

Speaker 1 ([00:11](#)):

Hello, and welcome to the higher enlightenment podcast brought to you by higher yields cannabis consulting, your seed to sale cannabis business solutions team, and the creators of the innovative cannabis consulting business solution system higher enlightenment. My name is Adam. I'm your host and part of the creative design team here at higher yields. In this episode of our higher enlightenment podcast, our host test Yancy brings on Kiran Wang of almost consulting, a woman owned and oriented consulting firm, as well as Courtney woo of amnesia media. She's an expert on compliance, AI and marketing for cannabis and CBD based influencers. All three are social equity minded women of color speaking on issues involving BI POC and self-identifying women in today's thriving cannabis industry issues touched on include mindful marketing and branding for companies that target BI POC in both employment and advertising, as well as how businesses can engage in spaces where inclusivity is lacking while working to increase inclusivity and diversity.

Speaker 1 ([01:29](#)):

Additionally, Courtney Kiran, and tests cover the best ways for businesses and brands to diversify in ways that are original and authentic matching intention with impact and avoiding performative practices and righteous allyship in both social and business engagements for non BI POC business owners and members, as well as ethical business practices in the realm of social equity, Kieren, and Courtney discuss cannabis businesses that are either already making strides in accountability, inclusivity, and representation, but also other BI POC owned and operated businesses. For more information check out can exclusives database inclusive base for BI POC owned cannabis and, and celery businesses as well as businesses that are keeping their business interactions accountable now onto the podcast.

Speaker 2 ([02:29](#)):

Hello everyone. My name is Tessa ANSI and welcome to the higher enlightenment podcast. This week. We were speaking with Karen Wang from almost consulting and Courtney Wu from amnesia media. We were taking time today to talk about marketing and branding and social media from the perspective of BI POC and other inclusive companies. Hi everyone. My name's Kiran, I am the founder and owner of almost consulting. And what we do at almost consulting is, um, help with cannabis marketing when it comes to social media, email marketing, experiential marketing, especially now virtual right experiences. Um, and then also, you know, really focusing around, um, you know, women identifying consumers. So, um, because I identify as a woman, I think I can relate to the experience of speaking to women. Um, and that's what I help a lot of brands and dispensary's, whatever it may be, um, focused on when it comes to marketing their product and their service.

Speaker 3 ([03:36](#)):

Um, so I got my start in the cannabis industry in late 2015. Um, so I'm in Washington, we legalized in 2012. We didn't implement really until 2016. Um, so right around early 2016 is really when the brand that I formerly worked for Vander pop launched. Um, and then about a year later, we got bought out by Tokyo smoke, um, which I have many things to say about that and cultural appropriation, but we will save that for another day or maybe we won't. We'll see. Um, so when it comes to, you know, cannabis industry and responsibility, I've definitely had direct experience with that. Um, and when I left, I was really pretty vocal about why I left, which was, you know, blatant racism and inappropriate, you know, especially for such a new industry. It was really disappointing to see. Um, and so, yeah, it was like, I can do this on my own.

Speaker 3 (04:39):

Um, I don't have kids, I don't have, you know, a lot of like financial responsibility. So if things go wrong, they'll go wrong and it'll be fine, but they didn't go wrong. They actually went really, really well. So, um, yeah, then consulting and working with, you know, all over in the United States and Canada and the UK, um, you know, cannabis related and, you know, hemp related brands, um, and, you know, stores, retail, all sorts of farms, um, like a nice array of, of brands and businesses. Yeah. So with almost consulting, um, we support with social media marketing, email marketing and experiential marketing. Um, and then of course for me personally, analytics has always tied into all of that because analytics is something that lights me up very much. Um, so really thinking about, and especially now, you know, when we're recording this, we're in the pandemic, right?

Speaker 3 (05:43):

So, um, a lot of people have come to me for virtual, um, experiences and virtual event marketing and that kind of thing. Um, understanding how do I take this beautiful concept that had for this physical space and hopefully make it an online experience that people want to attend. Right. Um, and then also of course, online, social media and email, um, which, you know, I'm sure we'll get into a little bit later. Um, and with that, you know, again, speaking to women consumers, and I don't think women really historically in cannabis, um, or in a lot of other industries, but in cannabis specifically, don't really get the chance to, you know, have these really open spaces and safe spaces to talk about and ask questions and not feel judged or, um, you know, why would you be asking me that question? It's so simple. It's like, okay, no, everyone is at a different point.

Speaker 3 (06:43):

Some people are, um, very new have never touched the plant before because there has been so much stigma attached to it. Right. Or they, you know, maybe have dabbled in it in the past and, you know, haven't really, um, then entangled with it and in a few years, um, and then, you know, as of recently with recreational changes and, and medical changes and things like that, they have, you know, started to experiment again with, um, you know, incorporating it into their holistic wellness plan. Right. Um, so with that kind of just helping create an eye through almost consulting, um, do events where we, you know, let women come together and learn about smokable herbs, or learn about how to roll of Rose blunt, like, you know, incorporate it into your life, however you want. Um, or just, you know, how to make a really, really good CBD smoothie or, you know, whatever it is. So, um, helping provide the education and the access is really important.

Speaker 4 (07:49):

Hi, my name is Courtney. I am the CEO and co-founder of amnesia media, and we're an influencer marketing platform that's been built and designed specifically to address the cannabis space. Um, one of the reasons that we set out on this endeavor together as a team is really because we felt that, um, we really wanted to make sure that we were building a really thoughtful and a great cannabis culture and why, what better place to do that than with people who are already cultural thought leaders, um, like influencers. And that really is to empower and consumers to be able to make the decisions that they need to make about what kind of cannabis product is going to be best for themselves. And so, um, we're really excited to be doing that and we have a great team on our, on our side and we actually really focus on developing campaigns that incorporate compliance.

Speaker 4 (08:34):

Um, and that's a key factor of how our platform works is we want to make sure that everyone stays safe and we're marketing to the right people. Very cool. Uh, so I got my start because I actually came from the regulated gambling industry, um, which is a really, I guess it's a, it's a very parallel industry, but it's also really interesting. So, um, just to kind of dial it back even further, I started out my career, um, working at Planned Parenthood, I was a health educator and I was gung ho about working in the public health space. And again, building like health promotion that was going to be culturally sensitive and really bring access to healthcare. Uh, and that was a really key kind of passion of mine since I was a kid. And so I ended up moving to the UK to pursue that and do my masters in that.

Speaker 4 ([09:19](#)):

And unfortunately I graduated from that when the recession hit. So no one was spending on preventative healthcare at that time, but the gambling industry was growing. And so I was able to get a random job there. And I ended up being at PokerStars, which is a pretty big gambling. If you guys aren't aware, it's the number one online poker platform in the world and ended up leading their pro and celebrity marketing department. So it was, it was a really interesting time because again, it's a really fragmented industry. The regulations are really difficult. It's an age restricted product. There's a lot of different things that people have to deal with. We had to deal with sometimes people having to exit markets literally within two weeks. Um, and that's, it's a, it's a very specific type of experience and what I was really fortunate to have with some friends from that industry invite me to, um, help companies transition from medical to adult use in the Nevada space. And I remember actually flying back and forth between

Speaker 5 ([10:21](#)):

To be

Speaker 4 ([10:21](#)):

In the cannabis space, just to be here for like six weeks at a time and then fly back and then come back and forth. And one of the key things like, I just remember driving one day in Vegas thinking, Oh my God, like, this is like everything I could've ever wanted. And I'm very grateful. And it's like, it feels a little selfish to even say that, but it's like, okay, well, if we're talking about public health and we're talking about access and we're talking about cultural development and, you know, cannabis is a health product. And

Speaker 5 ([10:50](#)):

So kind of

Speaker 4 ([10:52](#)):

Like, you know, like poker experience my time in public health. And so, um, every day I'm really grateful to still be a part of this industry. And, uh, in the community here is really strong. And I think that's one thing that we do see as much as you have a lot of this, um, entrenched, uh, institutional capital or what have you coming into the space, um, which, you know, does change the landscape. You do also have a very passionate community that can hopefully make that work, um, together in the future. Uh, so amnesia media, as a, as I said, is a, is an influencer marketing platform. So we're actually building out the technology, um, that is designed for the cannabis space. And the reason why that's really important is that, you know, a lot of things that we take for granted, such as like using things like Instagram's API, all those things are not accessible to the cannabis space.

Speaker 4 ([11:39](#)):

So we essentially have to build all this infrastructure that, um, just we don't have access to until regulations are going to be on a federal level. And so we've built this platform that ensures that both brands and influencers are going to be safe, um, from, you know, whether that's FDA regulations, FTC regulation, state, cannabis, regs, um, CBD regulations, what have you, and even platform terms of service. So we really focus on making sure that again, we can create educational content promotion and help brands actually reach customers and curate those experiences almost through the influencers for their communities, but making sure that everyone's safe doing it. So, um, one key thing that we do is we actually consult on the creative process as well. And that's because one thing that we found is again, um, compliance shouldn't be an afterthought. It really has to be something that is thought about from the very beginning of a campaign, our compliance a standalone engine soon. So that's going to be something for anyone who is doing any sort of digital marketing, um, can actually run their content through our compliance engine to make sure that it's going to be safe.

Speaker 2 ([12:45](#)):

I think it's great that, you know, I think cannabis has a really unique opportunity to create a safe space for women, especially within the marketing industry. Because I mean, obviously we were all young girls once and teenagers, and we know that I feel like the marketing, regardless of what we buy is never really positive and is really self detrimental. And, you know, self-examining in a very negative way. So I feel I'm really excited that like, there are people like you and like higher yields that, you know, focus solely on creating a safe space that's positive and is like a self-reflection that can be positive. So we're focusing on marketing and branding firms with people of color LGBTQ and other inclusive groups on their team. What do you think is the best way for companies to market themselves during this time? That's not only mindful honest, but also respectful.

Speaker 4 ([13:45](#)):

Uh, I, I feel like Karen's going to have a really great answer for this. So I'll kind of give my what may be a little bit more anemic. It's something that we've definitely thought about. And again, kind of referencing back to my time in public health, uh, it's always really important to be culturally sensitive. Uh, you have to understand that, you know, whatever perspective you may have is really informed by your life decisions, your life experiences, and also just your luck, you know, who your well, who's your family who, you know, what communities you're born into. And so it's really recognizing the most important thing, which is right now. It's not about you as a company. It's not about you as an individual, it's about your community and what is important to actually do for them. And recognizing that their experiences may not be your own.

Speaker 4 ([14:27](#)):

Oh, I love it. Um, yeah, I mean to add on to that, you know, authenticity that's, I think those are two pretty simple things, um, to follow. I mean, people can, can, and will see through, um, any inauthentic behaviors are judged. Um, and you know, don't obviously don't create content for appearances sake or for quote unquote clout, you know, whatever you want to call it. Um, you know, your company has a chance. Every company has a chance to evolve right now. And I think take it right, take that chance and evolve, um, and do the work and do the research and make a plan of action and follow through.

Speaker 5 ([15:19](#)):

Thanks, Kiran, for a company with a little knowledge and experience in a diverse space, what do you guys think is the best way for them to diversify and improve their brand to match their culture mentality? That really is inclusive.

Speaker 4 ([15:32](#)):

I think, again, it's just going back to what I had said previously and actually building on what Karen mentioned as well, which is ultimately again, it's, um, it's being authentic, it's being really intentional. And, and again, I think the first thing that anyone needs to do, no matter what their experience has been historically is to really check what their own biases are going to be, right. Because all of us have them. And there's no way to pretend that we don't and to pretend that we don't as ignoring the reality of what is, what is truly happening in our society and culture today. So again, um, I think it goes back to, you know, uh, really being empathetic. I think it's about being intentional about who you hire and look, ultimately the more diverse your team is, the more insights, the more experiences, the more you can actually build an anti-fragile product, the more you can build a product that really resonates with people.

Speaker 4 ([16:22](#)):

So as much as sometimes that can seem really broad, ultimately through all that broad experience, you're actually honing in on one very key thing, which is the human condition, which is something that does unite us all. And so I think, again, it's, it's really understanding that those stories don't take away, they add, but they, what they do ultimately do is drive towards, again, that idea that we are all people and that we want to work together, but we do all have different experiences that are all valid and meaningful. Yeah, absolutely. Definitely on the hiring, um, not only hiring, you know, just any position, but like executives, right? HR, people who are going to be helping frame the team as well. Um, and then not just hiring them, but, you know, I've been hired into spaces and have obviously people who know me, I'm very vocal.

Speaker 4 ([17:12](#)):

I'm not afraid to say what I feel and what I mean, and it's not heard, you know, like, just because you have a seat at the table doesn't mean that it's taken seriously or that it's, that your voice is heard. So, um, making sure that when you bring them to your table, that you're creating a safe place for them to be honest about their feedback, right. Be honest about why are they want to help support this company? Because ultimately, you know, when you're supporting them, they're supporting you, it's, it's symbiotic, right. Instead of like this fight every

Speaker 5 ([17:50](#)):

Day to be who you are, but also assimilate enough or quote, unquote, whatever you want to say, you know, however you want to survive as a person of color in this white dominant space.

Speaker 4 ([18:04](#)):

Right. And it actually, I think going back to, again, what you're saying, caring, which is like super insightful, which is true. Like even if you do hire it's about creating those safe spaces for those voices to actually be heard. I think I had read somewhere that even in organizations that are more prone again for that hiring and thanks so much, Karen for reminding me is that essentially, you know, there are even teams where people who are underrepresented in a traditional sense in that environment actually have to support and repeat what one person may have said in a meeting, because they're not heard often

enough. Right. So there are ways in which it's not to say that that's right, but that is actually happening. And so it's important to if someone sees that, for instance, in a meeting that, you know, someone who is underrepresented is saying something and not being heard, um, that, you know, allies, and also just anyone else in that community need to also help amplify that voice and support it and lift it up so that it is heard eventually.

Speaker 5 ([18:58](#)):

And also, you know, to piggyback off of that, don't try to decide what people of color want, you know, like don't try to speak for people of color, let them speak for themselves.

Speaker 6 ([19:11](#)):

Is there anything else you think companies can do to hold themselves accountable for inclusion? Like you both said, it's crucial to have a safe space, but I know that it can be difficult at times to know what that looks like.

Speaker 4 ([19:24](#)):

I think the first thing is asking questions, right. I mean, that's always the first thing. Right. And we do all have personal responsibilities again about where our biases are, but it's, it's asking questions. Um, it's, it's asking, you know, rather than making any sort of assumptions, it's really wanting to know like, what is someone experiencing? And I think it's, you know, rather than creating some sort of like decision fatigue and making it hard, it's actually putting some institutional structures in place that encourage that type of questioning. Right. So it's like, you know, there is going to be checking in with people on a, on a daily basis. And as Karen again mentioned earlier, it's making sure that those places are safe. Um, and that assumptions aren't being made and people, I think one sad thing that, you know, I've seen at least in marketing, especially with all the content that I have to consume for the work that I do is that, you know, you do see these kind of siloed places, especially within social media that are, let's say like POC who travel POC, who eat POC, who do that.

Speaker 4 ([20:22](#)):

But then, and you know, there's, I know there's a lot of, you know, cultural commentation or commentary right now about why that's the case. But if you also look then at content that's aggregated across the board, and let's say you were just looking at general travel content, you're not going to see those faces. You're not going to see unless it's kind of somewhat like lip service or like, you know, we just have to throw someone in there to make it look as if our brand is going to be active. Um, but again, you know, it's, it's asking the questions of like, what are you truly doing to move this forward? Um, that includes representation internally and externally. Like if your externals look a certain way and your internals look different, um, that's definitely performative, right? So it's, again, making sure that, you know, you're intentional and that those things match up because if they don't, there's definitely something that doesn't, it doesn't pass the sniff test. So, yeah, I think it's important to take a look at both those things and be really public and transparent if I click on a teams or about page and a website. And I see a very, a team that looks a very specific way, that's going to indicate to me the difference between what they're doing in a, in a performative or in a public sense versus what is actually happening on internally.

Speaker 5 ([21:38](#)):

Performative stuff is very, very easy to identify. So, so easy. So please back up your actions with actual work. Right. Um, and then also making sure, you know, if you're going to collaborate when we're talking about external stuff, if you're going to collaborate with, you know, black creators or non-black people of color pay them, I mean, when you collaborate with anyone, pay them, right. Don't just continue to try to, you know, exposure, like, no, we can figure out how to get that on our own pay people that's so, so important. Um, you know, if you're going to be learning from someone, if you're going to be, you know, if they're going to be dedicating time, pay them for that. Um, and then in the specifically regarding the cannabis industry, the accountability list is a really great resource. Um, it was created by Ken occlusive and a few other collaborators, and they have put so many hours into creating the list, verifying it, um, doing the research, you know, all that stuff.

Speaker 5 ([22:57](#)):

And really they're not doing any, you know, they're not exposing any information that's not publicly available on these people's websites. Right. So, you know, if there have been some companies that have reached out to them saying like, Hey, this isn't accurate, this isn't what we're actually doing. It's like, well, it's what it says on your website, if you would like to actually take those actions and then update your website, let us know, you know, um, talks internally don't really mean anything until they're realized. I hope that is understood industry-wide and, and in other industries as well.

Speaker 4 ([23:38](#)):

And I think even on one, like simple friend is like don't appropriate. And, you know, actually going back to the industry, that's a, that's a pretty big problem in our space. And I think that in some ways, you know, there's a really fine line between like, you know, paying a lodge to, you know, people or a culture or a community that has built up and has historical roots in cannabis and has done a lot. But you know, too, at this point, especially at this point in time, I don't think it was ever excusable, but especially right now, it's important to understand that, you know, if you're taking those things, are you giving back to those communities? Like, you know, are you like, so if you're going to borrow the name of something, you know, or use a different language or what have you, uh, but you're going to turn around and also not include people from that culture in your company.

Speaker 4 ([24:26](#)):

And you're not actually having conversations with those people. I mean, there's just a lot of things that are not appropriate there. And so it's, again, just making sure that, you know, ultimately to consumers have an ability. And I think again, to Karen's point, and also the, the list that she's created, it's important that people are referencing that because you are voting with your money and to actually see that and to see like, if you, you know, if you see something that doesn't look familiar, it's like, okay, well, let me just take a look. And I've definitely done this on the backend, you know, through some text messages with friends where we'll find a company, a cannabis company, it hasn't been like, let's look at their board, let's look at their team like, Oh, well that doesn't look like it works or matches. So again, I think it's, um, those lists are important and vote and consumers voting with their money is important.

Speaker 4 ([25:15](#)):

Yeah. So the list that, um, Courtney just referred to is inclusive base. I'm assuming that's what you're talking about. Inclusive based, which is, um, the directory of cannabis businesses that are owned and cannabis related businesses like him and tech, tech related and ancillary, that kind of stuff, um, owned by, um, people of color. So that includes, you know, black indigenous and people of color, um, and you

know, all the intersections, right? LGBTQ plus veteran owned, woman owned, um, formerly incarcerated, you know, all of that. Um, and then the accountability, why can't I say this word? Oh my goodness. The accountability list, which is separate from inclusive base, um, just, you know, a directory of all sorts of cannabis businesses and what they're actually doing right now in terms of are they contributing, you know, their proceeds, are they, um, you know, supporting certain organizations, what are they doing to actually, you know, take action. So that's kind of to help people clarify. Those are the two lists.

Speaker 2 ([26:23](#)):

How do you believe a brand can lead with empathy awareness and the intention to create positive change in the cannabis market? When really, it seems like others in the industry might not be as excited to be trailblazers.

Speaker 4 ([26:36](#)):

I think it's about again, sharing your community. And again, I know I keep using that C word, but it's really important. And it's really at the core of what we want to do at Ameesha as well as again, build culture, build community, and it's, it's letting your community speak for you, right? If you have a good relationship with your community, they're going to promote you because they have a good relationship with you. And so again, it's letting your community almost tell your story and also listen to what your community has to say back to you about your story, about what you want to do. And there's a lot of great companies, you know, in and outside of the cannabis space that really make it a point. You know, whether that's being intentional about who their partnerships are with who their clients are with, um, you know, who they're representing, uh, internally and externally, it's again, making sure that all of those things are aligned with one another and that your community feels comfortable to share their stories back with you.

Speaker 3 ([27:30](#)):

Yeah. I mean, never apologize for using that word. That word is so community is so, so important. And I have worked with too many brands that don't understand that community is more valuable than any thing you want to ROI measure, you know, um, when you, when it comes to like users or, um, you know, purchases or orders, you know, whatever it is, um, your community is, is true ROI. Um, they are the people that are gonna champion you. They're the people that are going to, um, tell strangers about you, right? Like that's the goal. Um, so with that, you know, understanding that your reputation or your aesthetic should never prevent you from being vocal or being active, and it honestly should not be driving your business decisions. Um, you know, don't worry about what other people are doing or worry about what you're doing, right?

Speaker 3 ([28:28](#)):

Like lead with that awareness lead with that intention. And remember sometimes your attentions might not align with your impact. So make sure that you're listening. If someone tells you like, Hey, your impact is actually not that great, even though your intention was great, which is thank you. We appreciate that. But ultimately your impact is what's important. So, um, you know, remembering that, and also remembering, you know, we had a great conversation, um, on sessions a few weeks back with, um, Casia of Ken occlusive. And she was saying, look, don't be a white savior. You know, um, remember to, you know, evaluate, did someone ask me to do this? And if the answer is no, then you're probably being a white savior. So make sure to ask that question, that's very, very important as well.

Speaker 5 ([29:24](#)):

Could you give us your opinion on what you think has been a genuine positive change for inclusion on social media?

Speaker 4 ([29:33](#)):

I think, uh, people are actually being really intentional. At least we've seen, especially within the influencer campaign space, people are being intentional about making sure that those stories, not just those faces are being shared. And I think that's a key distinction to be made here. Is that again, it's asking, um, people are starting to actually ask questions, which I think as a, as a woman of color, like, I think that's been always, the struggle for me is that there are a lot of assumptions made. There are a lot of things as, as Karen had just said about people, you know, with savior complexes, it's like, you know, ultimately at the end of the day, you know, people aren't looking for handouts, they're not looking to be safe. They want their communities to be sustainable, stable, and healthy and, and have roads and pathways to success that are they're defined by themselves.

Speaker 4 ([30:19](#)):

And so I think again, you know, just the fact that people, um, there, we haven't seen, I think such a outpouring of actual allyship in, you know, I don't think ever potentially, right. And I think that's a key thing and that allyship, you know, I'm not going to pretend I haven't lost friends through what's been going on lately. Um, because you know, people that I thought were allies, um, you know, we've gotten into some certain conversations that then, you know, indicate to me that, again, it's not really there. Um, but you know, it's, it's understanding that allyship looks very different and, you know, again, asking questions is really always going to be the first place, but also being sensitive to how those questions impact the person you're asking. And, you know, if, you know, asking if that person has space to have that conversation with you and or can refer or recommend something else.

Speaker 4 ([31:10](#)):

And so I think that's been one of the really nice things is that we're seeing mobilization calls to action, significant donations. We're seeing people actually take action on these things and really show up to be true allies. And again, some of those conversations, as hard as they are, as much as I've lost friends, because of it, I'm glad that they now are out there. I'm glad that they exist. And this is happening at a broad scale, you know, interpersonally, but also again on social media, on, you know, network television everywhere, and these conversations are taking place.

Speaker 3 ([31:44](#)):

Yeah. And I also think it's important to keep that momentum up. You know, if you're going to keep amplifying black owned businesses, if you're going to buy from black owned businesses, continue to do it, don't just do it because, you know, in June, um, there was a public outcry about, you know, black men and women being murdered that has is going to continue to happen, unless action is taken unless the momentum continues. Unless, you know, we continue to do the work as a community. Remember, you know, allyship is not something you get to a point on yourself a or, um, something that is an identity, it's a practice, right. So making sure that, you know, that is continued and, um, all that work, it's a commitment, it's lifelong work. So continue it

Speaker 4 ([32:36](#)):

And live life long is right here. Cause I'll, I mean, don't want to sound like a pessimist here, but genuinely, I don't think, you know, these, I think what's been really nice is that there are what it does look to be that there's going to be some significant change, but you know, I've pretty much grown up thinking that like, these are things that I'll just have to deal with my whole life. And I, and I still maintain that. I don't think that's going to change. I think the way it looks will change. Um, but you know, it's recognizing, and I think it's also saving space for again, people are going to feel fatigued. People are going to feel like this is a long game, right. And so, you know, don't feel that you have to ask those, all those questions upfront. Don't feel that those things all have to like end as if there's going to be a resolution at the end of it.

Speaker 4 ([33:18](#)):

And I think if people, you know, there has to be incremental resolution and like again, um, incremental even I think everything that's happening out to me, that's still incremental, right? Like a huge change would be like complete overhaul of our institutional structures and all that sort of stuff. But, you know, where is this as like a, let's say medium-sized like, it's, it's going to be our whole lives and, and it is going to be your friends' whole lives. And it's going to be something that they're just going, it's an experience that is going to be forever and at least in our lifetime right now. But that also means, you know, it doesn't mean people should give up, but it also means people shouldn't get disheartened if they're not seeing that change that they want to see immediately.

Speaker 5 ([34:00](#)):

Yeah, we do it. So we don't go reverting back. We do it. So we continue to move forward. Even if it's frustratingly slow and incremental.

Speaker 2 ([34:12](#)):

I think that's been one of the hardest things for me to like, even though I'm a white passing person of color and I'm understanding, you know, always understood my privilege, um, just because my parents were so, um, you know, were very, I thought it was really important for me to learn the history like black history and black history in America. It's hard when I feel like we're more connected than we've ever been before via social media. And you know, I'm not seeing the really negative trolls and these bloggers or anything like that. That's not content I follow, but I know it's out there and you know, it, it is a positive experience to see people speaking out and becoming allies. But it's also really hard when, you know, it's like, wow, like this is my fight to now. And it always kind of was, but now it really is.

Speaker 2 ([35:09](#)):

And especially looking at some of the influencers or photographers that I work with are followed and realizing like, wow, actually their content is really insensitive. I'm thinking one person in particular, but, um, you know, it's, um, it's negative and it's very difficult for me to feel like the change is again, like happening quickly because there are just a few people that, you know, it's, it's for their own personal benefit and it's at, sometimes it can be hard to differentiate between the two. Um, but I think eventually, you know, all that will come to light and like the positive conversations that come from it are the most important part, even if they're like really hard straining to like finally be understood. And yeah, I think social media is a great base for that, but it's, it's definitely a long haul for sure.

Speaker 5 ([36:07](#)):

Yeah. And I think the government proved in Portland, at least that it's not just immigrants that they're willing to like take action against, it's not just, you know, people of color. It's like anyone we are willing to do this too. So like, it is everyone's fight for sure.

Speaker 4 ([36:26](#)):

It's and I've had this conversation actually with my Caucasian or white friends of like, why there has been this inability to recognize, like when there are facts staring people in the face when they're seeing the things that are happening. And I think it's an easier way out, right? To just pretend that it doesn't exist because then you have no responsibility to be different. And to acknowledge it exists means that as you had mentioned earlier, tests, like that means that's a lifelong journey now. Right. And some people don't want to do that. And I think that's a shame and also keep like what you're saying about marketing. We can't forget. I mean, ultimately marketing, branding, technology, all of these things are somewhat inherently neutral depending on how they're built and what have you. But at the same time, like, you know, they are important things like public health requires marketing to get people to potentially change behavior.

Speaker 4 ([37:14](#)):

But ultimately that's what marketing is. It's about trying to get someone to behave in a specific way. And one thing that we really can't ignore, um, and I, I'm starting to see it a little bit in this, in our space and cannabis, but it is fraught and it's rampant. Um, pretty much outside of cannabis is targeting of minority communities. Right. And if with marketing and that's a big thing, right? You see things like the fast food industry, targeting minority communities, creating food deserts, um, all these other things that, again, the marketing part of it is very real because again, it's a neutral thing in its own, right. But ultimately if you have, you know, corporations targeting minority groups that continue to keep them impoverished. Um, when I was working through a community action group, um, during my time as a health educator, that was one of the conversations we were having with one of the sociologists on the team was like, if you look at minority communities like the Latin X community or the Asian American community, all these other communities, there's a lot of encouragement of spending money within their own community, supporting their own businesses within their communities.

Speaker 4 ([38:17](#)):

But if you look at the black American experience, they're targeted heavily by corporations. And so you see this outpouring of their resources not staying within their communities. And that's, that's a really important thing to remember is that, you know, marketing think about who your target demographic. And again, if your target demographic doesn't look like you whatsoever, you know, ask yourself, you know, what are you doing? Are you hurting this community, potentially creating negative health outcomes, creating, you know, all these things for the sake of a buck and essentially disenfranchising and creating instability in a whole, you know, when I was in health education, a whole city, a whole town that was bankrupt, um, didn't have money. And it was just, it was a really terrible thing to see when, you know, kids were saying that like their goal in life was to work in an oil refinery.

Speaker 2 ([39:08](#)):

Uh, it's been amazing too. I don't know if we'll edit this out, but it's an amazing to like, watch your guys's content and like constantly going through your stories, because I feel like I learned so much from you both. And I just think the, you know, not only do I learn about other people's experiences, which is the most important part, like learning about their stories and becoming empathetic, but also like the

accessibility of the story, as well as the resources, um, for me to kind of go after and like, you know, turn inward, um, and think about those things. Um, that kind of goes to my last question. Is there any other places other than like, can inclusive and things like that, I've sent those to my team as well, but, um, are there any other, uh, places that you guys think we should look for online resources? We are, we are starting to build a social equity page on the higher yields website, and we already did a podcast with, um, all of the BI POC, like LGBTQ people on our team. Um, so we're going to have some content up there, but we want to have as many resources as possible. And I have a few like, um, you know, a purely book resources, and then I have, um, the two other ones. But if you guys have any other suggestions that would be great

Speaker 5 ([40:36](#)):

Outside of that,

Speaker 4 ([40:37](#)):

The lists that Ken occlusive has done with Karen as well, as well as the accountability list. I think one really key one is the original equity group that's based here in the Bay area. That's led by Nina parks. Um, they do a really fantastic job of creating resources. Again, no one, you know, they're really trying to create a sustainable economy where people have access to something that essentially they've been criminalized for historically, and to participate and be successful in the cannabis industry. And, um, you know, I think that's a great resource, whether that's someone who wants to get a license, at least within California. Um, but it's a fantastic resource in terms of what they're trying to do to get people plugged into what they need to have. And so I think, um, they're doing a lot of great work over there and they're working very closely both with the private sector and the public,

Speaker 5 ([41:24](#)):

Definitely a great resource. Um, also the fluoride coalition. Um, so broccoli mag in

Speaker 3 ([41:34](#)):

Partnership with the inaugural board, um, which includes Casio gram of can inclusive, um, Maya Shaw as well as men lay. Um, it's a coalition where businesses can, um, pledge a certain amount. So it starts at \$50. And I think it goes up to 200 a month if you want to donate more and, you know, you can be consistent. You can definitely do that, but you know, 50 is the minimum requirement, um, for a commitment and it's six months, so \$50 over six months. Um, and then the, that inaugural board is the one that chooses, um, the organization that this money is going to be contributed to, um, the organizations that this money is going to be contributed to. Um, and then in the following year, a new board will be selected. Um, so that is a really, you know, sort of, um, I think they took the model from the giving circle, um, where they use that to kind of, you know, let's as a collective, you know, work together to, um, do our part, even if, you know, as a small business, you're like, I don't think I can make a big enough contribution just on my own.

Speaker 3 ([42:42](#)):

It's like, well, let's do it together. Um, and then also national expungement week, um, that is, I believe coming up in September. Um, and with that, you know, making sure that, yeah, let's start getting, you know, people out of prison and getting their records, you know, straight so that we can get them, you know, trained and reentered back into society and give them opportunities to be able to, you know, undo the damage that the war on drugs did. Um, and then the name of the organization that I had

mentioned prior is the flora coalition, which is, um, broccoli, mags collaboration. Yeah. Um, and then let me think, uh, equity sessions as well. Um, they do a lot of work in terms of, you know, really thinking about, I mean, look, there has not been an equity program that's like amazing, right. Like I don't think there's a single one that anyone can point to. Um, so we're definitely still striving for that, but, um, let's continue to, you know, do the work, um, do the research, figure out what, what we can do and then of course, you know, navigate the red tape so that it can happen.

Speaker 4 ([44:00](#)):

And if anything, again, that's the same thing. Like I hear a lot of people detracting from the equity groups or saying like, Oh, well the programs haven't gone well, so we should just get rid of them altogether. And it's like, again, we should never, perfection is just not real. And there are real life circumstances and to kind of have this like broad sweeping, like, you know, it just doesn't work. So let's get rid of it is not a solution. Um, at all, it's, let's look at it. Let's look at the fact that equity programs have been rolled out in numerous places now across the U S and all of them are structured a little bit differently. And what can we borrow from each one that is also again, going to be relevant to that population? So I think that's a key thing too, is that, you know, from a state by state basis, as much as there are unifying experiences, some of those things have to be culturally sensitive to where they are. Um, and actually it just tagging onto that too. Karen is the last prisoner project, right. And they're doing such great work again to really highlight mass incarceration, modern slavery, and essentially it almost being built on the back of these minor drug offenses for cannabis possession. So,

Speaker 3 ([45:03](#)):

Yeah. Um, thank you for sharing your perspective for sure. And your experience. Um, I, you know, of course, want to make sure that those stories are amplified, like even, you know, especially when you talk about, I recognize my privilege, you know, um, they're here. Um, and with that, I know for 21 projects, um, is, uh, I don't know what to call it. It's like a project is what you could call it. Um, what they do is they photograph, um, and tell the stories of, or not tell, but help amplify and give a platform to the stories that, um, you know, people of color and, um, you know, it's, it's mostly people of color that are talking about, you know, I was arrested when I was 16 years old, you know, and I was thrown into juvie and then prison and so on and so forth, or, you know, someone who's like, um, I'm a mother and I was arrested, you know, because of child protective services or, you know, whatever it is.

Speaker 3 ([46:05](#)):

Um, so all sorts of, you know, really different experiences, but obviously with one very common thread, um, and to go back to your point about, um, you know, the people who are making these equity, um, her designing these equity programs, not even that they're, you know, Nobre representative of the communities that are supposed to be, you know, given these, these equity resources and opportunities, it's, they don't even understand cannabis. Right? Like they don't even, a lot of them don't even know anything about the plant. Um, and that in and of itself is dangerous for sure.

Speaker 4 ([46:45](#)):

And I think that's, you know, and I was still just kind of us carry on with both. Both of you guys have said is again, same thing, Keith, like, appreciate you sharing that vulnerability again. And, and I think those stories are actually important to be told. Um, you know, and I know that there's some debate about that as well, but, you know, if we are going to try and build allyship, that includes representation too. Right. So, you know, having people like yourself, like tests and, and people live within your organization, you

know, stand up and say that, you know, yeah. It's hard. Yeah. It's not, it doesn't feel nice. Yeah. I have to kind of revisit, you know, a lot of different things, again, even as POC is we have to do that too. Right. It's, it's fraught with all these things of like, thinking about, you know, at what point am I some of these things and then behaving in that way of what's put on me and then am I now acting as a stereotype?

Speaker 4 ([47:35](#)):

Like, there's all these other questions. And also all these things also assume the default is white, right. And that's, and that's, I think a very dangerous place to be in. Um, and I think it's, it's important to recognize again, that validity of everyone's narrative, including, um, allyship narratives, right. Uh, and again, when we talk about these equity programs and who's building it, it's about, you know, it's really important for people to be. And again, this is another great thing happening right now is how civically minded everybody is. You know, I've heard so much in my life, especially as, you know, a Chinese American that on one side of my family, they're incredibly politically active. And on the other side, they're not, and on the other side, it represented a lot more stories that I was hearing in my community of like, why bother, you know, I don't need to vote, I don't need to do these things.

Speaker 4 ([48:22](#)):

You know, the system is oppressive, it's always going to be oppressive. So what, what is there to do about it now? And even again, as a Chinese American, my experiences, um, have more privileged than some others. And it's, and it's also recognizing that. So I think it's recognizing that even as people of color, we also are still dealing with where we're culpable, where these things, how they impact our behavior, where we don't want that anymore. And you know what, and again, it's, it's, this is not like a race to the bottom. Everyone has different experiences, again, they're all valid, but you know, we are all experiencing this differently. It's not this like, just like this monolith and like one version of the story. Right. So, um, yeah, it's just important to remember that we're all struggling with this.

Speaker 7 ([49:09](#)):

It's a very

Speaker 4 ([49:09](#)):

Cathartic conversation. I like it. I know, right. I'm like, are we not recording anymore? Can we just talk about it? Like, yeah.

Speaker 7 ([49:20](#)):

Wow. Thank you so much, Karen and Courtney for coming to speak with us here at higher yields consulting, and thank you again to our listeners for supporting the higher enlightenment podcast and keep a lookout for our next episode. Thanks guys. Have a good night. Thanks for listening everybody. For more information about the higher enlightenment podcasts, or if you have show ideas or would like to be a guest on our podcast, check out the description below for information about sponsorship or advertising on the higher enlightenment podcast. Please call us at eight four, four high yield that's eight four four H I Y I E L D S. Or visit our website@higheryieldsconsulting.com. Thanks. Have a great day. And we'll talk to you soon. [inaudible].