

# podcast33\_branding\_mixdown

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

brand, higher yields, branding, people, industry, business, logo, curiosity, clients, cannabis, important, product, brand awareness, intrigue, core values, attract, packaging, development, trust, anthony

## SPEAKERS

Cory Waggoner, Anthony Adkins, Adam Kulbach

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- A** Adam Kulbach 00:17  
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 today a panelist on our episode about the importance of brand and Canada's episode 33. Today our guests are Corey Wagner and Anthony Adkins, along with myself. Many emerging cannabis businesses treat their branding like an afterthought. We're still they act as though cannabis branding is easy. Because of the industry's natural association with the plan itself. They assume their brand should include green pot leaf and or Green Cross. Yet, by just slapping the obvious associated symbols together and calling it a brand, you're missing out on a major opportunity. In this episode, we talk about why branding is so important to the success of your business, and how you can position your business for success and generate demand purely based on the strength of your brand. So let's get on with the show. Let's start by having you guys introduce yourselves. Let's start with you, Cory.
- C** Cory Waggoner 01:32  
I'm Corey Wagner. I'm the CEO of higher yields consulting.
- A** Adam Kulbach 01:36  
Well, thanks for being here. And Anthony, could you introduce yourself?
- A** Anthony Adkins 01:40  
Yep, absolutely. Anthony Adkins, Director of Business Development with higher yields.
- A** Adam Kulbach 01:45

Well, thanks for being here. As far as branding, how does it relate to business development?

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Anthony Adkins 01:51

Well, one of the things that I believe is a is as misread Miss Miss understood is how brand development brand positioning brand messaging, and how important that is to the business development side of an industry of a business and, you know, locking in in terms of what that is a brand element is so important because it creates the first step of the demand generation process. And which I'll get into a little a little later, but it how important it is for business development to at least have some directional leadership on that brand development, but also how integrated it really is as marketing as a service. And of course, business development, go hand in hand with the proliferation of have that brand and anchoring that into those conversations that are so important, with clients and potential customers and partners and those sorts of things. So business development is is championing that brand. And if the brand is is not good, if the brand is suspect, and not clear in terms of awareness, and messaging, and positioning, then it creates a chain reaction through the demand generation process that causes and could cause confusion with clients and customers and also in the marketplace. So in terms of business development, it's very important. That brand is not only positioned well message, well, the awareness is created, but it's championing that brand throughout the process.

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Adam Kulbach 03:41

And speaking of process, could you discuss the process of branding? A little bit, Cory?

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Cory Waggoner 03:46

Sure. So, I mean, starting out, you know, kind of trying to develop a brand is, is obviously the first step. And generally what we'll do is ask our clients, you know, what, who are we trying to connect with? Because that's, that's really what we want to think about first is kind of the endpoint of what are we trying? Who are we trying to attract to this brand? What is the following we're attempting to gain? And then from there, you know, it starts where a lot of people were kind of people think it ends or would be all of it was, is with the actual logo creation, color palettes, fonts, starting to talk about certain things like, like Anthony mentioned, the messaging of what we're going to say how we're going to say it, and that process is a lot of fun, because a lot of times, you know, we're trying to kind of find out, you know, what, what clients want this to be, you know, we're looking at other types of brands, we're thinking about certain words for certain emotions, if you're trying to, to use to help gain that exposure of their brand, and how we can kind of visualize that. So how can we take a word and make it look like something that will attract people and sometimes that's done by shapes, sometimes it's done by colors. Sometimes it's done by certain imagery that are As we go through that process, and we started to kind of refine those things and, and figure out that imagery and try different color palettes and try different fonts, and then we develop into the messaging, that's where we start to really start to understand what this brand is going to look like. But we're also going to thinking about the mission of the company, the vision of the company, core values of the company, were the individual, for that matter. And, you know, through those things, we're starting to really develop like, more of a, almost like a persona of, you know, what this

company is or what, what this brand is going to represent. And then from there, it's really how do we, you know, how do we convey this? How do we deploy it and get it out into the public, and really test it to make sure that we did, we did attract what we're looking to the brand did hit the way that we needed it to the brand connected the way that we didn't connect?

**A** Adam Kulbach 05:52

Okay, how about a demand generation?

**A** Anthony Adkins 05:55

You yeah, as I was mentioning before the demand generation process, it's really a six phase process that actually is an integrated effort, with business development, marketing, aka, you know, in the branding element that a organization should pay close attention to. One of the things that I will say that higher yields has done just from an outstanding perspective is really understand their brand position, their Brandwell message your brand well, and market their brand very, very well. I've been with multibillion dollar year global companies, and they still don't understand it. You know, there was primarily the technology and telecom industries, they still don't get it. The great thing about what higher yields has in is the fact that we get it, you know, Cory plug for you, of course, I mean, just understanding and knowing that we get it, and we do it, and we actually offer it as a service within our vertical within our systems offerings. But in specifically in this demand generation process, there's six key phases or six key approaches that are all integrated. And the first one starts with brand awareness. It starts with brand messaging, it starts with brand positioning, it's the first element to create intrigue into the marketplace, that causes curiosity. And when you can create that curiosity, when you can create that awareness and you position it well. And messaging well. It's the beginning of have a great relationship and building trust, not only in the market as a whole and in the industry as a whole, but also as clients work and opportunities and partners connect with us in order to formulate a revenue generating environment, support environment or partnership environment. So that that, that falls into that brand awareness, it's a one to many type of environment where we're reaching out and solidifying and anchoring in our presence, you know, into the market as a whole. By doing that very, very well. It allows us to move into a more targeted awareness or a targeted environment of connected intrigue, connected curiosity where there is a okay, yes, absolutely. I want to find out more business development, of course, picks that up, and moves it into and continues to build trucks through that targeted environment. Where there where there is that initial intriguing curiosity that we can carry through the process.

**A** Adam Kulbach 08:40

As far as brand awareness, could you chip in on that, Corey, and then I'll pipe in?

**C** Cory Waggoner 08:47

Anthony, I'll try to kick this one to you. You speak a lot better this than I do?

A

Anthony Adkins 08:51

No, absolutely. The aspect of brand awareness, again, is all built around this whole idea of creating curiosity or intrigue. It's sort of the why of higher yields, as opposed to what we do, or who we are is formulated around developing the why us why you why, why the partnership, but it's creating the intrigue in terms of, you know, filling in or resolving a certain issue or a opportunity. You know, I have this whole idea of of what great brand awareness does is it elicits or brings to the surface a latent pain or latent gap in a particular project and a particular solution that they're seeking or the client account or partnership is seeking. Brand Awareness creates that that intrigue meaning it's positioned well it's message well, and it's causing or it's reaching or it's attracting the Client consumer partner to us, in order to be able to gain permission to continue on in the conversation, it's really the first step in developing the dialogue, the communication and the conversation. Yeah, as

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Adam Kulbach 10:15

somebody on the visual side of things, I noticed a lot of, it's very frustrating, a lot of companies will camouflage themselves by having generic logos and generic advertising that just kind of blends right into the chaos and noise that we're all subjected to, I think, what's the prime directive is to grab attention. And, and as you said, curiosity, and you only have like a millisecond to do that. So you got to keep that in mind. And also, another frustrating thing is, so many companies will spend millions of dollars on their facilities, and then they'll go to like Fiverr on the internet to get their logo done, where somebody just gets some stock logo and changes the name on it. And it basically camouflage is their business and or they're losing that millions of dollars that they invested. So one of the things that I tell Canada's people, as far as branding is to go look at craft beer, go go to a beer store and look at the craft beer section, I think it's generally done very well, because they, they all sort of grabbed your attention are all very distinct. And they do get that curiosity at least with me. So I think that's a good place to look. And another thing to consider is the don't go cutesy too much with with like, you know, like little cute frog or something that might get you in trouble. Because if you think of the Joe Camel thing, I think that was in the 90s, you know, where they got sued for sued their pants off, you know, because it was attracted to kids, you don't want to make it cartoony and attractive to kids. So that might be one thing you want to do slightly different than the craft beer. But I think craft beer is like a very good example to look at, because you want to grab their attention and hold it and have that curiosity. So you're interested in investigating that product a little further. And if you do that you have an advantage over all the people that are basically just having camouflaging their businesses by being generic, you know, and not thinking it through and not taking it seriously. As far as that there's businesses that take their business super seriously. And then they don't, they don't give a single thought about the branding or logos or, you know, their look or and you know, what goes deeper down to the customer service and stuff like that. So, so anyway, that's my piece.

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Anthony Adkins 13:04

Yeah, how important that is. Adam, Cory with regards to consistency across all medias, you don't want to have a great logo, and then fail in the narrative, or fail in the messages and the messaging, or the positioning, you want to be able to carry that through, as always, that people

would connect, you know, to you or, of course, to higher yields as well. But how important consistency through through media is,

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Adam Kulbach 13:35

yeah, it's good to have a coherent message throughout everything, even your answering message on your phones, and how the people on your phones, react to the customers and every bit of from letterheads to brochures or whatever advertisements, you know, it all has to be part of a coherent whole, that you really think about, and have professionals help you with.

C

Cory Waggoner 14:03

coherent, cause consistent, and continuity. And they get something we say quite a bit, and it kind of goes to the depth of a brand. And making sure that you're, once you have the logo, once you have your mission, your vision, your core values, everything has to kind of relate back to that. And that has to kind of bleed throughout the entire, the entire brand, like you said, Adam all the way down the letterhead, like you said, Anthony all the way through the messaging as deepest customer service. Because if if your core values don't align with the brand throughout, then that's where you get that disruption. That's, that's where you break that continuity. And that's where you break trust, you know, because of the idea of the brand is to establish that trust and establish that credibility. And if somewhere along the way that breaks down, and that's something that the owner of that brand has to become aware of. It has to improve on otherwise it's always going to be an issue and eventually it's going to kind of crack that foundation of the brain. And

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Anthony Adkins 15:00

itself. Yeah, that is for sure.

C

Cory Waggoner 15:02

I would just say that, you know, what I've seen in the industry over the last 10 years, and one of my closest advisors told me, you know, when they were kind of looking the same history with me is, you know, back in really 2010, he said, the two areas where I think people are going to be able to stand out, we're going to be the most important aspects of this industry are going to be compliance and branding. And at that time, you know, people were still selling things, and Mason jars out of their cabinets and Ziploc baggies, and everybody, you know, had the greatest product in the world. But as time has gone on, we've started to see what impact branding can really have to the product. And it's huge, especially for some of the smaller groups looking to get in as a boutique row or as a boutique extraction company, no, you're not going to be able to stand out and compete with people who have 200,000 square foot of indoor cultivation and 1015 years of experience, the only way you're going to be able to compete with them is to have something like you mentioned, Adam, kind of like a craft brewery, you know, something that's small, something that that is boutique, but you're going to need the brand, with that to be able to stand out and compete on that on the shelf, you know, against some of these bigger guys, because the bigger guys are going to be looking to win. From a monetary standpoint, you

know, they're going to conquer because of their size and their ability to compete from a price standpoint. But the smaller groups, the boutique ones are going to have the ability to drive price up. But it has to be driven by that brand, it has to be there has to be something more special than just the product that actually sits in that container. So you know, I really reflect back to that conversation I had with my advisor years ago and think wow, he was he was spot on. Just walking into dispensaries now and seeing everybody a lot of smaller dispensaries to try to have kind of their in house brands. But everybody has their kind of standard product line that we see almost everywhere, you know, with specific extracts specific edibles and candy bars, specific topicals. And some have specific flowers. But then on the other side of the cabinet, you know, they have their in house flour and their in house extracts or in house edibles. And those things do well for him, and they probably make a little bit better margin on them. But to have those established brands on your shelf, is really what continues to bring in people and allow them to see not just those products, but also your products. So having those established brands. And being one of those established brands is really in my opinion, what's going to set most of these groups apart from from some of these bigger competitors that they're going to run up against.

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Adam Kulbach 17:51

Yeah, and another point is, I've seen a lot of like edibles and stuff like that, and the packaging looks like it was done in somebody's basement, it kind of breaks your trust of what's in there, you know, and the purity and the quality of it, you know, might be the absolute best quality. But if it looks like some fly by night, made in the basement sort of thing just puts a lot of doubt in your mind. So that's another thing to take into consideration is you want to project that that's a quality product, and it can be trusted and it's pure, and because a lot of them seem questionable to me.

C

Cory Waggoner 18:32

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. You know, to your play packaging, I mean, you think about it, when you walk into a store, you're not going to see the product that's inside the packaging, right off the bat, you're going to see the packaging. And that's, that's where that logo that's, you know, where the colors, the fonts, those things like really come into play. But that gets it into your hands. Once it's in your hands, it's more about the feel of it, the touch of it. And we've seen some really cool packaging with you know, it's plastic packaging, but it has like a soft, almost filthy feel to it. And some of it, you know, it's shiny. And there's just different ways to like, once it hits the person's hands to build that trust. But then beyond that, you know, it goes to customer service and the blood tender or the person who's selling it, being able to educate you on it. And then it goes deeper to actually opening that package and seeing that product, that product has to hit the quality that people are expecting based on the customer service, the packaging, the logo, the font that you know, the design of it. And especially in today's market, where we're starting to see a lot more than retailers move towards a call ahead online digital platform where people can point click and have fill up their their card and just show up and pick up their products. If they do that, and they get good products, they're gonna continue to do that. But if they have issues, you know, or they go and pick it up and we think it's going to be great and it's not. That's, you know, that's where you've tarnish the brand and in this industry, there's so many competitors out there right now and You know, the customer base is so much

more educated than it was five years ago even that, you know, it only takes one time to kind of screw it up, you know, and to lose that trust. And once you've lost that trust, it's a lot harder to get it back than it is to just keep it keep that trust moving forward in that relationship.

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Anthony Adkins 20:19

And the thing is, is that, the great thing about higher yields, and what we offer and what we provide in terms of that marketing as a service demand generation system and support to our clients is we drink our own juice, what I mean by that is, we actually utilize very, very well, by the way, I mean, our own system, it's not, we're not some, you know, consultant that sits there and tells you how many great things we're going to do for you in regards to this, and then not even have a, you know, a lackluster website, or, you know, I'm operating from, you know, a plants of theory rather than practice. So we practice what we preach, we drink our own juice, we're very, very aware of how important brand is there's so much chaos in the industry. And we provide that clarity, that consistency, and that that foundational, brand brand positioning brand awareness, you know, for our clients and customers to cut through the noise, to create clarity in the chaos, and really deliver on, you know, excellent, excellent demand generation process. So very excited to be able to talk to anyone who's curious about, you know, our, our process.

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Cory Waggoner 21:37

I'll just add one, one more little clip here, is similar to a lot of things we do at higher yields. You know, it's a constant state of improvement. And one of the most interesting things about cannabis is different than a lot of industries where we're, you know, there's, there's been this long runway, or just this long history of the industry. And when brands come about, you know, there's more of a true background. Whereas in cannabis, you know, a lot of times we're kind of not making it up, but we're, you know, it's coming from something conceptual, you know, this is a new business, a new industry. So I just think it's important that people understand that it's okay to see brands evolve, and change, because those things certainly do happen. But you still have to have that good foundation of those core values of of what direction you're bringing it. But there's still that, you know, there's still that flexibility as these brands evolved to be able to kind of cater them and push them and mold them and mend them into exactly, you know, what people want them to be. And that's one of the fun things about cannabis is we're able to continue to evolve things and continuously improve them, and try to make them better. So that's, that's all I got.

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Adam Kulbach 22:53

Well, thank you. I think that's all the time that we have for today. I'd like to thank you, gentlemen, for being on the show today. I really appreciate it was great.

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Cory Waggoner 23:05

Thanks, guys. Thanks.

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Adam Kulbach 23:20

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