

# Episode 23 Intersection of Cannabis Branding, Website Design...

📅 Mon, Mar 27, 2023 11:47AM ⏱ 52:13

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

cannabis, brand, e commerce, products, consumer, higher yields, delivery, industry, hemp, compliance, people, dispensary, space, anthony, companies, important, cbd, customers, regulations, element

## SPEAKERS

Sonny Marston, Anthony Adkins, Courtney Woo, Adam Kulbach

---



Adam Kulbach 00:15

Hello and welcome to the higher enlightenment podcast brought to you by higher yields cannabis consulting your seed to sale Business Solutions team. My name is Adam, your host and part of the creative team here at higher yields. Today's episode deals with the intersection of cannabis branding and E commerce. Today's guests are Courtney Woo, Sonny Marsden and Anthony Adkins. So let's get on with the show. Okay, let's start by having you guys introduce yourselves. Let's start with you, Courtney, could you tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do?



Courtney Woo 00:52

Sure. So my name is Courtney Wu. I'm the CEO and co founder of amnesia media. And we are both an agency and a tech platform that serves the cannabis industry, and other regulated spaces. So one of the things that we really do is really try to identify ways in which brands can build meaningful relationships with their target audiences digitally, through whether that's content creators like influencers and what have you. But all while being compliant. So a really big part of what we do around compliance is keeping community safe. But that's also why we actually spend a lot of time on brand building as well, for a lot of our clients through the agency side so that we can not only keep brand safe by through our compliance product, but also ensure that when they are talking to their target audiences, they're really helping to educate them on what and helps them make more empowered decisions about the type of cannabis that's right for them.



Adam Kulbach 01:42

Well, thanks for being here. Sonny, could you give us a little background on yourself?

S

**Sonny Marston 01:46**

My name is Simon Marston and I am an executive Account Manager here at higher yields consulting. I work in the business development division, and I'm really responsible for ensuring that our client's needs are met. I began working in cannabis in 2010. At a medical cannabis testing lab in the early Colorado days. This company was really among the first Premier labs in Colorado and there I was responsible for the sales division. My experience in that space really changed the way that I see cannabis. From there, I moved into wholesale, working to create brand awareness building relationships and generate revenue for several producers in the early Colorado days, I had the opportunity to help launch several product lines and quickly gained an understanding of the wholesale cannabis landscape during that period, which has really been immensely helpful in my journey going forward. I soon move to the retail side of cannabis overseeing dispensaries and the Colorado market for a large vertical operator and focused on compliance staff training, general retail oversight and purchasing further six retail locations. I eventually found my way back to wholesale and have recently worked as sales director for two separate vertical operators, one in the Michigan market and one in the Oklahoma market. And my concentration there was really assisting with product development, brand development, brand management, and ensuring the growth and scale for those companies as they emerged here at higher yields. I'm an executive account manager working in business development. I am responsible for ensuring that the needs of our clients are met. And I'm absolutely looking forward to continuing my cannabis journey.

A

**Adam Kulbach 03:41**

Thank you, sonny. Anthony, could you give us a little background on yourself?

A

**Anthony Adkins 03:46**

Yeah, absolutely no problem. I'm Anthony Adkins, Director of Business Development with higher yields consulting, I've been into sales marketing, business development, leadership partnership development, both internationally and nationally in the primarily in the telecom and tech industry is organizations like at&t, global markets, Comcast CenturyLink, organizations like that. So definitely have a very unique insight into how technology plays right and how connected to a market an organization no matter how big or how small really needs to be paid attention to. Along the lines of my industry experience in terms of E commerce in cannabis and that sort of thing. You know, we were the we were the back end and the the back end, if you will, all the technology that built platforms so seeing it from a different side is is very unique. But also functionality is how and how important functionality really is. My background in terms of cannabis in the hemp industry is is very young, eight months in and the application of what I see and what but I'm not I'm not a I'm not a How can I say it? I'm not a Green to the industry, no pun intended. But um, you know, from that standpoint, the, you know, taking this expertise taking this experience of sales, business development that demand generation and marketing into the industry has been, it's been a really great transition for me. So very excited to be here.

A

**Adam Kulbach 05:20**

Thank you, Anthony. Onto the first question. The definition of e commerce is E commerce is the

activity of electronically buying or selling of products on online services or over the Internet. Let's start by discussing what are the different cannabis and hemp products that are trending in E commerce right now?

A

Anthony Adkins 05:41

Well, definitely, yeah, absolutely. The you know, interestingly enough, I mean, we're definitely see a continued rise in the edible market. From that standpoint, for sure, I mean, edibles seem to be that, that bridge that gap between individuals who had never liked the smell and never liked the taste never like the, you know, those those historically, quote, unquote, bad elements of, of, you know, cannabis and those sorts of things. The global market, you know, the launch of that, in the hemp market, CBD with the Delta eight element into those edibles. And, you know, being able to, you know, bridge certain gaps in terms of interstate transportation and delivery, where hemp is, you can do so cannabis, you cannot so it has to stay remain internally with, you know, within the state of resides. But it's interesting to see, you know, from an E commerce perspective, because we're not unfamiliar with E commerce, right, I mean, e Commerce has been a part of our, you know, development as a culture, it's been great ways for, you know, organizations to market and proliferate their, their product development and growth, and their reach. And it's now becoming, you know, more of a science than any time in our history, you know, and how important that is. And then, you know, you combine the science of E commerce with the science of, you know, cannabis deliverables and how, you know, the methodology and the products by which, you know, cannabis cannabis is being delivered into the marketplace, it's really going to be explosive. The other thing, and certainly, I've always appreciated, you know, your insight in development, especially in the retail commerce product development side, and seeing what's moving and what's not. But even also seeing an increase in, you know, pet, the pet side of the business as well, and especially in an E commerce environment. So that's gonna be interesting to see.

S

Sonny Marston 07:42

Absolutely, I agree, you know, the, the CBD side of things, and, you know, the, the E commerce within, you know, the dispensary channel, you know, really is two different things, right, you know, you have platforms that are helping, you know, basically, to facilitate online orders, you know, I want to, you know, choose my products, you know, before I go into the dispensary, and, you know, have the maybe delivered curbside, maybe pick it up at a window, you know, I think that's been really, really, really helpful on on a lot of levels, you know, traffic, for one, certainly helpful during, you know, this time of COVID and the pandemic, for sure. And you know, that it was gaining popularity, really, prior even to the pandemic, you know, a lot of retailers are seeing a lot of increased sales, you know, by by using those platforms. And, you know, I think the consumer certainly certainly appreciates that, you know, as you said, Anthony ecommerce is nothing new. And, you know, we have voted with our dollars, and it's clear that, you know, we love e commerce. And the other side of that is, you know, the CBD side, as you mentioned, you know, which really is amazing in the way that it opens up, you know, a line there of purchasing that just wasn't available to some folks before, you know, people can kind of research online, take their time, look at different companies look at different brands, look at some of these products, you know, that may help them with, you know, whatever it is that they seek. And so, it's really interesting in that way, for sure. You know, CVD, of course, is the rock star there. But, you know, you mentioned Delta eight, right, you know, we've even got some

delta 11, you know, circulating around, it seems and, you know, it's going to be interesting to see how people, you know, respond to that and how consumers continue to buy on those platforms. But as far as CBD alone, I mean, that has just been so amazing for the medical Will patient and as you said, Anthony also, you know, it's a great warm up to, to cannabis also, you know, maybe some folks are, you know, a little bit hesitant about diving in, you know, to maybe a dummy or you know, even a mint or, you know, some some type of cannabis edible, you know, but they're willing to try maybe, you know, a CBD gummy or, you know, something along those lines and start to really understand, you know, the benefits that cannabis and industrial hemp, of course, you know, can provide from a, you know, from a pain standpoint, you know, tons of pain relief, obviously that, you know, people are getting anxiety, as you mentioned pets, you know, I mean, it really is, it's a it's a big product, and it can offer a lot of help and a lot of different ways. And I'm so glad to see it being, you know, sold on ecommerce platforms for sure.

**C** Courtney Woo 11:03

And I think just to follow up on with the important points that I think both Anthony and Sonny have made here is that, you know, as as Anthony very clearly mentioned, you know, direct to consumer is not something where ecommerce is not something that we are unfamiliar with as a society. You know, I think we've seen this transition in the general CPG space. And, you know, let's be honest, cannabis at the end of the day is a CPG. And so with all of that being said, I think there are a few trends that definitely exist in our industry that are specific to our industry that I think are unique based on the regulations in which they have to operate in. And so there are a few things. So for instance, I think you see looking at the CPG space as a whole, a couple of different trends that are starting to also take place in the industry. And, you know, in some cases, depending on the type of products that they're actually selling on, whether they're cannabis or cannabis adjacent products, they have positioned and taken a lot of great nods from the CPG space. So you have brands like Flora marchais, Flora, marchais, being a CBD, a CBD e commerce platform that really focuses on curation of products. It's being led by former leaders in the goop industry or the wellness category from goop. And they really understand how to build brands and how to use content as a way to actually push direct to consumer sales. And so again, seeing aggregators like Flora marchais, that really curate products really tried to understand the general consumer, and really try to place the right products with the right consumer is fantastic. And I think that only serves to increase the brand values of a lot of these brands moving forward. Another thing too, is also, you see two kind of variations in terms of how direct to consumer will actually work in the THC cannabis space. And you have, you know, vertically integrated companies like collibra, that are direct to consumer where, you know, it's fantastic, they create, they have fantastic service, they're able to streamline the experience for the client, they're really able to gather meaningful data about even what kind of products to create for their clients based on their needs. And so you see this very kind of quick direct feedback between the operations and product development and their relationships with their customers. And then you also have, again, looking at other brands, brands like mole that don't necessarily have that are not vertically integrated, and don't have an opportunity necessarily, to build up as much of that direct to consumer market. And we're starting to see other platforms in the industry kind of replace things like Shopify, to help these brands build that direct to consumer relationship. And I think this is a trend that will only see more so especially as consumers are becoming much more savvy in terms of being able to purchase on their own, and not necessarily purchase just based under the guise of what bud tenders tell them. Those consumers who are going to be more confident may feel more confident to actually shop through direct to consumer channels. And then lastly, one of the really key things, of course,

and a motivator for all of this is the amount of data that's going to be coming back. And you know, some CBD brands who are also quite savvy from a brand perspective, may build that direct to consumer brand, and gather all the data of their CBD customers only to use that information later, when they are able to produce and sell THC products on their sites as well. So then be able to build that brand from there, or to be able to then tap directly into the data they've acquired through the CBD direct to consumer channel. Yeah,

S

Sonny Marston 14:28

I really agree with that. You know, I think that you bring up an interesting point and that is, you know, really how these companies are messaging right and speaking, you know, directly to the consumer. And that really is you know, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful parts of you know, this E commerce you know, emergence that we've seen within I think, you know, cannabis and hemp on on both sides, you know, these, you know, these consumers, right, as you said, you know, they have the ability ability to, you know, to shop, right, you know, they're, they're not in a store, you know, feeling like they're in a line and, you know, they need to make a decision in five minutes, you know, they're able to, again, research these brands and, you know, really understand the products that go into them. And, you know, really find what, what suits them. And I think that a lot of companies, especially in the last, you know, I would say, two to three years have done a really great job, you know, speaking directly to the consumer. And, you know, I am definitely looking forward to seeing more of that, you know, it really just creates a level of transparency, right, that we never ever had before. So it's, it's fantastic. And even, you know, just to add to that a little bit, even on kind of the, you know, the retail side of it, right? You've even got companies like, you know, I heart Jane, right? You know, they are really helpful on the dispensary level, you know, even on the wholesale side of that, you know, not only will they you know, help you increase your online orders, you know, things of that nature, but on that wholesale side, you know, they really help the wholesaler to sort of control the brand, you know, control the description, you know, instead of some of these, you know, retailers, you know, having to kind of find pictures and descriptions and, you know, different ways to communicate, you know, those products, specifics to the consumer. You know, again, companies like, you know, I heart Jane, right, I think they especially do a great job, you know, taking that information and just kind of, you know, having having those products be stocked, you know, they they have sort of profiles that you know, retailers can pull from, so that those images and you know, that messaging and that product information is clear to the consumer, and again, just, you know, offers a level of transparency that I think is progressive and absolutely, absolutely appreciated.

A

Anthony Adkins 17:12

Absolutely, you know, it's gonna be interesting to see how the hybrid nature of E commerce and the actual retail dispensary the brick and mortar, if you will, really works together, the the aspect of if you look at it in its entirety, and we'll get it in its whole, you know, the retail dispensary, you know, may want to even start taking a look at a more hybrid or integrated approach into into an E commerce type of environment. And not just with, you know, in terms of, you know, maybe their own products, but also how they work with, you know, those wholesale other product developers and, you know, bringing those into their, you know, their shelf space shelving space. You know, the E commerce provides us, you know, easy access, quick access, quick, you know, information, but there's something, you know, especially for me,

who never had been in a dispensary prior to two years ago, the, you know, the aspect of the uncertainty of what the heck am I doing? Okay? Now what, right, so you sit there, but there was something so amazing about being able to talk to a bartender to share with them, you know, at that particular time, the the nature of what I'm why I'm here and what I'm doing, and the the experience was fantastic. So we have that blended element of, you know, personal, personal reach a personal touch, if you will, you know, with this whole element of E commerce and what drives it. So it's interesting, because I think, you know, the cannabis is a is a very, very high touch industry, a very high touch all the way from seed, you know, all the way to, you know, ultimately the usage of, you know, the consumer usage of that. So, my curiosity and my what I hope to see is, you know, how this all comes together and how it really hits that, that sweet spot between both brick and mortar and E commerce platforms?

C

Courtney Woo 19:04

And I think, yeah, just to finish on that thought, Anthony, I mean, that's fantastic. And appreciate, you know, you talking about having walked in a couple years ago, and really trying to understand what that experience looks like. And I think what we generally see is that, especially those dispensaries that are, you know, predominantly brick and mortar looking to expand, like you said, a hybrid approach into that digital and E commerce space. Again, I think that's a, you know, relevant based on not only in terms of CO marketing, if you will, but again, having that access to data and, you know, to some of the follow on points that Sonny made as well, you're talking about scaled relationships directly with consumers, right. And so, you know, you can't, as much as you may have a stellar budtender, replicating that experience across all customers is going to be very difficult and what ecommerce allows for is really a consistent experience for a customer consistent education. And again, everything at scale. So, yeah, that's it. That's it. Really good point about the fact that, you know, it is a very high touch industry, high education industry that is shifting.

A

Anthony Adkins 20:08

Yeah, and it's gonna put a lot of pressures on water pressure on the training element, even at the retail and the retail space and the brick and mortar space, because, like you said, I mean, there is you have an ability to have more consistent experience online, because of what can be controlled. Right. And, you know, that that's the adoption, you know, in the retail side of things to make sure that that mirrors or at least can get as close to mirroring an E commerce platform. Absolutely.

S

Sonny Marston 20:37

I agree. You know, just one thing to add to that really quick, you know, you know, coming from a wholesale background that honestly was, you know, one of my greatest challenges, you know, as as a director, right, it's like, okay, how do I get, you know, these retailers, you know, specifically the bud tenders, in most cases, you know, to talk about my products, you know, in the way that I need them to be talked about, you know, how do you reach them? Right, you know, sometimes you have staff, you know, you know, a staff that's turning over often, or, you know, the the bud tenders, and you know, the retail staff in general just has a lot of product information coming at them, generally speaking, and so that that is a difficult piece. And so

yeah, that man that direct to consumer is so important. And it's going to be interesting to see how it develops. And really, you know, it's really exciting for both, you know, the brand side and the consumer.

A

Anthony Adkins 21:43

Oh, that's awesome. Yeah, no, totally.

A

Adam Kulbach 21:47

Agree. Okay, I think we touched on this a little bit already. But how do cannabis and hemp companies elevate their brands as the transition to e commerce becomes more relevant, rather than an in person interaction?

C

Courtney Woo 22:04

Happy to kind of start on this one. And I think really what that means is it really what I think this forces a lot of brands to do is actually truly understand their customer. First, I think that when you get to operate behind a retailer, or what have you, sometimes that direct relationship with the consumer obfuscates, you know, either feedback from the consumer data points from that consumer. And again, even just that relationship is, you know, obfuscated as well. And I think one of the key things that, you know, as people as brands transition into that E commerce space, there's a couple of things, it's number one, really trying to truly understand the community and the target audience that's, you know, a brand is speaking to and whether or not you know, that messaging is actually resonating with the community that they would like to speak to. And again, one of the key things here too, is that this is where brands also have an opportunity to empower their communities to actually be a part of the brand, as opposed to be passive participants and seeing what a brand can become. And I think this is where we see things that as comp brands are starting to track more things like lifetime value of a customer acquired. This is where we see opportunities for brands to actually start to determine the real ROI they get by investing in their community, by empowering their communities to actually start helping to evangelize the brand itself. So I think what we'll see as we transition to e commerce is number one increase in terms of the type of culturally relevant content that's going to come into the mainstream from the cultural zeitgeist of the cannabis space. I think another key thing is really trying to have closer relationships between brands and customers, and really trying to foster meaningful conversations between the two parties to increase lifetime value. And again, especially even the nature of the type of products that CBD and cannabis, things are, that customers may feel that that need to have a safety element or a trust element built there. And again, one of the key things I think here is really that ability for a brand to empower their communities to be participants in the brand, and not these passive consumers of it.

A

Anthony Adkins 24:08

Yeah, I agree. Oh, I really mean you take a look at that, right? And ultimately a brand as a brand as a brand. Until it becomes accepted, right? I mean, so the awareness of the brand, the positioning of the brand, and the messaging surrounding that is so important, you may have a

positioning of the brand, and the messaging surrounding that is so important, you may have a great color, you may have a great you know, brand guide, you may have a great but if it's not being you're not creating awareness around that if you're not creating intrigue, curiosity, and, you know, through positioning and awareness, and ultimately that messaging that's going to go with that, that that has to be included, you know, in the especially in terms of you know, there's so many new products and there's so many new directional elements coming out in the hemp and cannabis industry in terms of product development, you know, from butters to hot chocolate infused Right? Or infused hot chocolate, you know, just I mean so many so many things that are happening Printing and are coming into play that, you know, to get a hold in the market. It has to be experiential, and it has to be connected. And with that connection, especially initially, initially, you know, in terms of what a brand is doing, is it creating intrigue? Is it creating curiosity? Is it being positioned? Well? Is it sustainable? So just kind of dovetail on that, Courtney.

C

Courtney Woo 25:28

Thanks so much, Anthony. And I think yeah, you're absolutely right, again, about the different even types of products that we're seeing in the space and how that impacts the interaction that the clients or the customers are going to have

A

Anthony Adkins 25:38

THC infused butter.

S

Sonny Marston 25:44

You know, just to add to that, a little, I do absolutely agree, Courtney, I think that, you know, it's really, really important for these brands to understand who they're selling to, you know, we've seen a lot of misses, historically, you know, in the cannabis space on that just a misunderstanding of, you know, who this consumer is, right. I mean, the, the data has been limited, this is all news. So I think that has been, you know, a struggle for a lot of us, you know, in the branding space. And the other thing that, you know, that I really, really like, is the ingredient factor, right? You know, ecommerce also, you know, kind of sort of forces these brands, you know, to really be transparent again, in you know, what's in these products. You know, in the beginning, you know, when we were talking about the types of products that are trending, you know, Anthony was mentioning edibles, and I definitely agree, I think, you know, people are more comfortable buying those products, you know, in an E commerce space, than, you know, maybe some others that they may need to you know, touch or feel or smell, such as, you know, a flower or concentrate product, you know, more of a dab bubble type product, I think, you know, that those the vape pens, and, you know, the edibles are, you know, doing really well in that space. And so the ingredients become important, you know, and it's really important for people to understand, you know, what, what these products are, especially for those folks that are new, you know, in cannabis branding, you know, as a company as a brand, you really have this amazing opportunity, you know, to not only turn someone on to your brand, right, or you know, your type of product, but cannabis or you know, hemp as a whole, you know, and you know, those people, right, if they weren't attracted to, you know, a certain brand or an ingredient or, you know, a messaging campaign that you know, what brands successfully lead, you know, maybe they wouldn't have ever tried these products, right, via him



or cannabis. And, you know, often right, we know that many of these consumers, you know, benefit so much that they continue to, you know, use cannabis and hemp products on a daily basis, you know, throughout their life. So, I think that, you know, these these companies, these companies that are emerging, you know, it's just so important, you know, that they do it, right, you know, that they understand, you know, the power that they have, you know, to, to message directly to the consumer, and to really, you know, be transparent in the way that they do that. And, you know, I think that, again, it's not only ingredients and messaging, you know, it is, you know, their ethos, it's the everything about them, like you said, you know, even you know, taking it a step further and, you know, involving the community and, you know, making their mission apparent and all of those things. You know, I think that society demands that more and more. And, you know, I just think it's so important for companies to you know, really set up you know, good manufacturing processes and you know, solid brands and you know, really create something that the consumers can truly benefit from, and, you know, therefore benefit, you know, the hemp and cannabis industry as a whole.

A

Adam Kulbach 29:20

Okay, so what are the major limitations of THC versus hemp on an E commerce platform relative to branding, advertising, consumer age and compliance?

A

Anthony Adkins 29:33

Or do you want to take that one?

C

Courtney Woo 29:36

Happy to take that one? I'm definitely a big fan of all of those things, especially the branding, advertising age and compliance. I think, you know, one of the key things and so you know, actually even to Sonny's point earlier, as well about how much do you value do you actually create for your customers? That's something that we actually try to do through our campaigns as well as really trying to understand like, if we actually have to create a digital experience for this customer who may have a disconnected experience once they actually enter into a dispensary? How do we create value for them that's going to be memorable as they go into that dispensary? And so that's a question we are constantly asking our clients like, how do you what is actually valuable to your customer, and let's really kind of Route everything there first and then kind of work our way backwards. But I think one of the key things that we do see especially, you know, we get asked all the time as well is this is this disconnection actually, between that digital experience for so many of these customers, and versus what that that in store or retail experience is going to be like, and whether or not you can track that. So traceability and you know, as we know, in our industry, we don't have the luxury at this point in time to actually get tax write offs on exercises, light marketing, activations, things like that. And so these become that much more important for brands that, you know, as we know, our industry is revenue generating, but not exactly, always profitable. And so people brands really have to think about where they're going to spend their marketing dollars. And what e commerce provides us an opportunity to do is really track the ROI on those e commerce dollars, or on the app marketing spend for folks. And that's one of the key things that's missing because of that disconnection in our industry and how nascent it still is, to some extent,

especially when it comes to data sharing. And, you know, of course, e commerce as well, there are so many compliance issues that come along with that, you know, what are we doing to ensure that there's age gating in place, you know, what kind of due diligence factors are brands taking into consideration, and actually exercising when thinking about the fact that anyone can actually access this information via the internet. And, you know, again, even from a compliance perspective, so for the work that we do, we always double check that all the influencers and content creators we work with are going to be compliant, based on both publication compliance in terms of what that content actually contains. But also, on the other side of it, you know, publication compliance, in the sense of who is it being published to, as I'm sure you guys know, in California, we have very strict laws about the age percentage of an audience, what we have here, when you start going into E commerce is this difficulty in ensuring again, that age compliance, especially when there are certain percentages of the audience that have to be certain ages to satisfy what those regulations look like. And again, you know, one of the key things that our platform does is actually review all advertising content for compliance across different state regulations. And so for us, you know, it's really that disk connect between advertising content that is digital to the experience that's actually going to be in store and then again, ensuring compliance across the board, while making something memorable enough to actually drive that sale, ultimately, at the end of the day,

A

Anthony Adkins 32:46

yeah, that's really true recording from the standpoint of higher, you know, higher yields, we have internal saying, you know, basically everything alleges, and lives and dies by compliance. And it's so important for that element to be maintained through the entire supply chain and value chain, you know, especially as it relates to you know, this call it necessarily a new burgeoning with, with cannabis, but it kind of is, you take a develop platform, you take a relatively newer industry, and then you have all these different elements of regulations that exist. And what you can do, why you can do when you can do and all this other things, and, you know, for organizations to really understand and know that, that, you know, we're here at higher yields. And, you know, you're there at an amnesia media, you know, to make sure and ensure that integrity of that is kept and maintained through the entire supply chain all the way to the consumer.

C

Courtney Woo 33:40

I may have to borrow the fact that compliance is everything from you guys love that you guys do. I mean, I don't even want to touch operational compliance. So I'll just put that right now. So much respect for what you guys do, and and helping with that.

A

Anthony Adkins 33:54

Yeah. Awesome. Thanks, Courtney.

A

Adam Kulbach 33:57

As the future of cannabis becomes more digital and consideration of the COVID 19 pandemic, what do you predict this means for the future of E commerce and advertising and cannabis and

what do you predict this means for the future of E-commerce and advertising and cannabis and hemp?

A

Anthony Adkins 34:09

Well, I think cannabis officially named an essential industry essential business. Yeah. So hey, we're good. That's funny. No, I think you know, the pandemic is definitely opened up some people's eyes to creativity, you know, we take there's always opportunity in chaos, right. And, you know, cutting through working through and seeing possibility as opposed to restricted constricted elements, I think is very, very important. You know, you take something that happened, we had no control over it. The industries don't have any control over what happened right now. How do we respond to it? Now that's a different that's, that's a different way. If we respond in light of you know, in light of this In a sort of a negative, constricted controlled, or we can do this, we can do that as opposed to going, Okay, now we got this wrench thrown into the end of the mix of this thing called the pandemic, you know, how do we respond to it with possibility? E-commerce really gives us that opportunity to explore that avenue probably a little more quickly, maybe then some organizations that had actually planned on but which is good, I think it prostrated puts pressure on the industry puts great pressure on, you know, organizations like higher yields, and I'm sure I'm amnesia media in order to be able to, you know, align and respond with possibility. All right, rather than, you know, being scared and, and looking at it from a constricted restricted manner.

C

Courtney Woo 35:49

I feel Anthony, you've hit the nail on the head about being in the cannabis industry as a whole. You know, we have to be here seeing the realm of possibility, um, despite, you know, regulations changing sometimes, you know, month to month, and so are how they're interpreted at least

A

Anthony Adkins 36:04

right now. Absolutely. Yeah, that's the nature of possibility. And no, there's no doubt coming cannabis is I mean, that's is essential. I know, in Colorado, when everything hit, I think they closed down liquor stores and dispensaries for like 30 minutes. And then open them back up again, because people were getting in, it was just like it was going to be a major up wrong.

C

Courtney Woo 36:27

That's when we would definitely get some some extreme rioting.

A

Anthony Adkins 36:32

I know. Right. So but it was, it was kind of good to see. And it is, I mean, there's so many medicinal benefits alone, let alone, you know, new opportunity. So

S

**Sonny Marston 36:44**

yeah, I really see a lot of companies working to figure that out. Quickly, you know, I think a lot of people have seen an increase in their sales and a lot of other benefits. As we mentioned earlier, you know, we're in this in this time of the pandemic. And, you know, here in Michigan, for example, I mean, we've been, you know, largely shut down for, you know, much of much of this time, right, much of the last year, and, you know, there are many shops here that are still only curbside, you know, and I think that some of them are looking at sort of, you know, more of a hybrid type model going forward. But, you know, some I think, would prefer to, you know, continue to take online orders and, you know, facilitate the their business, their retail business in that way. It's gonna be interesting to see what shakes out for sure. And on the advertising side. You know, I think that is, you know, really just yet to be determined. I mean, you've seen some really creative, you know, campaigns and a lot coming out through social media. But, you know, obviously, we need to, we need to reach beyond social media.

C

**Courtney Woo 38:05**

And I think, you know, to all of that, you know, again, everything that happens digitally at the end of the day, humans are still humans. And I think one thing that we forget a lot, especially in well, we don't forget necessarily advertising, but I think generally people forget is that storytelling is still really important, right? And as brands move over to ecommerce, and more digital considerations of their their relationships with their customers, that storytelling is going to be really key. You know, so much of the data we see right now about how customers are making decisions about how to buy cannabis products, based on buyer behavior is still very much informed by like shelf spacing and that sort of thing and bidding on those spaces. But what e commerce allows for these brands to bypass that interaction, and again, have this scalable relationship directly with their consumers that allow them to, for instance, collect email addresses, that now means that you can actually retarget your customers again, pushing that that lifetime value of that acquisition of that target consumer? Yeah, absolutely.

A

**Adam Kulbach 39:06**

Delivery licenses and cannabis delivery are being introduced in legalized states. How do you think delivery will affect the security of cannabis e commerce sales?

A

**Anthony Adkins 39:18**

Let's I mean, it's definitely going to be interesting because we're seeing or at least I am some definite players in the delivery and distribution model, wanting to layer in a different revenue model for their delivery infrastructure. Like for example, on the east coast, I actually had a conversation with a magazine newspaper distribution organization that has been around for over 100 years. Wanting to layer in this new opportunity of delivering cannabis, cannabis delivery, transportation And I will tell you what, that they don't have security on their mind at all. You know, you know, it's like, what kind of security do you need for a magazine or a newspaper? You know, what I'm saying? Usually travel with the doors open, you know, yeah, come on in and take my newspapers if you want. But this is going to pose a, an interesting adaption of a way of thinking that they're going to have to think about, and of course, you

know, for kind of a shameless plug for higher yields, and that's, you know, in a sense, what, where we come in, to be able to help these organizations, you know, continue to compliance security throughout the supply chain, especially in terms of deliver,

S

Sonny Marston 40:41

I think that as delivery progresses, you know, these companies will find ways to to mitigate that risk, you know, for example, you know, bring it bring it back to Michigan, again, even here, you know, a secure transporter has to deliver, you know, products from a producer to to a retailer, you know, and there has to be two people in the van, the van has to be manned at all times. You know, of course, they're unmarked, you know, so it is, you know, I think it's just a great measure that they're taking. And, you know, as we get closer and closer to delivery, you know, on a on a more large scale, I think that, you know, companies need to seriously consider their security. And, of course, you know, you've got, you know, like I said, the unmarked vehicles, and, you know, they're not going to be, you know, driving up announcing that, right, they've got a cannabis delivery. But, you know, we know that people are habitual, right, in their, you know, delivering delivery habits, you know, they like to get, you know, certain products on certain days, and, you know, I don't see why it would be any different, you know, with cannabis, again, not immediately, but a little down the line. You know, even I was, you know, talking with a neighbor here of mine that was getting delivery, you know, on a regular basis. And even you know, her as the consumer, you know, was was concerned about that, you know, just general safety. So, I think it's definitely something that, you know, companies interested in that aspect of the business are going to have to figure out, and I can't imagine that the deliveries will flow, right. I think it's one of those things that, you know, once that's opened up, you know, people people don't want to go back, of course, there is something to be said, for the brick and mortar experience, I think there will always be, but there's also something to be said for delivery and convenience. And, you know, I know a lot of folks that are really, really, really excited about cannabis delivery. And, you know, we'll continue in that way. Certainly.

A

Anthony Adkins 42:58

Yeah, and I think it actually puts a nice, nice pressure on the technology, industry security industry, you know, to come up with creative ideas, as opposed to just sending out a fleet of armored cars. Respond to that. So it's gonna be it's gonna be, it's gonna be neat to see it develop, it is going to need to develop, Sunny indicated, you know, as it relates to, you know, finding new creative ways to secure, you know, people's individual Orders and deliveries and those sorts of things. So, again, from a compliance standpoint, from a security standpoint, it's all speaking in the realm of possibility and to seeing something amazing happen.

C

Courtney Woo 43:37

I think that's it just again, Anthony, fantastic point about this realm of possibility with delivery as it comes online. You know, and and even to your point earlier about tech, right? I mean, it forces folks to actually have to think through solutions that may not have been as obvious. And because it is, you know, as you alluded to earlier, cannabis is a kind of a special product in the sense that it's not a magazine, right, you can't, you know, people it's a high value product in the car. And I think even with the tech side of things, we're already starting to see that, you

know, companies like HyperX, other types of companies like that, because I know they're not the only one in the market, but providing that ability for people to check out the e-commerce fashion, for deliveries so that they can reduce the amount of actual cash in the car. I think that's one of the key things as well as that reduction of actual cash. And, and to that end, you know, we had the good news yesterday about the safe Banking Act, going through and I think things like that those government regulations are going to become that much more important as an perhaps delivery is actually the pressure that put is put on regulators around banking. We've seen that definitely in spaces where deliveries already available. And so for instance, in California that, you know, thinking through safe banking is a core part of thinking through delivery. And so again, I think it's really important to kind of think about that, but also, the fact that delivery at the end of the day is exciting because not only is it per You know, a motivator for us to think through new business models, new products, new technologies, but also it's creating a pathway for communities that have less capital resources to participate in the legal industry. You know, I think we can, you know, talk and be very transparent with chatted on this podcast before about things like the war on drugs, and that essentially, delivery is a key aspect to create pathways for disenfranchised communities to have some of the upside of a legal space. And so, again, I think by providing safe banking, this also creates more economic opportunity for different communities.

A

Anthony Adkins 45:37

Chain champion that, no doubt. I mean,

C

Courtney Woo 45:42

can't wait to see the next few years

A

Anthony Adkins 45:44

now. Right.

A

Adam Kulbach 45:49

Okay, on to our next question, which is a two parter. What are your thoughts on the current cannabis and hemp e-commerce regulations? And do you believe products like delta eight and delta 11, which are not quite THC and not quite CBD, but derived from hemp? Will they remain largely unregulated?

S

Sonny Marston 46:11

I think that the the regulations as they are, are the very beginnings, right? The very, very beginnings. And as we I mean, as we move forward, you know, it would be great to obviously see expansion, you know, even you know, having things sort of, even a little bit settled, you know, in the last couple of years with CBD and industrial hemp and, you know, people being more much more comfortable there, you know, understanding, you know, what's allowed to be

purchased, what's not, you know, on the consumer side, I think, has been incredibly helpful. And, you know, progress for sure. But, you know, we still have, we still have a long ways to go right. And, you know, it'll be interesting to see, you know, what happens, once we, you know, move closer to the possibility of FDA regulation, you know, and, you know, many, many, many more things that are, you know, still still being figured out. And as far as delta eight and delta 11, you know, I feel it's kind of, you know, flown under the radar as of late, but I can't imagine that, you know, some sort of regulation wouldn't come out, surrounding, you know, those particular products. And, you know, I really hope that, you know, we can, as an industry really be progressive and move forward, you know, with regard to, you know, e commerce and really just, you know, consumers obtaining these, you know, these products in in a way that is that is comfortable for them, and, you know, easier for them than it has been in the past. You know, I would like to see cannabis, you know, of course, safely, you know, but, you know, be bought and sold much like, much more like other products that, you know, people people use every day to enhance their lives.

C

Courtney Woo 48:21

I think one of the key things that we see in the industry as well, that we see in other regulated spaces, so whether that's gambling, or tobacco, or alcohol, or what have you, is the fact that the regulations are incredibly fragmented, right. And we see that across not only jurisdictions by geolocation, so you know, state lines, but you also see that across different agencies. And I think one of the key things about the future is a streamlining of regulations in the agency side of things, you know, sitting on a lot of regulator phone calls, like, you know, whatever if they're hosting, like open forums, and what have you, is that you do hear about the fragmentation of you know, this is, you know, this agency is now responsible for this aspect of your application, but then the, you know, the next element of your application or for your license, or what have you, maybe a different agency. So I think streamlining agencies is really a key thing. We're streamlining regulations really, is key. And that could be across different jurisdictions for establishing best practices. But that also includes like, making sure things like the FDA is not at odds with FTC regulations when it comes to a specific product. And then really understanding at the heart of it, who is the regulator? I think what we'll see with both delta H and delta 11 is really trying to shed that weird hybrid space because right now there is a clear delineation that CBD is regulated on a federal level, through the bank, the Farm Bill, and then you have and then fragmented across each state and how they implement it and regulate it within their state, but then for THC, again, regulated state by state basis. And so the question about delta eight and 11 is who is going to be the regulator? I think that's one Another key things to think about is, is it going to be the federal federal government? Do they want to take that on? Or is this really going to be a state issue? And is it only going to become an issue when something happens, and it's forced to be an issue?

A

Adam Kulbach 50:14

Well, that's all the time we have for today. I'd like to thank you guys very much for being on our show. And there was a lot of great content and information there. So thank you very much.

A

Anthony Adkins 50:24

Yeah, absolutely. No, it's a pleasure.

**C** Courtney Woo 50:26

I've learned a lot from Sonny and Anthony. So thanks so much. Appreciate it. Appreciate you guys having me as always. Great questions. Thanks for having me.

**A** Adam Kulbach 50:50

We'd like to thank everybody for tuning in today and listening to our podcast. For information on how to follow the higher enlightened podcast. Please be sure to check out the description below. You'll receive all the latest and greatest podcasts news and announcements will also let you know when we release new episodes. If you'd like to be a guest on the higher enlightenment podcasts, or have ideas about upcoming episodes, please be sure to check out the description below. For information about sponsorship or advertising on the higher enlightenment podcast, please call us at 844 High yield. That's 844 HHI why i e, LD or visit our website at [higher yields consulting.com](http://higher yields consulting.com). Thanks, have a great day, and we'll talk to you soon