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From Brick and Mortar to Click and Mortar

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Socrates Rosenfeld, CEO of ♥ Jane Technologies, details the budding e-commerce marketplace for cannabis through the lens of a U.S. Army veteran turned entrepreneur

An undergraduate degree from West Point. A stint in the U.S. Army as an Apache Helicopter Commander and eventually a premier Army Ranger. An MBA from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

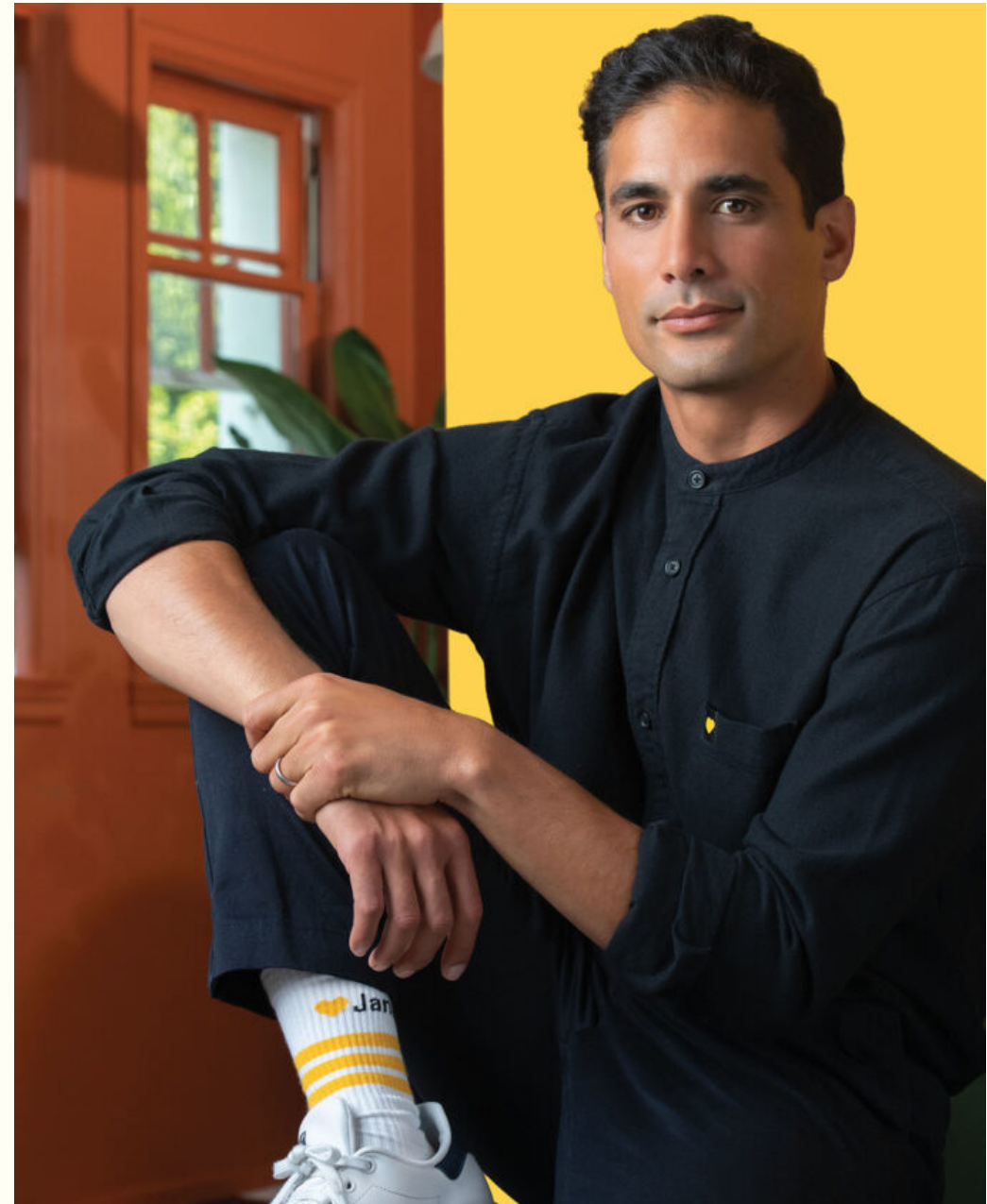
A period spent as a consultant at a prestigious Silicon Valley firm. And now, the creator of an e-commerce cannabis marketplace. U.S. Army veteran Socrates Rosenfeld has lived many lives, and each served its purpose in leading him toward the health benefits as well as the financial opportunity in cannabis.

Today, Rosenfeld is the CEO of Jane Technologies, an online marketplace where consumers can shop for cannabis products and find their real-time availability to reserve them at local dispensaries for pickup or delivery. Founded in 2015 and based in Santa Cruz, Calif., Jane strives to transform the industry's brick and mortar dispensaries into "click and mortar" retailers with presences both online and in stores.

"For businesses, Jane empowers local dispensaries with a fully-automated solution and helps generate business by connecting them to consumers that may have not purchased from them otherwise," Rosenfeld said in an interview with Forbes. "We're supporting local businesses, creating brand awareness and keeping consumers informed and happy."

From Army Commander to Cannabis Connoisseur

The jump from an Army commander to a cannabis entrepreneur may seem unexpected, but Rosenfeld's path has been anything but conventional. After his service, Rosenfeld came back to a life that he described as high-stress and high-achieving. Living in Massachusetts at the time with his wife, he was balancing his studies at MIT with the difficulties of transitioning back to civilian life. So at age 29, he experienced a moment that changed his life forever: he tried cannabis for the first time.



SOCRATES ROSENFELD, CEO OF JANE TECHNOLOGIES, HAS ASSEMBLED A DIVERSE TEAM OF MILITARY VETERANS, ARTISTS, ENGINEERS, IMMIGRANTS AND ADVOCATES TO BRING CONFIDENCE TO THE CANNABIS SHOPPING EXPERIENCE SO CONSUMERS CAN MAKE SMART PURCHASING DECISIONS WHILE BROWSING LOCAL DISPENSARIES FROM THE COMFORT OF THEIR HOME.

“I couldn’t find a way to turn down my intensity level,” Rosenfeld said in an interview with the Santa Cruz Sentinel. “I was fortunate enough to not be officially diagnosed with post-traumatic stress. I have all my limbs, my eyesight, my body feels fine, but I was almost meeting everything as if it was a life-and-death decision.”

Rosenfeld’s wife was the one who advised him to try cannabis to take the edge off of his stress. He paints a picture of this first encounter as he remembers the song that was playing in the background: “Dreams” by the Allman Brothers.

“For me, cannabis allowed me to experience presence again and really find balance again in my life,” Rosenfeld said. “And I think most importantly it allowed me to connect with my own self again, outside the uniform. No longer did I view myself as Captain Rosenfeld, but now I was just Soc. And that was a really profound moment in my life, and I think a really profound moment in a lot of veterans’ lives as they transition from serving in the uniform to serving as a civilian.”

Rosenfeld described that cannabis allowed him to better manage his stress and navigate through the tasks of everyday life as well as reconnect with loved ones and stave off bouts of sleeplessness. The only problem: Rosenfeld and his wife were still living in Massachusetts at the time, and cannabis

was not legal yet. Because of this, he had to rely on the black market where safety and origins of the product were never certain. Rosenfeld drew from this experience when dreaming up the concept of Jane Technologies where he could create a safe environment for people to buy cannabis.

Past Military Service Aids Business Operations and Attitudes

While his difficult shift from the armed forces to civilian life pushed him toward recreational cannabis, his experience as a commander in the Army set Rosenfeld up to become a strong CEO. Along the way, he has faced some hesitation from investors who doubted his skills as a veteran, but he has continued to connect formative lessons learned from his service to his experience in business, including that of self-discipline, consistency and a fierce love for one’s team.

“As a military veteran you’re often taught you’re not an entrepreneur,” Rosenfeld said. “I hear it a lot from Silicon Valley investors. You don’t wear the hoodie, you’re not the typical entrepreneur – you should go into banking, you should go into investing.”

Rosenfeld also explained that the demands of the armed forces and the business world tap into similar skill sets. Both entities celebrate adept leaders who can rally their teammates around a

common cause. Both also present high degrees of risk and uncertainty, and Rosenfeld credits his service with teaching him the important, real-world difference between these two items.

“I hope I’m one of many of the new generation of military veterans that realize we don’t just have to go into banking or consulting, we can actually build and create teams just like we did in the military and continue to be able to help people and serve people as we did in uniform,” he said.

The Future of Jane Technologies

When asked about future plans for the company, Rosenfeld says that he and the team do not envision Jane Technologies becoming the Amazon of cannabis. Instead of creating one destination for digital consumers, he aims to make

neighborhood dispensaries the center of marketplace innovation for the cannabis industry where they can sell products online and strengthen local businesses.

“I think we are really seeing the next chapter of what the future of e-commerce will look like, not just in the cannabis industry, perhaps across the world with various retail verticals like alcohol, convenience goods, restaurants and groceries,” Rosenfeld said in an interview with TechCrunch. “Local establishments [now have] some digital connective tissue to their local community, and I don’t think there’s a more challenging environment than the cannabis industry. I’m very proud of the team that we’ve come this far and still have a long way to go.”



THE JANE TECHNOLOGIES TEAM POSES FOR A CANDID PHOTO TOGETHER AT THEIR HEAD QUARTERS IN SANTA CRUZ, CALIF.