

 **Client**

Meta Growth is a national cannabis retailer in Canada with 35 locations.

 **Training Challenges**

In a quickly changing pre-launch environment, Meta Growth needed flexible staff training options.

 **Solution**

SmarterU provided a platform for eLearning that was both flexible and easy to update.

# SmarterU and Meta Growth Pull Off Challenging Retail Launch



## Meta Growth: Canada's Recreational Cannabis Retail Leader

When Canada's federal [Cannabis Act](#) came into effect in 2018, Canada became only the second country in the world to legalize the use of cannabis for both medical and recreational purposes.

Meta Growth, a company with roots in the medical cannabis industry, prepared to launch its recreational cannabis retail operations. In 2020, it is a leading national retailer with dozens of locations — and it is in the process of joining forces with High Tide, to become Canada's largest cannabis retailer.

Meta Growth's products include dried cannabis as well as cannabis extracts, edibles, beverages, and accessories.

## Retail Launch in a Constantly Evolving Regulatory Landscape

The passage of the Cannabis Act triggered a period of evolving regulations. Added to that, provincial laws differ from province to province across the country. Retailers preparing to launch their businesses when the Act became effective needed to train employees in how to operate retail outlets, comply with regulations, verify customer ID, and more. But the training was a moving target; in some areas, changes were made up until just days before a shop would open.

As Meta Growth planned to launch its retail business, it needed employee training for an entirely new industry. The training solution had to combine eLearning with face-to-face onsite training at retail outlets and include tracking and reporting of all training activity. Content had to be flexible enough to enable frequent, last-minute updates and additions. The newness of the retail recreational cannabis industry meant that suitable off-the-shelf content was not available.

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*It was very clear, looking at the system, that it was one that could grow with us, based on the tiers and numbers of users. ... Knowing that things like OttoLearn were available as potential future additions — it was certainly easier to keep it all in-house and under one umbrella, one relationship. And of course the expertise of Flare Learning really does give a 360 solution.*

— Sarah Bezanson, senior manager, learning and development

## A Flexible 360-Degree Training Solution

Meta Growth decided to use eLearning for a foundational program and provide cannabis education, customer service training, and compliance training for ID verification. The organization would provide on-site training at each retail outlet for staffers to learn processes and procedures for running the stores.

Meta Growth selected the SmarterU LMS and worked with Flare Learning, also a Neovation division, to create some of the training content. The organization had hoped to find a suitable Canadian vendor and was thrilled to find a Manitoba-based company that could meet their needs.

Neovation's strong record of customer support and the availability of a local support team were strong draws. The SmarterU LMS easily handled Meta Growth's tracking and reporting needs, including maintaining records of required third-party certifications that differ from province to province, as well as LMS-based eLearning. The ability of the system to scale up was another deciding factor, as Meta Growth knew that the cannabis industry was on a strong growth trajectory and wanted to be prepared to add learners easily.

Neovation's ability to support all aspects of their training program — LMS, content development, and potential growth into microlearning in the future — was another key selling point. "Any pieces that we didn't feel able to support ourselves, we already have relationships established to support us in those training needs," said Sarah Bezanson, the senior manager of learning and development at Meta Growth.

That was especially important since their content was being developed simultaneously with the LMS implementation. "Typically, in your 6-week implementation period, you'd have a lot more actual content; but, as a result of the fact that regulation had not been decided yet, many things could not be built really until the last minute," Bezanson said. "A challenge through implementation was that we had to deal theoretically with what we **think** it's going to look like when we have the modules to add, the users to add."



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*The capacity of the system was a strong feature, both in the reporting and the support. Something I've certainly experienced in the past is, you can have systems that are strong. But if all of your support is offshore-based and you're losing 12 to 15 hours every time you send in a need for support or some changes, that's a challenge. There can also be real communication barriers that occur ... language barriers can hinder the ability to understand what the need is. That's something we've never experienced with SmarterU.*

— Sarah Bezanson, senior manager, learning and development