

## Cannabis Research Results

The NSLC hired Narrative Research to conduct research into cannabis purchase patterns in Nova Scotia. The research consisted of a telephone survey and two online surveys. The sample size for the telephone survey was 3,460, with results carrying a margin of error of +/-1.7 per cent 19 times out of 20. This survey was primarily aimed at understanding incidence of cannabis purchase among the general population. In order to explore the topic of purchase choice and use in more depth, an online study was also undertaken. The research firm used two different panels for the online research – one was the general population and one was the Customer Advisory Panel, which is a group of NSLC customers who agreed to participate in research on a regular basis. We received a total of 1,907 online responses. Due to the nature of online research, including customers and volunteers as opposed to a random-dialed telephone study, the online research should be considered valid but not statistically-reliable. The range of results shown is due to the three different types of survey conducted.

### Findings:

#### **One-quarter of adult Nova Scotians purchase cannabis for recreational and/or medical purposes.**

- Sales vary across the province by county
- The highest incidence of purchasers are in Cumberland (33%) and Victoria (34%) counties
- The lowest incidence of purchasers are in Digby (16%) and Pictou counties (19%)
- Purchasers tend to be younger, with 49% being between the ages of 19 and 34
- The most important factors when deciding where to purchase recreational cannabis are product quality, value for money, convenience and price
- Privacy and security of personal information also play an important role

#### **The NSLC is the main place for recreational cannabis purchases**

- Nova Scotians who buy recreational cannabis most commonly purchase from the NSLC (41% exclusively from the NSLC, and 40% from both the NSLC and illicit markets)
- County-level results vary.
- Purchasers at only the NSLC are highest in Halifax (49%), Hants (47%) and Antigonish (46%) counties
- Purchasers at only the NSLC are lowest in Queens (17%), Shelburne (20%) and Cumberland (22%) counties
- 83% of those who buy from a single source name the NSLC as that source.
- Those who buy from any source – both legal and illicit - name the NSLC as their primary source (58%)
- Only two in ten buy solely from illicit sources

#### **Price (27-30%), quality (28-34%) and the THC/CBD content (25-28%) are the three factors considered most when buying.**

- The strain, product safety and product availability jointly rank fourth each at about 10%

#### **The top four reasons for purchasing from the NSLC are convenient/easy to access stores (50%), it's legal (25%), trust that the product is safe and good product selection (19%).**

**Perceived high prices are the main reason purchasers do not shop at the NSLC (61-64%). Other key factors include:**

- Poor product selection (18-28%)
- Poor product quality (20-22%)
- Not enough stock/run out of stock (9-22%)
- Closest store is too far (9-22%)

**Why do purchasers shop at illegal storefronts?**

- Product quality (42%)
- Price (35%)
- Product selection (30%)
- Knowledgeable staff (21%)
- Convenience (13%)
- Better/less packaging (10%)

**What the NSLC can do to encourage purchases from the NSLC:**

- Lower prices (40-43%)
- Better product selection (27-31%)
- More locations and more convenient locations (6-20%)
- Better quality (10-14%)
- Better/less packaging (0-3%)

**NSLC sales have impacted dealer sales more than illegal storefronts.**

- 39% purchase recreational cannabis from a personal connection, such as a dealer. That's down from 63% who said they purchased from a personal connection, such as a dealer, prior to cannabis being sold by the NSLC, after legalization.
- 28% purchase recreational cannabis from an illegal storefront. That's down from 40% prior to cannabis being sold by the NSLC, after legalization.
- Those purchasing dried flower from an illegal storefront typically buy in higher quantities than those who purchase from the NSLC. NSLC customers typically purchase 5 grams or less. Illegal storefront customers typically buy more than 10 grams.

**NSLC Purchase Channels:**

- The in-person shopping experience was rated highly on almost all factors, including staff friendliness, location, layout, line ups, wait times, knowledge and overall experience.
- The online experience was familiar to fewer cannabis purchasers, indicating room for improvement.
- Of those purchasing from the NSLC, 85% purchased from an NSLC store location
- 10% purchased from both a store location and the NSLC cannabis website
- 2% from the cannabis website only
  - Reasons for not purchasing online include stores are close, don't have to wait for product, want to speak with store clerk, privacy concerns, don't buy it regularly, prefer to go in-store
  - The largest percentage – (26-32%) - don't know why they don't shop online

**All key elements of the in-store shopping experience were rated highly for satisfaction. The top five factors are, out of 10 (=completely satisfied):**

- Staff friendliness (8.2-8.6/10)
- Lineups/wait times (7.4-7.6/10)
- Staff knowledge (7.3-7.5/10)
- Store location (6.9-7.0/10)
- Store layout (6.6-7.0/10)

**Five factors show room for improvement with online purchases, out of 10 (=completely satisfied):**

- Educational information (5.6-6.4/10)
- Ability to know what products are available (5.2-5.3/10)
- Delivery fee (5.1-5.2/10)
- Discovery Quiz to help you find the right product for you (4.8-6.1/10)
- The access card system (3.6-6.3/10)

**Dried flower is the overwhelming choice of cannabis product at 69%.**

**Current purchasers are interested in new cannabis products if they become available. In descending order, products of interest are:**

- Edibles (66-68%)
- Reusable vape pens/prefilled cartridges (26-30%)
- Topicals (24-26%)
- Beverages (24%)
- Disposable oil extract vape pens/vaporizers (20%)
- Concentrates (shatter, wax, rosin, hashish/hash) (17-20%)

**Almost one in five (19%) of adult purchasers in Nova Scotia have been purchasing cannabis for 6 months or less.**