

RITHMSEONY.COM

A Case Study

BRAND DEVELOPMENT

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Case Study.

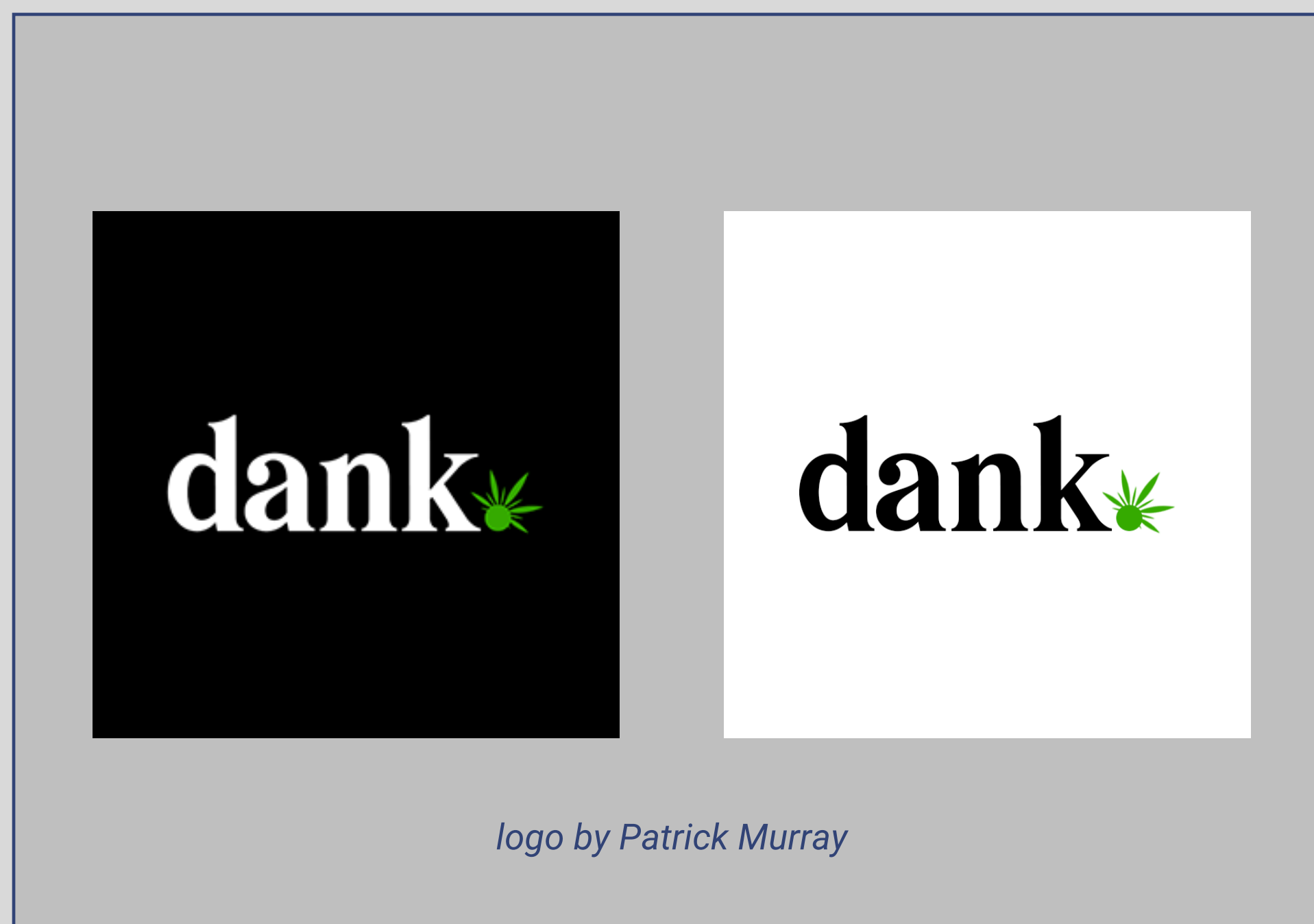
Client: Dank

Industry: Cannabis

Launch Date: May 2021

Location: New York, United States of America

Agency: /RITHM





Background.

Dank, a pioneering cannabis brand, was launched in 2021, coinciding with the legalization of marijuana in New York State. The introduction of legal cannabis in New York presented both opportunities and challenges, with the regulatory landscape still in flux. Dank was conceived with a hyper-local focus on the New York market, while simultaneously laying the groundwork for nationwide expansion, anticipating the eventual legalization of cannabis across the United States. Given the nascent nature of the cannabis industry in New York, it was imperative for Dank to develop a brand that could navigate uncertainty and adapt as laws and regulations evolved. Dank sought to establish itself as a leader in the New York market, while building a brand architecture that could seamlessly scale to a national level. To achieve this, the principals of Dank partnered with /RITHM, a leading digital strategy and branding agency, to create and execute a comprehensive branding and marketing plan.

Objectives.

> **A Smoking Start.**

The primary objective of the project was to establish Dank as a premier cannabis brand in New York State. As it looked more certain that legalization was around the corner, branding started week before it was “woke to toke” in NY.

> **Some High Expectations.**

With sights already set on a booming industry, the second goal was to create a brand architecture with a focus on scaling – quickly. Legalization of marijuana was catching fire across the United States. There are plenty of signals that at some point legalization will be nationwide. And Dank would be ready.

> **Work On Getting A Buzz.**

The architecture incorporated systems to pivot when indicators showed themselves in the market. While a solid foundation was developed, it wasn't optimized. The third goal was to augment the brand's preparation with a little recognition on the national stage. A digital strategy deemed to be the best method to join this conversation.

> **Who Runs This Joint?**

One thing is certain when dealing with changing laws and governments: Things will change more than once as politics does its thing and nobody will really know what the hell is going on for a while. Not exactly a surprise, the fourth matter of business was to forward-think. Each component needed refinement so the brand and its business model were as flexible and diligent as possible.

> **This Is Will Be Cannabis Country.**

Finally, the brand was developed to respond tactically. The digital strategy was already executed and the brand was exposed to the nation, creating visual identity, purpose-driven conversation with the (soon-to-be) target audience, a social media following, and organic search strategies bestowed decent Google rankings for optimal SERP positioning locally and a head start nationally.



Our /RITHM.

Brand Discovery

Brand Strategy

Brand Identity

Brand Architecture

Brand Experience

Brand Messaging

Web Development & Design

Social Media Creation

Organic Optimization (SEO)

Marketing • Promotional • Sales Collateral

Content Marketing

Copywriting

Product Copy (e-Commerce)

Affiliate Marketing Program Creation

Brand Launch (Digitally + Bricks & Mortar)

Operational Execution & Optimization



The Agency's Approach.

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Brand Discovery.

The foundation of any successful brand lies in a deep understanding of the market landscape, consumer needs, and the competitive environment. For Dank, the brand discovery phase was crucial, as it allowed /RITHM to gain insights into the emerging cannabis industry in New York, the nuances of consumer behavior, and the regulatory challenges that the brand would face. This phase involved extensive research and analysis, laying the groundwork for all subsequent branding and marketing efforts. By understanding the intricacies of the market, /RITHM was able to craft a strategy that was not only relevant but also resilient in the face of an evolving legal landscape.

DISCOVERING DANK: /RITHM'S ROAD TO REVELATION.

- **Market Research:** Analyzed the almost-real New York cannabis market, competitor landscape, and consumer behavior. Consulted with those in existing markets to identify potential tactics in earning maximum market share, threats that may not have been considered, similarities legally and other consistent market conditions in the industry, and unique elements of the overall market to launch with the strongest possible value proposition nationally.
- **Audience Analysis:** Defined the target audience segments, including medical marijuana patients, recreational users, DIY growers, and cannabis enthusiasts. Researched the potential for market expansion by way of legalization and nearby locales without legalization. Identified psychographic and behavioral patterns, triggers, attitudes, demographics, and shared interests of each segment for highly targeted campaigns to create hype for the brand's launch and for efficiency of future marketing efforts.
- **SWOT Analysis:** Identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats specific to Dank. Collected data relating to competitors (and potential competition), condition of the local forecasted market, those already in existence, and public forums. As such, indicators of how consumers would receive the industry were revealed, preempting additional research where interest seemed highest.

Brand Strategy.

In the nascent cannabis industry, a robust brand strategy is essential to differentiate a brand and establish its identity. /RITHM developed a comprehensive brand strategy for Dank that aligned with the brand's vision of becoming a leader in the New York market while being prepared for nationwide expansion. This strategy encompassed the brand's core values, mission, and positioning, ensuring that every aspect of the brand was cohesive and resonated with the target audience. The strategy was designed to be adaptable, allowing Dank to pivot as the market and regulations evolved, while maintaining a consistent brand narrative.

POSITIONING THE POT PLAN(T)S: /RITHM'S REEFER READINESS.

- **Brand Purpose:** Positioned Dank as a premium, trustworthy, and forward-thinking cannabis brand. The cornerstone of the strategy, the brand's purpose shaped and guided all strategic maneuvering. Delivered to market as a lifestyle brand, this was a vital component by which all touchpoints would be created. This approach was developed to create a sensory experience in harmony with the effects of the brand's product and evoke emotion to establish brand loyalty. This method is the only way to penetrate other markets needed for scale. Without the transactional element, the brand's perceived value is a delicate component for Dank. Without it, realization of success past NY is highly doubtful.
- **Vision & Mission:** Influenced by Dank's purpose, the stated vision and mission are more vital to the strategy than with most others. The statements clearly establish the values to which the key audience relates. Strategically crafted to secure and maximize future opportunities, the intention is to underline brand consistency and enforce shared values. If executed properly, brand awareness and loyalty will create barriers to entry for competitors and position Dank to secure its share of the market.
- **Value Proposition:** Positioned as a purpose-driven brand, Dank will realize higher loyalty and justify the premium pricing strategy it employs. In today's climate, consumers are markedly supporting brands that reflect their personal values more than ever before. Bolstered by investing into non-transactional markets, the importance of making connections far outweighs that of product or price-related tactics.

Brand Identity.

Dank's strong brand identity is the visual and emotional representation of the lifestyle brand, encompassing everything from the logo and color palette to the tone of voice. For Dank, /RITHM developed a distinctive brand identity that captured the essence of the brand – of premium quality, sustainable, innovative, and trustworthy. The identity was crafted to appeal to both the sophisticated New York market and a broader, national audience with a clear indication of what the mark does. By creating a cohesive and memorable brand identity, /RITHM ensured that Dank would stand out in a crowded and competitive market, fostering brand recognition and loyalty with intent.

A JOINT VENTURE: THE /RITHM OF RELATIONSHIPS.

- **Brand Name & Logo:** The name “Dank” evokes the premium quality of the product, while the logo subtly whispers to those familiar with cannabis culture . Its modern design aesthetics and pure simplicity represent the values that motivate the intended audience. This minimalist, short, and primarily-typographical logo design is a balanced and easily understood visual message. The design language speaks to the lifestyle it creates – and attracts those who live or care to live in it. Coordinated with the product behind the branding, it speaks not directly to spending money. The marijuana (a simple period with pot's signature five leaves attached) is simultaneously described by the brand name's four letters.
- **Color Palette & Typography:** A sophisticated color palette and the modern yet classic typography it embellishes were chosen to reflect the brand's premium positioning. With great intent to de-emphasize the transactional element of the brand's purpose, Its simplicity is inviting and begins the consumer's experience with Dank. The subtle pop of relative-green draws just enough attention to the otherwise monochrome styling. The color scheme, typeset, and linear posture of the logo design each work alone and together as a complete mark with purpose. These visual signals deliver the business's silent sales pitch – reinforced by other messaging – to the sensory receptors instead of the brain.
- **Brand Guidelines:** Detailed guidelines were created to ensure consistency across all touchpoints. The resource is organized with exacting detail. Designed to protect the brand's identity, messaging, and perceived value, it is a valuable publication and intended to be made available to all for one concise directive with an assertive undertone, relating the importance of the intangible asset that drives the world of Dank.

dank 

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Brand Architecture.

As Dank looked beyond the New York market, it was essential to develop a brand architecture that could support future growth and diversification. /RITHM designed a scalable brand architecture that allowed for the introduction of new product lines and sub-brands, catering to different consumer segments and regions. This architecture ensured that Dank could expand its offerings without diluting the core brand, maintaining a consistent and cohesive brand experience across all touchpoints. The brand architecture was also designed to be flexible, enabling Dank to adapt to changing market conditions and consumer preferences.

A BUDDING BRAND: /RITHM'S GREEN THUMB.

- **Product Lines:** Dank was structured to accommodate multiple product lines, including flower, edibles, and concentrates, with room for expansion into other cannabis-related products. Planted firmly as a cultivator, it was crucial that the brand appeal to myriad preferences to be dominant in the market.
- **Sub-Branding:** The architecture allowed for the introduction of sub-brands targeting different consumer segments or geographic regions. This was incorporated into the architecture to be effective once legalization became broader. It was also designed to respond to any regional-specific data that became available signaling an opportunity to gain additional market share with ease.
- **Franchising the Future:** Although much of the cannabis market's future cannot be remotely forecasted state by state, let alone nationally, there are some consistent themes in its history. Using the past to prepare for the future, Dank's architecture includes several possible manners of scale – all several versions of a "Plan B". One of the structural components is a franchise dispensary model. Included for myriad reasons, the chief objective is to leverage the brand recognition being built, minimize the need to be proficient in the legalities of different markets, develop nationwide distribution, diversify pricing tiers, gain insight into competing brands, and understand the national consumer with data and real-time feedback– by region.



Brand Experience.

Creating a compelling brand experience is key to building long-term customer loyalty and advocacy. /RITHM focused on crafting a holistic brand experience for Dank that spanned every interaction a customer would have with the brand—from the first point of discovery to the post-purchase experience. This involved mapping out the customer journey, optimizing touchpoints for engagement, and ensuring that the brand’s values were consistently reflected at every stage. By prioritizing the brand experience, /RITHM helped Dank build a strong emotional connection with its customers, fostering loyalty and positive word-of-mouth.

AN ELEVATED EXPERIENCE “CAN” GET YOU HIGHER.

Customer Journey Mapping: /RITHM mapped out the ideal customer journey, ensuring a seamless experience from discovery to purchase. Cognizant of the wide age range of the target audience, this approach was designed with user friendliness and simplicity at the fore to be accessible no matter the path taken by any consumer.

User Experience (UX): The website and online store were designed to be user-friendly, with an emphasis on educating customers and simplifying the purchase process. The objective was not to promote marijuana to those who don’t participate in cannabis culture. Rather, the goal was to establish the brand’s transparency, superlative knowledge, and value proposition. The UX uses a “sales-second” approach by leveraging psychographics and creating a sensory experience versus shopping trip.

Packaging Design: The packaging was designed with a purpose-driven approach. The result was packaging that stood out from all other brands, as it was a round metal can unlike a box or pouch that is the norm. It also took up less valuable shelf space which prompted ordering in larger quantities. Thirdly, it preserved the quality of the product much better than resealable packaging. And lastly it was a silent salesperson – cans don’t get thrown out nearly as much as cardboard boxes and plastic pouches. Metal cans, however, are repurposed in many cases. This retention becomes brand awareness, starts conversation, and serves as a constant reminder that the brand – and its product – symbolize quality, and perhaps in time status or signals a lifestyle.

PACKAGING EXAMPLES – 2 SKUS

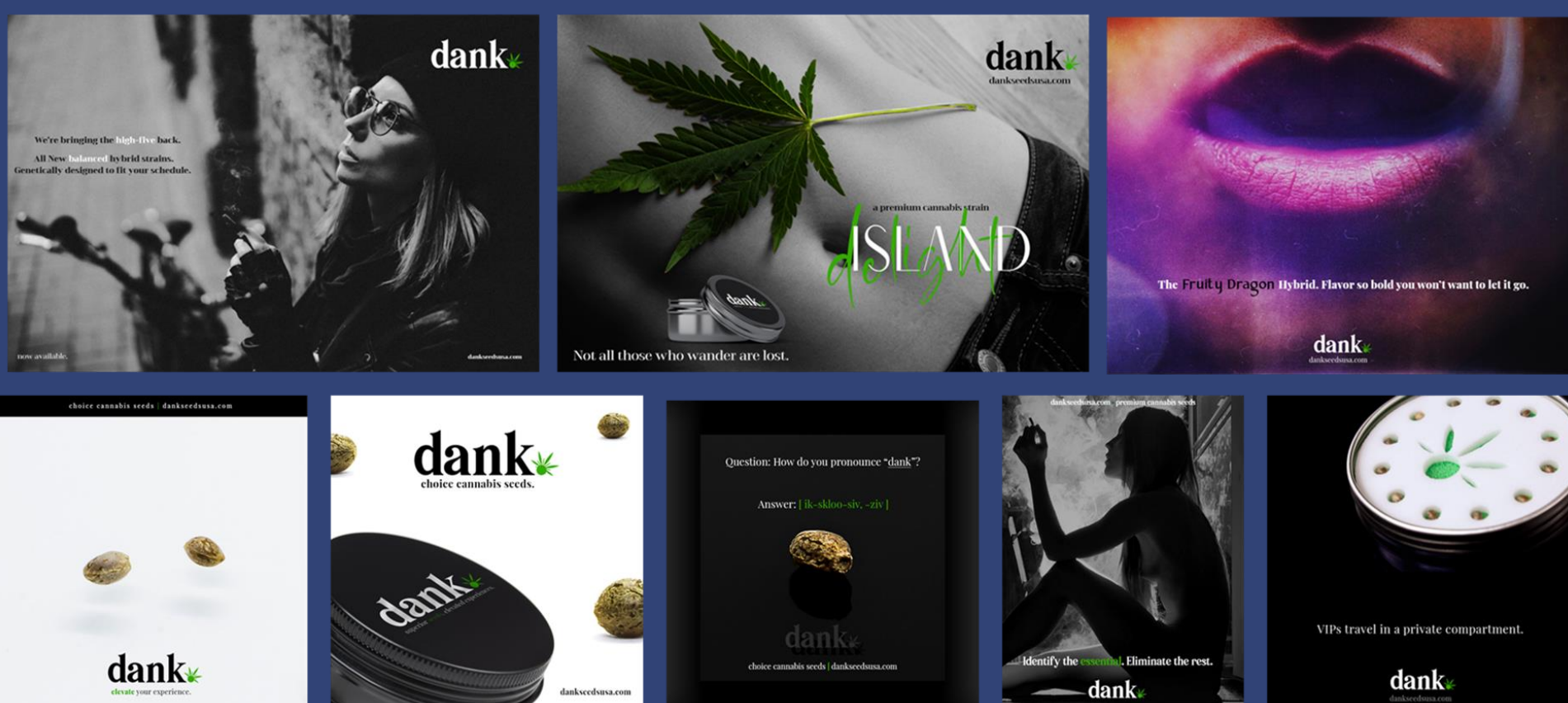


Brand Messaging.

Effective brand messaging is the voice through which a brand communicates its values, personality, and promise to its audience. /RITHM developed a messaging strategy for Dank that resonated with the target audience and clearly articulated the brand's commitment to quality, innovation, and involvement in cannabis culture. The messaging was designed to be consistent across all channels, from digital to print, while allowing for nuanced adjustments based on the platform or audience segment. This approach ensured that Dank's communications were always on-brand, helping to build trust and credibility with its audience.

WEED LOVE TO TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT.

AD COPY EXAMPLES



Brand Voice: Dank's voice was crafted to be confident, knowledgeable, and approachable. Many people in the target audience have a lot of experience with cannabis – using it and growing it. Therefore, Dank's voice needed to be assertive as a professional industry leader, yet it must also have an air of respect for said experience and conversation must acknowledge the consumer's knowledge.

Key Messages: Focused on quality, test results, and superlative genetics. Consumers want a quality product, they know that comes from good genetics, and if so, they want you to prove it. This is generally known within the culture. Therefore, this is the key message Dank delivers.

Tagline: "Superior Seeds. Elevated Experiences." The brand slogan simply reinforces key messaging and sensory approach: Superior (quality). Seeds (genetics). Elevated (higher). Experiences (not sales).

Web Development/Design.

In the digital age, a brand's website is often the first point of contact for potential customers, making it a critical component of the overall brand strategy. /RITHM created a sophisticated, user-friendly website for Dank that not only showcased the brand's products but also served as an educational resource for consumers. The website was designed with a focus on user experience (UX), ensuring that visitors could easily navigate the site, find the information they needed, and make purchases with confidence. Additionally, the site was built to be scalable, allowing for the integration of new features and products as the brand expanded.

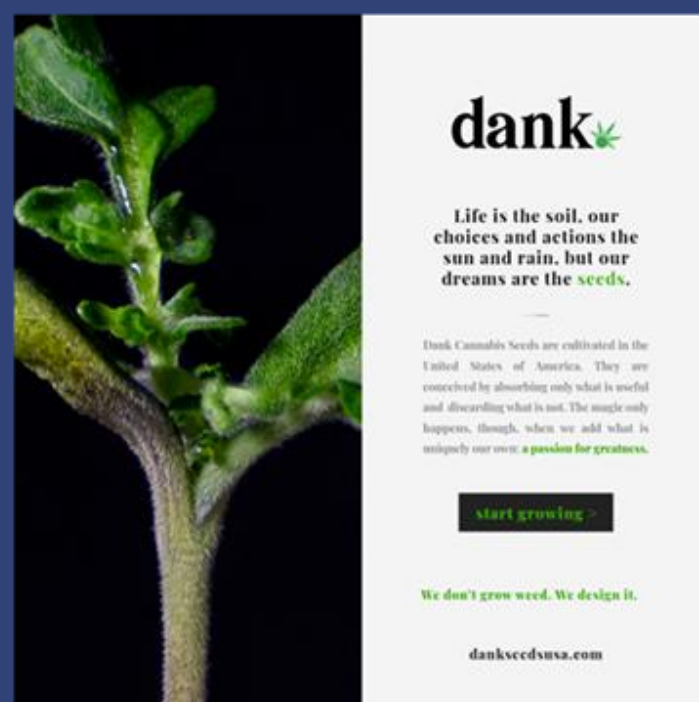
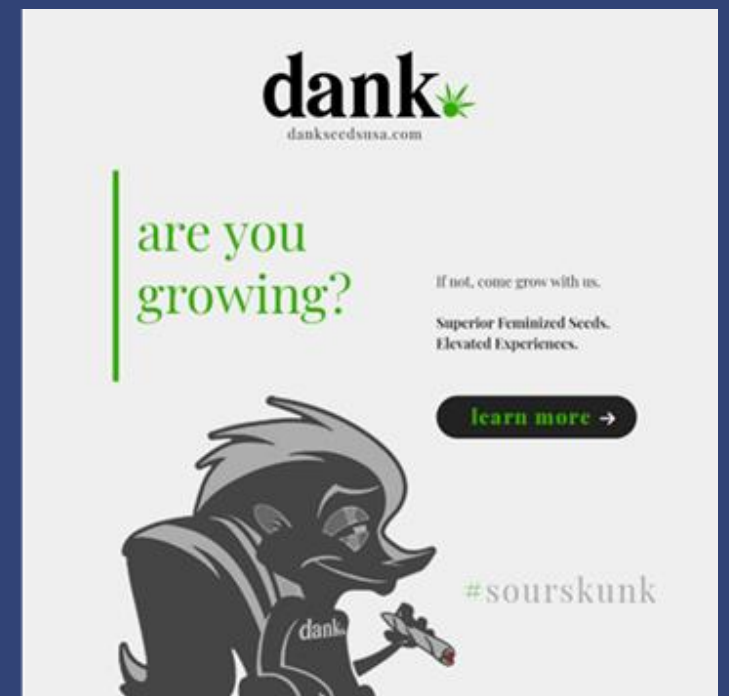
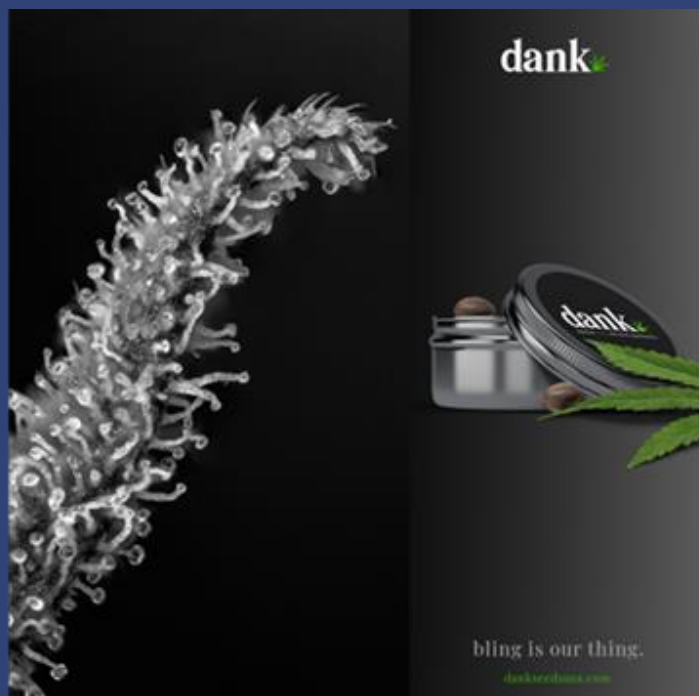
DIGITAL DANK. WEED ON THE WEB.

PLEASE REFER TO THE "WEBSITE PROPERTY" SECTION OF THE ATTACHED BRAND GUIDELINES FOR MORE.

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Social Media.

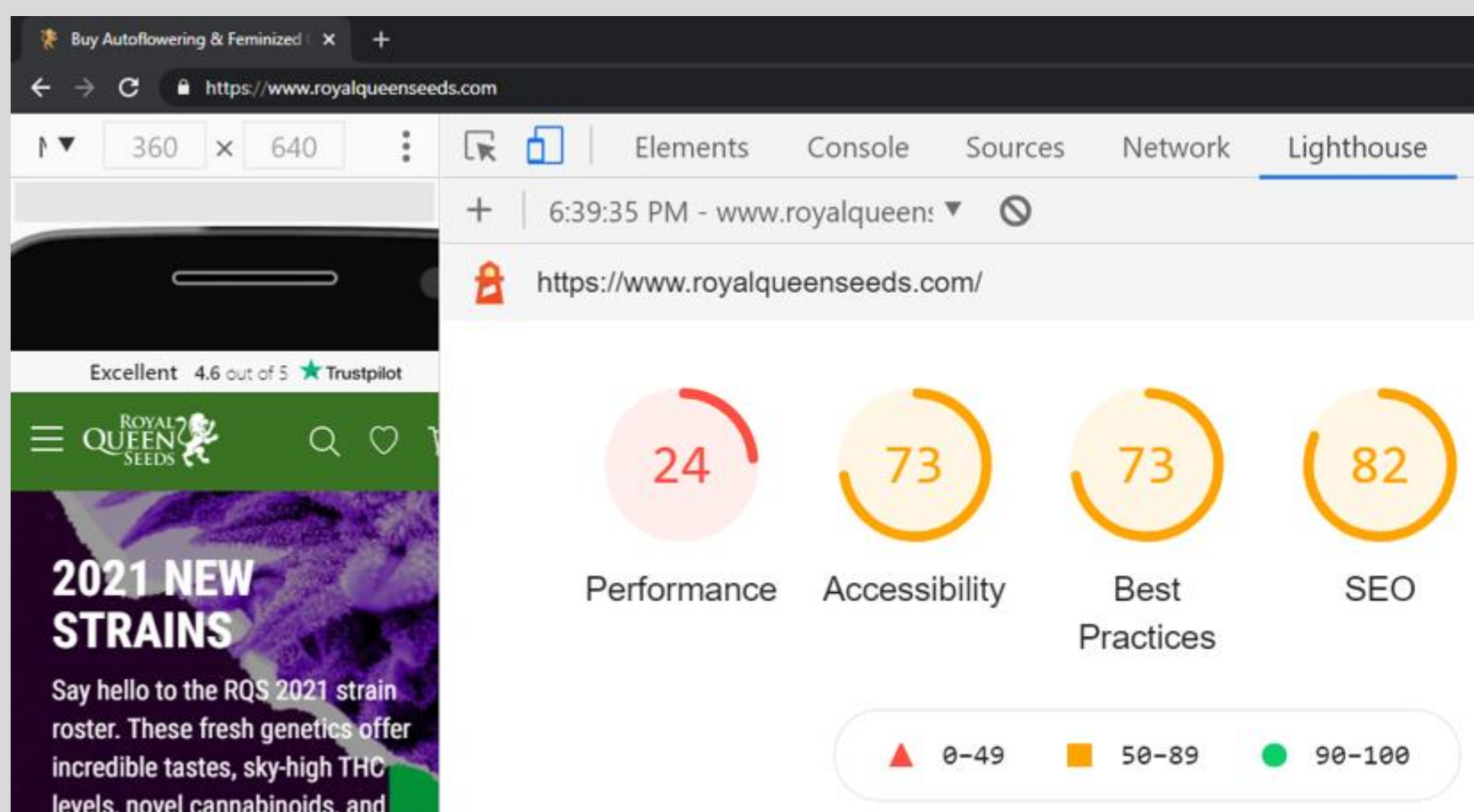
Social media is a powerful tool for building brand awareness, engaging with customers, and driving traffic to a brand's website. /RITHM developed a targeted social media strategy for Dank, focusing on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Reddit, where the brand's target audience was most active. The strategy included content creation, community management, and influencer partnerships, all aimed at building a loyal following and generating buzz around the brand. By leveraging social media, /RITHM helped Dank connect with its audience in a more personal and engaging way, fostering brand awareness, loyalty and driving sales.



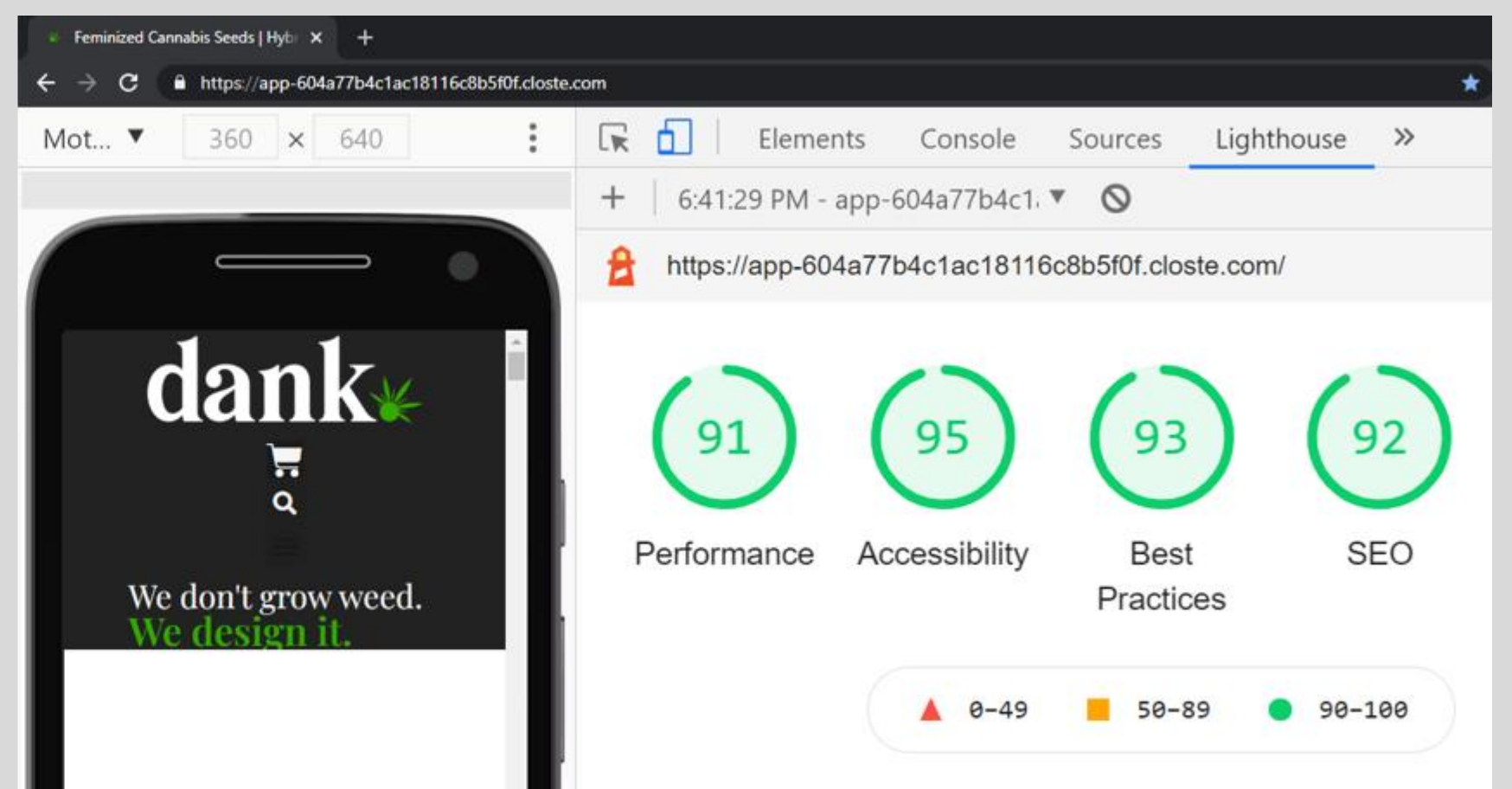
Organic SEO

Search engine optimization (SEO) is essential for driving organic traffic and increasing a brand's visibility online. /RITHM implemented a comprehensive SEO strategy for Dank, targeting relevant keywords related to the cannabis industry and the New York market. This strategy included both on-page and off-page optimization, ensuring that the brand's website ranked highly in search engine results for key terms. By optimizing content, metadata, and technical elements, /RITHM helped Dank achieve greater online visibility, attracting potential customers and establishing the brand as a credible authority in the cannabis space.

Competitor



Dank



Marketing Collateral.

To support Dank's branding and marketing efforts, /RITHM developed a suite of marketing collateral that was both visually appealing and strategically aligned with the brand's messaging. This collateral included brochures, flyers, and product catalogs, all designed to reinforce the brand's identity and communicate its value proposition. Whether distributed at cannabis events, retail locations, or through digital channels, the marketing collateral played a key role in building brand awareness and educating consumers about Dank's products. /RITHM ensured that all materials were consistent with the brand's identity, creating a unified and professional brand presence across all touchpoints.



Content Marketing

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A Blog Post Excerpt

GOOD GENETICS CAN MAKE A BAD GROWER LOOK GOOD. GOOD GROWERS CAN'T MAKE BAD GENETICS LOOK GOOD, THOUGH.

So, you want to start growing marijuana. One of the first questions you need to ask yourself is do you want to start from feminized cannabis seed or cannabis clones? There are advantages and disadvantages to both. Let us dig into the details:

Marijuana clones are a replica of the plant they were cut from. That means all the good and bad traits will be passed along. One advantage to this is if the plant you took the clone from was female, you are guaranteed for the clone to be female as well. However, on the flip side clones will also include any disease and bugs the mother was exposed to. If you bring in a clone with spider mites or other pests your entire grow can become infested. With seeds, you are starting with untainted DNA free from disease, virus, and bugs. With a regular marijuana seed, you have a 50/50 chance of getting a female, but at dank, all our marijuana seeds are feminized with a success rate of over 99%.

Another advantage of cannabis clones is they will allow you to save a little time. It will take a few weeks for seeds to germinate and catch up to the stage rooted clones are in. The root system of clones will be different from that of seed though. Marijuana seeds, although a slightly lengthier process, will produce a long taproot which acts as an extension of the stem digging deep into the soil providing great stability and vigor. The roots of a clone are a single layer of lateral roots that do not provide as much support and lead to a less vigorous marijuana plant.

Product Copy.

Product copy plays a critical role in influencing purchasing decisions, especially in a regulated industry like cannabis, where consumers need clear and accurate information. /RITHM developed detailed product copy for Dank that highlighted the quality, safety, and benefits of each product. This included creating informative and engaging product descriptions for the website, as well as writing copy for product labels and packaging. The product copy was designed to be both educational and persuasive, helping customers make informed purchasing decisions and reinforcing Dank's growing reputation as a premium cannabis brand.

A Product Description Excerpt

Blue Chem.

BLUE. IT'S SERENITY IN TECHNICOLOR. CALM. PEACEFUL. RELAXING. YEAH, WE KNOW HOW TO NAME A STRAIN. Genetically modified to create a sublime experience, the blue chem feminized marijuana seed strikes a balance between lackadaisical indica and energizing sativa strains. Blue Chem fusing the cerebral high and formidable of the blue dream strain with the stimulating effects and pine flavor of chemodo dragon.

The result is an experience that relaxes in a dreamy, uplifting high. Balanced, though, functioning isn't an issue. A fruity-diesel cannabis strain, Blue Chem emanates the sweet aromas of blueberry and citrus kissed with pine. Rounding out the allure of Blue Chem, this pot plant is high-yielding. A workhorse through and through, it is a manageable crop and is one genetic that will serve a new or novice grower well with its substantial, trichome-rich nugs. Walter White would be proud of this weed workhorse.

dank
superior seeds. elevated experiences.



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images by p. murray • /rithm

BRANDING BONUS.

FOR A MORE IN-DEPTH LOOK AT
THE DANK BRAND BY /RITHM,
THE BRAND GUIDELINES
ACCOMPANY THIS DOCUMENT.

THE BRAND BOOK MAY ALSO BE
REQUESTED BY EMAIL:
HUMANS@RITHMSEONY.COM





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