required in most states and provinces. They're often one of the first things inspectors check, and a lack of surveillance system, or the improper monitoring and maintenance of one, is one of the most common reasons license applications are denied and existing licenses taken away.

Cure8 handles this for Superette, allowing them to focus on much more important things like design and marketing, while not worrying about potentially losing any of their licenses that they worked so hard to get.



The Future Is Looking Super

Despite operating in one of the most crowded, competitive cannabis markets in the world, Superette has grown into one of the largest privately-owned cannabis retailers in Canada. In February 2022 they purchased Canoe Corp and its 6 dispensaries. Cure8 is currently assisting with the technical aspects of the merger process, as well as managing the IT of Superette's existing locations and orchestrating the tech setup of 4 additional Superette dispensaries. We're proud of our role in helping them realize their vision on the technical side and look forward to serving as their trusted IT advisors and enablers for years to come.

“When we were opening our first stores we weren't sure how to handle our tech like our POS systems and networks. Cure8 came into the picture and helped us get on track. They were our guides. They handled everything from planning, hardware and software installation, testing and support. At the same time, they kept us informed and in control every step of the way. Cure8 continues to be our go-to for tech support for our stores to this day and thrilled to have them alongside us every step of the way.”

Lauren Davie,
VP of Retail and Sales,
Superette