

Speaker 1 ([00:12](#)):

[inaudible] hello and welcome to the higher enlightenment podcast brought to you by higher yields cannabis consulting, your seed to sale cannabis business solutions team. My name is Adam. I'm your host today. And part of the creative design team here at higher yields today's episode is about business development in the cannabis industry with Anthony Atkins, director of business development at higher yields cannabis consulting. So, Anthony, can you tell us a bit about yourself and what you do?

Speaker 2 ([00:43](#)):

Sure, absolutely. Um, my, uh, my name is, uh, Anthony Atkins and I am a director of business development with higher yields. My background is Steve deeply into complex environments and the technology and telecom industry, uh, prior to, um, my venture into the cannabis industry cannabis and hemp industries. And, uh, I have been associated with, uh, building organizations, uh, building sales and business development teams, uh, integration of marketing as a service into, uh, into the marketplace. Definitely a lot of experience internationally in terms of developing business, uh, not only developing business and partnerships, but also developing teams and teams of teams. So I've run organizations as big as a Comcast or century link and have developed, you know, the sales teams and turned around organizations and launch products and that sort of thing. So very excited to be able to bring that, that level and that type of experience to not only the industry, but also higher yields.

Speaker 1 ([01:54](#)):

Okay. For the first question, what are the most important factors when evaluating a candidate?

Speaker 2 ([02:00](#)):

Well, evaluating a cannabis deal, there's so many different things, and somebody thinks that we don't know when we're talking with a potential client or a potential account, whether it be an individual or whether it be a small team of individuals or whether it be an actual, a business that's looking to, uh, engage, engage us as a, as a trusted advisor and a consultant, the three major things, even though there are a lot of, a lot of different factors that I want to know in developing, uh, number one is what is their end point? What is their end game? Um, I always start with the end in mind. Uh, this is actually, they have been developed, uh, from an Olympic training technique called backward shaping end point visualization and backward shaping on it's very, very effective when working with organizations that are looking to either a get into the industry for the first time, uh, get into the industry, um, by doing on their own personal development in the industry, whether it be growing or whether it be, you know, baking or that sort of thing.

Speaker 2 ([03:08](#)):

So number one is always understanding what their end point is, what is their end game? What do they want to, they want to build a series of dispensary's that they ultimately eventually want to sell, uh, is getting into the industry at one point, like as an extraction environment, and then be able to build it out from there. Um, but end point visualization is huge. What is their end game? That's number one, number two is, you know, ultimately what is their, what is their budget and their timing and the authority to, in a sense, invoke or create, uh, the motion forward? Are they a key influencer? Are they just digging for information? You know, ultimately what is their budget and timeframe? And a lot of times that helps me and helps my team, you know, really understand, are they serious? I mean, is this just kicking tires or are, do they have a long and aligned budget?

Speaker 2 (04:06):

Do they have an aligned timeline and what are they looking to do? How are they looking to do it? And, uh, you know, from that standpoint, that's very important and also are the individual, the individual I'm talking with because this goes right hand in hand with budget and timing. So it falls underneath that second key element. There's do that, love the authority to make those decisions, you know, are they acting on behalf of someone, you know, who is the other members of their team, uh, and that sort of thing. So that's number two, specially in initial, uh, evaluation of, you know, a good opportunity number, uh, number three is sort of a why higher yields. I asked them, how did you come, come across those? How do you, what do you know about us? Um, do you understand and know what we do and how we do it?

Speaker 2 (04:58):

What is your, you know, so how did you come into connection, you know, with higher yields, even if it was us reaching out to them and them accepting or giving us permission to engage in them with a conversation or whether it's, they were proactive and sought us out, um, sought out our expertise. Um, that would be number three. And the reason why that those main foundations, right. Endpoint visualization. So I understand the know the end point number one, number two, budget and timing, where are they in the context of this project that they want this end result for? And then of course, how did we connect those three elements? Really tell me, um, number one, the serious, serious nature of, of the inquiry or the opportunity is this real. Um, but also can they articulate, you know, what it is they're doing or how they want to be able to do it.

Speaker 2 (05:55):

And then of course, the reason why number three is so important to me in terms of how did they come across or what do they know about higher yields? Um, that allows me to fill in any gaps, right? In terms of what we do the value we can provide and what creates us as, you know, what ha what are our key differentiators are, you know, in the marketplace and how uniquely qualified we are to be able to engage them in their projects. And, um, I really utilize those three in order, right. In process, because I'm, I'm establishing those building blocks of understanding that we have really allows us to engage in open conversation and dialogue, because if we can't get to dialogue, you know, then I know that that opportunity is going to be difficult to be able to not only work within, but I'll also able to understand, especially if the individuals or the accounts or the companies are unable to articulate exactly what it is, you know, why they're there, why, why are we talking? So those are the top three.

Speaker 1 (07:07):

A lot of companies are confused about what their goals are and what they're doing

Speaker 2 (07:15):

Of self urgent environments. A lot of times they definitely are ahead of themselves, or they don't truly understand and know. So based upon that, you know, it's the fact of do, are they clear? How far are they down the path and how willing are they to be able to take insight, advice and advisory, you know, services from an organization, of course, like higher yields. So, um, in the startup environment, it's interesting because a lot of times you're right. I mean, they don't know, I don't know where all I know is I want to be in it. Right. But you tell me where to start. You know, that's a different conversation for sure. Then someone who is, uh, indicating, you know, clarity in terms of, you know, I wanted to start with this, you know, the start on the retail side of things, I want to have access to property, or I'm

looking for assistance for real estate and identifying and building out. And, you know, so it's a, it's a very distinct, um, uh, trigger, if you will, an identifier, uh, if they can't articulate it, we definitely know we're in the very, very beginning stages, if they can articulate it. And to what degree will allow me to understand how far, you know, how far down the line they are, you know, with regards to, uh, their, their own vision.

Speaker 1 ([08:38](#)):

So what is your preferred or recommended strategy for finding cannabis business partners?

Speaker 2 ([08:44](#)):

Well, there, there's definitely distinct, um, you know, elements and opportunities that I'm always seeking or looking for, depending upon, um, you know, where is we? We are in the, in the industry. Here's what I mean by that. Um, we know what higher yields does. We know, um, the expertise that we bring to the table and the value we bring to the table. Right. And, um, based upon that, we're looking for partners who share and bring value, right? And, uh, what I'm looking for in terms of developing a partner, it's where do they fit within our ecosystem? Developing a national international ecosystem has been very, very important to us and understanding how these partners would eventually play within the context of that ecosystem is also very important. There are four elements, so that I'm looking for, I'm looking for sustainability, I'm looking for predictability, I'm looking for accountability, and I'm looking for responsibility in terms of those partners and what they can do, and the values that they bring now, the partner, right, of course, is those relationships that we would be working together within so that we can build our account structure, our client base in order to be able to plug them into that ecosystem.

Speaker 2 ([10:15](#)):

So searching out account opportunities and client opportunities that we would actually be functioning and helping them develop their opportunity or their vision, or their journey in the industry, you know, where that is along the supply chain or along the value chain. Uh, but those partners are going to be so key because we want to be able to marry that group. We want to be able to, you know, if we get to that point, introduce our clients to that ecosystem. So that partnership, those partners in this industry has to be all about integrity. They have to be about deliverability. And, uh, I mean, I can probably throw out a couple of, uh, more ilities if you will, you know, sustainability, predictability, accountability, and, uh, responsibility. Um, you know, it's, it's very, very important. They have to have assignment same mindset because this industry is moving fast and, uh, it's becoming more sophisticated and even more complex as it grows and develops out.

Speaker 3 ([11:20](#)):

Okay. How does technology play into business development in cannabis?

Speaker 2 ([11:26](#)):

Interestingly enough, that's a, I mean, it's a good question because there are so many facets of technology that can be considered, you know, for the industry, um, technology on the business development side. Yeah, absolutely. That that's a different play, right? Because that technology is all about, you know, things of, uh, the software nature of the cloud, um, environments that we could build databases. And we have the opportunity to be able to bill build communication platforms by which we're communicating with the industry or communicating with the marketplace. And we're also communicating with our clients, you know, from that standpoint. So, um, when I take a look at

technology, uh, especially from a business development perspective, I'm looking at the, those things that can be utilized internally to help us, you know, continue to create efficiency, create, continue to create engagement and in continue to, uh, you know, create that, uh, that intrigue, if you will.

Speaker 2 ([12:37](#)):

And always being able to stay, you know, top of mind with our clients and or our potential clients Huston. So from technology, from that standpoint, in terms of a marketing engagement, customer, client engagement and prospecting engagement, that's very, very important for us to be able to utilize, you know, that marketing base, that cloud-based, those communication-based platforms and software platforms that will help us become, you know, more efficient in terms of our engagement and more personal. And from that matter, I think we lose sight of, uh, technology being able to actually create, uh, you know, uh, deeper engagements, you know, from that standpoint. So that's exciting when we explore that. Now, the second element of how important technology is in the industry, um, from the standpoint of, you know, what are we bringing into, um, somebody's journey, whether it be cultivation, what technology is being utilized there, uh, you know, in terms of genetics, in terms of, you know, processing in terms of cultivating, growing and agriculture, I think it's important for us to stay on top of that, but also as from a business development perspective, I'm looking at how we're going to always bring our best, the best to our clients at a fiscally responsible, you know, pricing model, right?

Speaker 2 ([14:01](#)):

So it has to be a blend of, of technology has to be a blend of expertise and has to be a blend of been there, done that. And that technology definitely has to support that, you know, through the process, whether it be cultivation, whether it be transportation disposal, whether it be, you know, production and manufacturing and extraction, uh, even from a dispensary standpoint of what that customer experience really is going to be, technology has to support it. It doesn't take over and we can't allow it to quote unquote take over and allow technology to only be, you know, uh, software connections to people, application connections, to people. There has to be a person to person, um, peer to peer, a developmental element that technology needs technology needs to bring. And that also works well for the security side of things. Of course, we're always wanting to make sure that, uh, cyber security, financial technology, um, you know, FinTech, you know, making sure they're secure, you know, security in terms of, you know, the cash flow and how cash operates and how banking potentially banking will interact with, uh, with us. So it's multifaceted at, um, um, big time, big time.

Speaker 3 ([15:19](#)):

Okay. So what principles do you use with H C when engaging in longterm strategic planning and also, how do you incorporate these principles into business development at higher yields and with cannabis companies?

Speaker 2 ([15:35](#)):

Yeah. The, because we're starting with the end in mind, we're always starting with the relationship in mind as well. Right? So with that end point in mind, in, in addition to helping them understand what their end point is, right, how they visualize that we want to be alone, um, we want to be on that journey with them. So our end point is long-term relationship end point is sustainable relationship. You know, our end point is, is taking and bringing our expertise and value to them along their journey so that their investments are returned so that their profitability is increased. And, uh, you know, of course their experience, you know, helping them mitigate risk and fill gaps and that sort of thing, very, very

important. So even though that's sort of a large, you know, statement, if you will, how we can narrow that down into sustainable long-term relationships that are built upon, you know, a continual demand generation, not only demand generation for our services, but at demand for our relationship and our ecosystem that we're, you know, that we've built, uh, you know, very successfully and continue to keep refining, you know, we want to bring it to the, we want to connect to the market.

Speaker 2 ([16:50](#)):

We want to connect to account accounts and clients. We want to connect with our partners and we want those relationships to be built. Long-term. So the biggest aspect of that is, again, acting with the end in mind, if I'm engaging you as a client, right. I'm looking out, you know, two years, three years down the road, I'm looking at, you know, elements and opportunities for a job well done that can result in a referral, a testimony, a reference, you know, that we can continue to keep expanding and working together because along the journey, I mean, we act as that trusted advisor, and if we're not in it for the long haul, then, you know, then there's, there's major gaps. And, uh, you know, that's, that's important to understand, uh, Adam, one other thing I want to mention on that is what I call continuity and continuity, what higher yields brings. And this is understanding why those long-term relationships are so, are so good. And so functional is because we're looking at, you know, we're, we're, we're looking at that ability, you know, in order to be able to, you know, really gain footholds and, you know, and that sort of thing, you know, along a demand generation, um, standpoint.

Speaker 3 ([18:08](#)):

Okay. So what are the top three X factors do you think are missing in the cannabis industry that would change the course of the industry success?

Speaker 2 ([18:19](#)):

Um, that's, uh, you know, that, that definitely is a tough one. I've, um, I've been exploring this one, um, you know, for a little bit now, and that's just due to the fact of, you know, who's getting into the market, who are the players that have been there, done that, you know, who are the organizations are looking to expand and grow? What are the organizations that are getting involved, you know, in the industry and what is happening is there is definitely a lot of individuals who are looking to get into the industry. Um, you know, you know, from that, from that particular standpoint, engaging higher yields, um, you know, we want to understand, you know, what is happening. So you have these, all these, um, call it, the bleeding edge groups that started in the industry. There was a lot of, uh, uh, people that were, you know, being innovative and bringing their own, uh, own personal expertise, you know, to the industry.

Speaker 2 ([19:15](#)):

And they were finding out that, uh, very, very quickly that there was a deep oversight, uh, from government state and local government, uh, more regulations that came into play, um, more aspects of tax environments, more aspects of, you know, compliance environments, regulation environments. And so, uh, it just tingly enough where we are today is a very complex, uh, very highly regulated at the federal, you know, gain comes into play. I'm sure it's going to be more. And, uh, it's, it's just D it's steeped, you know, deeply in control and manipulation, right? So organizations and individuals have to make these adjustments, uh, because of all the uncertainty, because of all the variables and because of the, what I'll call is uncertain risks. I mean, a lot of times, I mean, being in compliant on every single aspect of such levels in such degrees at every single stage at one stage breaks down, if one part of the supply chain breaks down that affects everyone, everyone, you know, who are connected with that. So,

um, you know, watching a YouTube video, do it yourself, you know, cultivator, you know, may not be the best route to go in this industry, you know,

Speaker 3 ([20:42](#)):

Or any industry really

Speaker 2 ([20:46](#)):

For any, this is not like, you know, I got a bunch of weebles and I'm selling them on Amazon, you know, with a turnkey environment, this isn't necessarily turn key, it's complex. And then you add in, you know, certain personalities and characters and characteristics and endpoints and cultures, and, you know, developing, uh, you know, a certain culture or a certain brand. You know, it's very, very important to understand how you're going to connect into the marketplace. Are you going to connect with your clients w no matter who your client is, whether it be the individual coming in into a dispensary and, you know, purchasing a, uh, a gummy based, you know, uh, product for the first time, or whether it is a, a very large production manufacturing, extractor, who's looking to streamline processes and systems, you know, that, uh, that are looking to increase their ROI.

Speaker 2 ([21:43](#)):

And so it's a very complex environment. Uh, higher yields of course, brings that expertise, you know, for the three majors, right? Nothing is custom. We don't customize things, or I'm sorry, we don't, uh, we don't template things. We customize things. We are a customized, uh, group that takes into consideration all factors and brings, you know, RSP our expertise uniquely to each individual. Uh, we've been there done that, our collective experience in the industry at all different facets. We've been there, done that. We've seen things work, we've seen things fail. We know how compliance functions, we know where the pitfalls are. We know how to mitigate risk and close gaps, you know, for these organizations, you know, and, um, uh, of course, uh, you know, the aspect of our relationship and how we work and we build and work in phases, you know, we take phased approach because budget is important. Cashflow is important. Um, and we build it out. We have checklists, we have evaluations and, uh, we have reviews at every single step along the journey of how we develop work for them.

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

So how do you create sustainable long-term relationships in the cannabis industry? Well, sustainable longterm. I mean, it said, if you look at how we're, how we're working to develop,

Speaker 2 ([23:00](#)):

And you take a look back at, you know, what I was mentioning about, you know, uh, predictability, integrity, um, sustainability and those sorts of things, uh, it is a, it is a commitment to achieve anticipated results. And those end points have to be defined clearly if we could define the end point and I want to know what they want to get out of it, whether it be a partner or a potential client, or an existing business, existing clients that are looking to grow, they need to be able to, and I'm going to push them to, to understand their end point. Ultimately, it's okay to say, I want to be bought out in five years. So Kay. Just say, you know, I want to grow and I want to waste my dispensary elements in five different States. You know, I want to gross revenue profit of whatever it is, red cross revenue.

Speaker 2 ([23:53](#)):

Um, from that standpoint, to be able to really define what that end point is, defining it, to find it, to find it, to find it, to plan it that way we can align with our relationship and how to build that relationship and always point them towards their anticipated results, right? What are they anticipating? I want to align with that always not only even, even from the first engagement, but also way through their journey and through our relationship, always understanding and what they're anticipating as a result. And if we need to adjust to that, we'll let them know based upon certain factors, or if they want to realize that, then they're going to have to, you know, understand that there's going to be time, money, and energy. That's going to need to be devoted in order to alter that course to a new anticipated result, know in that collaborative environment and customized environment that we provide and so important with continuing to align with our anticipated results.

Speaker 3 ([24:59](#)):

Okay, Anthony, um, before we wrap up, uh, do you have any final thoughts you'd like to share with us?

Speaker 2 ([25:06](#)):

Well, let me understand this. And this is something that I'm developing over my years of experience, you know, not only in individually contributing to the organization that I'm working with in a sales business development and marketing, um, environment, but also, uh, developing teams being in leadership roles and, you know, working to, you know, connect to the market. We have to understand, uh, completely that there is a, uh, there's a demand right out in the marketplace. We may not know where it is. We may not know, uh, how that functions, but we always need to be in demand generation mode. That's creating demand. It's connecting to the market. It's establishing intriguing curiosity with who we are and what we do. It's being able to take that, you know, that target, you know, um, of opportunity and to be able to create awareness around us in our engagement and the industry, right?

Speaker 2 ([26:07](#)):

So we have to understand that though process has to be in place and it has to connect right throughout that process, but also, you know, really understanding what, you know, what functionality each area of business, uh, in our organization, how they function because sales is not business development, business development is not sales. Marketing is not business development. And business development is marketing, right? Advertising isn't marketing, marketing is an advertising. So we, we work hard to make sure that we're functioning in our role and what role marketing plays, what role business development plays, what roles sales plays, and understand that there's synergy between those organizations, that they can't operate in a vacuum, right. We have to be all about the generation, the demand generation as an organization. So it's an organizational model, rather it is than a functional model, right? Because once we establish what that, what that is each role within the organization, sort of, I don't want to say it has to stay in their lane, cause it's kind of a little bit cliché, but marketing has a specific role and it impacts business development in a huge way.

Speaker 2 ([27:32](#)):

Business development impacts marketing because they're bringing the intelligence, the market intelligence back to the organization, or back to the functioning business unit of marketing in order for marketing to continue to keep improving. We always want to be in a constant state of never ending improvement, no doubt. And we operate on our functions as you know, and allow those functions, uh, to really take, hold, create foundational, uh, direction and, and movement. And when you have sales operating with business development, business development, operating with marketing, marketing,

operating with the organization and understanding what it is we're doing, there's so many great things that could come as a result, but the foundation is always, how do I create demand? How do I create demand in everything that we do, and then make sure we're ushering and moving organizations down a, a, an engagement path that is asking and, uh, you know, asking for permission if you will, to engage them. So a lot of times we always try to shove certain things down the market's throat, right. And, uh, doesn't vote very well. Not in terms of engagement. They come across as a salesperson, right? Quote unquote, or I hate this. I hate consultants. I hate salespeople. We don't want that. I mean, yes, we, we, we functioned in roles, but as long as we're connecting, as long as we're engaging, as long as we're asking for permission and ushering them through a process, um, great results will ensue.

Speaker 1 ([29:12](#)):

Okay. I think that's about all the time we have for today. Uh, like to thank you very much for being on our show today, Anthony.

Speaker 2 ([29:19](#)):

Absolutely. No, I appreciate it. And look forward to

Speaker 1 ([29:26](#)):

Thank you very much. We'd like to thank everybody for tuning in today and listening to our podcast for information

Speaker 5 ([29:42](#)):

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Speaker 6 ([30:32](#)):

[inaudible].