

Thinking Outside the Bud

Episode 421 - Andrew DeAngelo & Christopher Peak

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EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

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Bruce Eckfeldt

Welcome, everyone, this is thinking outside the bud. I'm Bruce Eckfeldt. I'm your host, we have two guests today we have Andrew DeAngelo, from founder of Andrew DeAngelo consulting, we also have Christopher peak, who is SVP of retail development at ACV. Consulting, we're going to talk to him about the world of cannabis, we're going to talk to him about new products, some new solutions they're bringing to the market, really helping companies really kind of navigate some of these challenges that they've really seen in terms of how to kind of deal with cannabis. And I'm going to let them to get into the details. But I'm very curious about this. I think we're at the point in the cannabis industry where we're starting to see some of the challenges. We're seeing professionals from different industries, kind of different professions coming in and kind of helping cannabis companies navigate some of these things. I think these are challenges that we're just going to see more and more of as this industry matures, and really kind of evolves, hopefully resolve some of the legal kind of regulatory issues. You know, we'll start to see some real kind of advances here.

So I'm curious to hear of this conversation, sort of see what the background is, and really kind of talk to him about where they see cannabis going. Right. I think we're in a little bit of a crossroads here in terms of cannabis. And I think we're seeing some movement, we're seeing some challenges, and it's really going to be telling over the next few years how this plays out. So with all that, Christopher Andrew, welcome to the program. Thanks,

Andrew DeAngelo

Bruce. Great to be here. This is Andrew. I'll just kick off with my introduction, sir, go ahead. So a lot of your listeners are probably very familiar with my older brother, Steve DeAngelo, you may also be familiar with the medical and adult use vertically integrated cannabis company in California, we started called harbor side, now called State House is one of the largest vertically integrated cannabis companies in California. I exited when that company went public, and started this advising business. Because what I saw when I left harbor side was that the industry, like you said, is at a crossroads. There's a lot of entrepreneurs coming in that are from other industries, they've done well in other industries, or there's just other leaders and executives coming in as companies have scaled up and national companies. And so companies are Oh companies are bringing in this talent from other industries.

And you know, those solutions that I wanted to provide was coming from 20 years of experience working with the plant, and then also a building a bridge to some of these folks from other industries with more corporate backgrounds. And that's where, you know, Christopher, and what he's done in his career come in, and what this particular solution that my advising businesses providing for folks, which is really centered around marketing and branding and making beat, everybody knows right now, branding is the big word in the industry, if you don't have a brand, you're gonna die. It's sort of the mantra. And there's some truth to that. And there's a reason people are urgent about that right now, in this cycle in the industry. And Christopher can speak to that more deeply than I can. But that's really why we came together, Christopher and I, with his firm that does marketing branding for very big companies all over the world. So this is opportunity for entrepreneurs who want very sophisticated marketing and branding at affordable entry level prices to engage us and we can get in the trenches and create something great for folks.

Bruce Eckfeldt

So Christopher, I'm curious, how did you get involved in this? What's your background in cannabis? Give us a little backstory?

Christopher Peak

Yeah, sure. So well, my backstory is I started in retail development for Universal Studios. 20 plus years ago,

Bruce Eckfeldt

you were to when you started

Christopher Peak

out? Exactly, exactly. It was very much that retail tainment space, and I was developing retail I was developing restaurants, I was developing entertainment concepts for universal. And then from there, I've worked with a number of different retailers, both in house and outside as well as design firms, and eventually landed myself as head of the global design, research and development, procurement, manufacturing, and a number of other little small things like sustainability for Apple and Apple retail. Yep. So if you've been inside of Apple Stores, most likely you've seen things that I've developed and you're in a space that I ran the designs for. I did that all over the planet.

So that's kind of a and then since then, I've continued to work with retailers, and restaurant tours. And these days, primarily through the consulting group ACV consulting, which my partner and I are constantly running back and forth between different concepts, trying to help them as they emerge into the market. So that's the background. And the other thing I'd say real quick is just that, you know, we really see branding, and the reason why my partner and I got started and all of this is we really see branding all the way through to store development store, build, restaurant development restaurant builds, so that, you know, physical spaces are also part of that branding profile who you are, and how you exist in 2d environments, 3d environments, ie environments. It has to be seamless. It should all be integrated in a way that it's meaningful for the voice of who you are as a brand. So that's, that's kind of that and then my cannabis space is kind of an interesting thing. because when I came out of out, there was a marketing group, I was working with another one just on some projects of my own, and was asked if I'd be willing to meet Steve DeAngelo.

And I was absolutely thrilled to meet Steve and then Andrew, because unbeknownst to those guys, my dad was a grower illegally. In Los Angeles back in the 60s, my little brother grew up in Washington state for a chunk of years. And so I came from this like very comfortable space around cannabis. And knew damn well that it was ridiculous. Its placement in the legal space within the country. So with Andrew and Steve, it was for me, it was super natural to bridge that space between cannabis business. And you know, at the time when we consider more legitimate businesses. Yeah. So it was easy for me to kind of do that corporate in the corporate cannabis or into upcoming cannabis development.

Bruce Eckfeldt

Yeah, I'm curious. I'll kind of let you decide who wants to answer this one. But there were maybe two questions. One is, can we just kind of define or kind of talk about what do we mean by branding? In general, like, when we talk about a brand, what does that really entail? What does it not entail? What is it you know, how does it get developed? Or what are the kind of the challenges around branding in general? And then branding in cannabis? Right? Like, I think Andrew mentioned, like everyone's talking about, you know, if you don't have a brand, you're not going to survive in cannabis. Like, why and why now? I guess, like, what is it about the cannabis industry now that this focus or this prioritization of brand becomes so important? Be curious to kind of talk about those two things, so we can kind of set some groundwork for this?

Christopher Peak

Yeah, sure. Andrew, when I do the first part, and you do the second part, absolutely. Sounds great. So, you know, branding is such an amorphous thing, right? Yes. Everybody out there goes out. Branding has become such a, it's like naming a child. It's like, everybody,

Bruce Eckfeldt

maybe harder. Yeah, right.

Christopher Peak

I don't know. I've got four kids. That last one was a little tough. But thank God, there was an Otis Redding song playing. We named him Otis. I love it. But you know, it's tricky. I will say this about branding. I was fortunate enough to be at Apple when we were pushing really hard on the idea of integrating online store, and brick and mortar stores, that omni channel approach. And one of the things that kept coming up was this idea of honesty and branding. How do you speak with an honest voice from your brand? Yeah.

And that really laid the kind of groundwork for the way that I think about branding now, which is being honest about who you are, and being honest about what you're providing, and trying to steer clear of all of the kind of fireworks have crazy ideas about I'm going to name myself shoe, I'm going to name it. It's like, listen, who are you? What is it you're selling? What is the service that you're providing? What are the products that you're providing? And how it is who you are, encapsulate those things that you're taking to market? And how can we talk about that? And how can you speak from that voice and as honest way as possible? To me that's branding, it's identifying, and the act of identifying as a connection to your intent.

So really, that's it. But the depth of branding has grown, I would say dramatically in particularly the last 10 years, when it comes to just strict branding profiles. So that even when you think about billboards along the highway, if the billboard doesn't feel like it reflects the same voice that you feel when you walk into a shop, and

I've designed and developed hundreds and hundreds of retail spaces. And if you don't feel the same feeling, if you can't get the same voice coming off of that billboard, on the side of the freeway, that you get when you step through the door, or when you're standing outside of that brick and mortar shop, that you then feel, again, when you go into the E commerce space, if there's not continuity there, then your voice isn't resonating.

And you're not speaking from the honest space of who you are and what you're trying to provide. And you see it all over the place. And then the transition into the cannabis spaces. That's where it's really rough. I think, time and time again, people are in such, they're either in such a hurry. They're so limited in funds, or they just don't have the acumen to put together a platform for themselves. That can resonate. And I'll let Andrew jump in a little bit more on that. But that really becomes the, for me as the kind of conundrum of the cannabis space is there are those who do it really well. But for the majority of them, there's lots of real soft brands, or confusing brands, or kind of unspecified brands. Like I said just a second ago, a lot of that just comes from, you know, lack of funds, lack of time, or lack of understanding of how to do it. And that's kind of where, you know, that's the space we're trying to fill here. Yeah.

Bruce Eckfeldt

Andrew, tell us a little bit about your take on why branding now like, what is it been about cannabis? You know, historically that I guess this hasn't been a focus or at least not a priority? And then why has it become such a topic of discussion over the last year or two?

Andrew DeAngelo

Well, it's a very important question for entrepreneurs to ask themselves. You know, in the old days, there was no branding of products because if you branded your products, even in the early days of a legal framework in in Colorado or California, you would risk federal law enforcement coming after you because when you brand something, you're naming it, you're giving it a location, you're giving it an identity, it's really easy for law enforcement to kind of work backwards to your warehouse, right

Bruce Eckfeldt

from the GPS coordinates for them. Right, right. Right.

Andrew DeAngelo

So you couldn't do it. All right, until the activists and all the people got the frameworks a little bit better developed, we got the federal government to back off with the appropriation restrictions that were done at the federal level, we don't need to get into that. That's not what we're talking about today. But in any case, now we can brand and what we have, we have a regulatory and tax market and frameworks that are broken everywhere, and we have fragmentation in the market. So you've got a legal licensed market that captures anywhere from 20 to 50% of the market, depending on what state you're in, you've got the underground market that's there. And now we've got this hemp derived cannabinoid market that's further fragmenting the market. And when you have a fragmented market, I don't care widgets, okay, you're gonna need stronger brands, because you have to capture one shelf space, which is now fragmented.

And more importantly, you have to capture the minds and hearts of the consumers, right? I use Apple, not because it's particularly a superior product, than all the other products that are smartphones, and so forth. I use it because I consider myself a rebel. And Apple has branded itself beautifully as things rebels use. So that's

why I use it. And I'm used to it now, right? So I got it. But when I go to do a PowerPoint, and I have to use Keynote, and I can't, you know, switch it over to PowerPoint, which the rest of the world uses, I get frustrated with that particular product. But that's called a brand gap, right. And this is the other thing we're seeing in the industry, that pipeline is here to solve, okay, you can't make a promise as a brand, and then deliver something different than that promise, unless the thing you're delivering is exceeding the expectation you've set in the market. Okay. And what we're having right now, because the supply chains are not delivering consistency right now, is you've got a lot of talented people who are making brand promises.

And then they have these problems with brand gaps, because either the product is not delivering on the promise or the experience is not delivering on the promise. And a lot of times that happens because people are moving too fast, like Christopher said, and they're not thinking this stuff through. And then all of a sudden, they're reading Yelp reviews, or weed map reviews, or whatever the reviews are. And they notice they have a brand gap. And then they have to spend all this time fixing the brand gap. So if you want to capture the hearts and minds of consumers and a fragmented market, and you want to make sure that the promises that you are making with your brand, and marketing, are actually being delivered upon and a good way in whatever market, your supply chains in these complexities are what you need experience hands on the wheel. That's where I come in with 20 years at Harbor side and all that experience. That's where Christopher comes in with his experience. And the combination of these two things, we think will offer solutions to entrepreneurs and businesses out there.

Christopher Peak

Yeah, can I say that just a little bit more than two. You know, the thing that's tricky about it, and that is really what everyone is hoping for, when it comes to having your voice is that it will resonate with other people and they will connect to that voice, that they'll connect to your you as a brand, so that they feel like they're participating in something that they're part of. And I know when I first went to harbor side, I was just flabbergasted with the experience was people standing in line talking about harbourside or talking about how much they liked it in there or are talking about the products that they enjoyed, and that the reason they came back is because they felt like they had a friend, then they felt safe.

And they felt connected. And so the tricky thing is, or the cannabis space is when you have so much noise. And there's so much you see it when you go into the shops. I mean, the amount of packages that are just crazy. It's just crazy. How does your voice get heard? How do you kind of rise above the kind of white noise of cannabis? And that's super tricky. It's not an easy thing. What you're trying to do is get people to go, oh yeah, I totally dig this stuff. I'll always go there. There's a cannabis shop near me. I live in the Santa Cruz Mountains, just outside of Los Gatos, down in San Jose. There's a shop that I go to all the time. It's close. It's near the airport. I really like it, but it kind of resonates with me. I appreciate the space the way they laid it out. I appreciate the bud tenders. They're all about you know, they're not all kids.

There's all different age folks, they have a lot of experience, they really speak about the products. Well, they also speak about the business they're in well, it just has a nice vibe to it. So I go back because I feel connected to it. And I used to, not in the cannabis space, particularly when I'm developing and trying to find brands for somebody else. As an example, I always look for cult brands. And as a quick example of that, one of the craziest cult brands out there is the Raiders football team. I use it as a bit of an example because I did a development deal with writers. And so many people showed up, I put a shop in Universal City Walk in

Hollywood, they had to shut down the hill, the subway shut down. So many people, I got calls from my boss who was like the, you know, one of the head VPs of of universal freaking out because he's like, What the hell was going on, I didn't actually know what it was. I didn't know what was going on. I don't know what's going on. He's like, buses are shut down, the subway shut down, we're shutting down the hill, no traffic.

And it was we opened a raider store on CityWalk. And it shut down the hill, that kind of connection to customer. That kind of partnership with customer is the goal is where you're trying to get to Yeah, so but the way they're, it's tricky. And if it's not clear if it's muddy, if that strain of who you are. And that honest kind of voice of who you are doesn't go isn't in every aspect of your business, you struggle. And then the other thing I'd say too, is what you end up seeing is, you see lots of brands that are constantly rebranding, or constantly trying to change their focus, we're going to update this, let's change the website, let's go after the maybe our profiles wrong. Or maybe would let's move the Capture app to the beginning of front of the store or Let's try these, maybe we change the menu boards in the store. It's always this kind of playing defense. And the truth is, you have to step back and be completely be comprehensive and play some offense and get to it. So that's the thing that I think you know, the cannabis space is, is like, in a lot of ways it still feels like the wild wild west. Oh,

Bruce Eckfeldt

yeah, definitely.

Andrew DeAngelo

I love it. I mean, if there's a soundbite from this whole thing, it stopped playing defense start playing offense, call us.

Bruce Eckfeldt

Yeah, it seems like cannabis has some interesting kind of structural challenges, which makes us hard. I mean, when you've got such kind of product range and product, I guess, you know, innovation and shifts. And you know, we're sort of developing things like that seems like a problem, it seems like a problem, we've got this whole kind of dispensary model, right, like products are sold through this particular kind of dispensary kind of licensing model, which keeps everyone kind of arm's length from the customer. And then you have such, well, maybe four problems you have, you know, restrictions on what you can actually what channels you can use and the ability to actually use some of these digital channels that are not available for a lot of folks in the cannabis industry. And then you've got the state by state market, like it feels like there's so many challenges in cannabis in front of you to try to build a brand. I mean, where do you see the big ones? How do you start to navigate some of these things? Like, how does this stuff play into strategy?

Christopher Peak

Well, first of all, one thing I'll say is that, I totally get all of that, and I and we all see the complexity, what you have to do is kind of pull yourself back a little bit. And actually, you mentioned something earlier that I thought was interesting. I'm also come from a lean processes, lean manufacturing background, I believe very much in the idea of the simplest route from A to B. So it's the same thing here, you have to pull back and really understand what each of those venues are that you're allowed to communicate through what each of those spaces are, you're allowed to sell through. And then in a kind of calm and wholesome way, and not in a freaking out way. Figure out what the best strategy is for each of those, it will change. The idea is to create

flexible models so that you can manage the constant change. If you do not develop flexible models, then you obviously you run into a lot of trouble because you don't know how to pivot.

I will say one of the interesting things when I first went to work at Apple, Steve Jobs set up apple with a really flat management structure. And his perspective on that was that if he had to pivot to a new product, like let's say they came out with the Apple jacuzzi, and that became the main thing that he could pivot that organization on a dime and keep going. And I watched that happen over the time that I was there. It's a very interesting thing. You learn that, oh, it's about being malleable. It's about being flexible, and not being afraid of it. Like I think one of the things that I've run into, and particularly in dealing with some cannabis folks is they're just so stressed. You know, there's a lot of anxiety about, well, I don't know what to do here. We can't do this. We can't do this, what great step back, figure out what you can do, and then do it right. Or at least do it in a way that you'd feel like that you're taking positive steps in the direction that you want to go. And as positive steps are about, you know, being honest about who you are. The other thing I'd say to this too is and we know it's continuing to change. It changes slowly.

But the ship is turning. We're seeing the scheduling all that news that came out about the government's perspective on the scheduling, you know, should change on cannabis, which is great. Once the bank we all know that the banks are I mean, I've seen interior reports of like Bank of America, and what they're prepping For when the cannabis industry becomes viable for them as a banker, these things will all change, are you setting yourself up now to be able to flex into the adjustments that are coming, and at the same time be viable now. And that's where, you know, we come in and do that, do the kind of work that we do, which is to help you navigate to help you make sure that you're focusing on things that are viable, and that are going to increase your business. You know, it is funny to go back to the thing I said about the billboards, I've never been able to get anybody to prove to me that billboards have any real positive impact on a business. And I can tell you that I've been in house at a couple of different companies where we looked at the amount of money that was being spent on billboards. And we're trying to figure out, well, how do you justify the amount of the spend? If you can't tell how many people actually looked at a billboard and then came to your shop or called your service? It's a very difficult thing to do.

So then the question is, why do you see people come out and do these big insane cannabis billboards? If it doesn't seem like if you can't prove it's viable? What can you prove that's viable? What do you know that works? Well, here's what works. I open a shop door. People come through the door, and they'll buy product. That's the thing we know. And we know that people chase product, they chase types of product. And that's another thing too. You mentioned that a moment ago, I swear to God, I get off on a rant on this stuff. But you mentioned that a moment ago about having all of these different products in your shop, and how do you make the decisions for what products you're going to carry? Exactly. Because I'll tell you, I was just down. We did Christmas down in outside of Puerto Vallarta, but spent some time in Puerto Vallarta. And I went and purchased some cannabis and poured my heart. It was horrible.

Andrew DeAngelo

Yeah, I mean, product was horrible. Yeah, exactly. So look, we're

Andrew DeAngelo

talking about a constrained ecosystem, right? Going back to your question, you can't be all things to all people, if you try to be all things to all people and every state in the country, you're going to need hundreds of millions of dollars to do that. Yeah. And we've seen people make that bet. And we've seen, the results have not been good. So you have to choose your spot, you have to prove the concept of your spot, right in one spot. Okay, once you've proven that concept, okay, then we can start to stretch it, okay. And maybe it's other states, maybe it's other locations within that state, if it's retail, maybe it's getting more shelf space, if it's a product, maybe it's optimizing a farm, if it's a farm, whatever it is, we're gonna move outward from a core that we've proven a concept on.

And that's not trying to be all things to all people. Yeah. And whatever that thing is that you want to be in the world is going to come from you as an entrepreneur, or it's going to come from what your core business already is what you've already determined, you're good at what the data says, right. And if you're an existing business, we move out from that we determine what that core is, because sometimes people have Chase shiny objects, and you know, there's some dead ends and some fat, we need to really have serious, honest conversations about get this thing focused on something, prove that you're the best at it, or as good as everybody else at it, and then move outward from there.

Ease people's anxiety and stress, okay, and this is where experience comes in. And maybe you're seeing this to Bruce, but I see a lot of entrepreneurs and even some of the bigger companies and they think they know it all. And I've got my MBA from Harvard, and I'm going to come in and I'm going to show you people how to do it. Right. And then, you know, the Titanic hits the iceberg. Reality

Bruce Eckfeldt

has Yeah, you know,

Christopher Peak

I mean, honestly, you can see that, like med men is a perfect example. Yeah. I mean, med men, I remember when med men hit the mark, and I was actually around Steve and Andrew at that time, like looking at some stuff at harbourside, I did a little bit of work in homicide. And I remember saying to you guys, I was like, listen, first of all, they're absolutely stealing from other brands. Oh, including Apple. There was things in their shop that I am on the design patent for an app that was in their shop. Oh, sure. So I said I think the term is when a plane is going down and they don't want to freak everybody out and say it's an uncontrolled descent into rough terrain. You know, like you can see it coming. And those are decisions that are made out of arrogance to be honest.

And and you see this too when entrepreneurs will come in in the cannabis space and this is I think Portland has a big problem with this. You know, like we're going to open up a 5000 square foot dispensary. What the hell? Why do you need 5000 square feet? That's a lot of pre rolls. I know like what do you think a submarine and and so it's about creating smart decision matrixes and developing brands in a very, like holistic and calm way. And you don't have to spend a bazillion dollars. I think that's one of the things that Andrew and I talk about. We've done a number of podcasts now that I want to just keep reiterating. You would think that we would be the most expensive people in the world, particularly based on Like my Android background of cannabis, my background in retail, actually, we're not like our creative studio ACV is very reasonably priced. We're not trying to kill anybody here at the pocketbook.

What we're saying is, hey, in order for this industry to continue to move forward towards full legalization, which is what we all want, it has to be a viable industry. Yeah, it can't be a mess. And it feels messy right now. And so if you're out there, and let's, you know, hopefully, if you're listening to this podcast, and maybe we're like getting your ear to pick up a little bit, what we're really saying is, we're here to help, and we want to help. And that shows up in a lot of different flavors. It doesn't have to be like, as an example, I've been working for the last year with a retailer outside of the cannabis space, but in another interesting space. And I give them two days a week. And then those two days I do everything I can to act as their CEO, their CEO, and provide, you know, good leadership for them, and help them and sometimes that's the path. And sometimes the path is come in and develop all of it for us. And sometimes the path is just give us like, give us little bits and pieces that can help us out. Yeah, we're here to be as valuable as we expect the industry to become. Yeah.

Bruce Eckfeldt

Tell us a little bit about pipeline. How did pipeline come about? How does it sort of solve a core problem for you in the industry?

Andrew DeAngelo

Well, pipeline came about because my advisory business, you know, a lot of people, a lot of clients, were asking about marketing and branding help. And so I always want to work with the very best people. So Christopher and I reconnected, I said, Look, there's this opportunity with in the cannabis psychedelic space for what you do. I've got a little advisory company that's growing right now and could use your help. And let's talk about what product and solution we can provide. We've been talking about that really for the last half hour, but that's where it all came about. It came about from clients needing this because as we mentioned already branding, marketing is big, key word right now and the industry. And I wanted to have the very best offering for the market. And so Christopher and I've put together pipeline, you can see it on Andrew D'Angelo dot com slash pipeline. It's all right there on it's also on the homepage. And we're really excited to be able to work with entrepreneurs and established companies in solve some of these constraints and problems we've been talking about. Yeah,

Christopher Peak

and the idea is, you know, when we said, we wanted to provide something that didn't feel like it was cumbersome, but instead felt like it was, you know, it could be picked up and sat down at at any point in the journey.

So while we have a tremendous amount of experience taking concepts from I've got an idea to I'm living in the market, I've got a retail space, I've got an online space, I've got whatever it is that one would have at the end of that development journey, we can kind of pick up an off ramp anywhere along that path. And so where we become most effective is with startup brands, or with brands that are in trouble with brands that are in trouble. And we can come and we're not just talking about again, I'm gonna get back to this, we're not just talking about branding, from the perspective of a billboard here, or a commercial, we're really talking about the full retail experience. Obviously, Andrew has a tremendous amount of experience in operating dispensary. He operated one of the biggest and most successful dispensaries on the planet at harbourside and understands not only the

front of the house, but the back of the house very well. My background of my experience, along with my partner, Aaron's who's also a piece of this, Aaron was CMO at North Face. He's the chief marketing officer there, he was VP of Marketing at Levi's, he comes from the very deep background of as a marketing professional.

And between the two of us, you know, we understand the full development approach for a startup, we also know what it's like to go into those companies that are saying, Hey, look at if we can't figure this out, we're gonna go under in a year. Yeah, exactly. How do we get this figured out, we're very good at that. And so we've gone into many companies. And sometimes it's just for a short period of time, sometimes it ends up being extended, where we help them figure out their operational model, we take a look at how to make sure that their voice is getting out there in a way that's effective.

But cost. It's also you know, if you're constrained with funds, we can look at how to do that in a cost effective way as well. So I mean, between Andrew and myself and our teams, we have hundreds of years of experience here. And have seen and have been in companies that have gone under and seen what that looks like have been in companies that are the most successful companies in the world, and know what that's like, and know the middle spaces in between. So what we tried to do is bring all of that in an effective way to whatever part of the business you need help with in the cannabis space because, again, we're trying to help and so we want this thing to work. I want this thing to work,

Bruce Eckfeldt

I guess where do you each hope that cannabis is in a couple of years? I mean, do you have any particular vision or hopes, desires around changes you want to see or kind of? Oh, yeah, it was goes.

Andrew DeAngelo

I mean, I want to see cannabis federally D scheduled and I want to see that without some BS step of rescheduling in between. I'm not a fan of rescheduling. So best outcome to three years from now is we have d scheduling. Cannabis is regulated like the natural food and supplement industry, not like the pharmaceutical industry or the alcohol industry. We are not alcohol, we are not pharmacy, or pharmaceuticals. We are a natural compound we are natural plant, really, it's its own category. Cannabis needs to be in its own category, so to psychedelics, and they should not share a category, they should be separate. Okay, folks, we can be intelligent and deal and unwind these complexities and tell the stories of these things. Yeah. And I want high quality products that are not trashing the environment. Right now cannabis is not sustainable. We're growing all the weed indoors, it's crazy. And so I want to see a more sustainable industry. And I want to see great products in the marketplace, I want to see great experiences, I want the brand of the cannabis industry and the psychedelic industry and the hearts and minds of the world, to be a good brand, to be positive, to be healing to be something that people think about when they're hurting, or their need healing. I don't want it to be branded as something you do when you need a party. Yeah. So those are some of the things that and I hope that it can be a more profitable industry that some of these regulations and tax structures, we can work on making them better so that all of us can be profitable. I want to see our community, we have a lot of people that have been working with these plants for a long time, they deserve to have a voice and a spot in the industry. We need the corporate folks to come in and scale and do all the things they do well, because these medicines need to be in the medicine cabinet of everybody in the world. We can't do that. Without that. So we all need to come together and work together as a team, we need to stop viewing each other as you know, incompetent people we're not

we can come together, build these bridges. And I think if we all do that together in the hearts and minds of people two or three years from now, they'll view our industries, not like some terrible money grab race to the bottom, which is kind of where we're at going right now. But with hay, this is an industry that cares about people and planet and healing. And it's something I want to spend my hard earned dollars using these things in my medicine cabinet and for my family because they offer good solutions for the times we're living in. That's what I want to see.

Christopher Peak

And I'm just add a little bit to that. My hope is that we get a cannabis market a psychedelic market, that becomes an open and free market that it is we do live within a capitalist framework. If that being the case, it should be that small mom and pop shops can thrive. That medium sized kind of regional brands can thrive, that large scale, multi state brands should can thrive, that everybody can exist within the framework of a of an open and free cannabis space.

And that people are able to get access to products that are meaningful and helpful, not harmful, and that everybody can enjoy, imbibe. And in the cases where often is, you know, focused but have better health. Because they're able to go somewhere without the constraint of the banking system doesn't bank. We can't go across state lines. The regulatory path has become archaic and cumbersome. The taxation market is killing it. Like there's, you know, the headwinds are really heavy here. Yeah. And I will say the reason why we've started our pipeline, thinking up here is because we understand the headwinds. And so being able to battle those headwinds requires very strict strategies, very clear strategies, very onpoint strategies to create a profile that can help you survive until all of those things land and come in line. There's no doubt I mean, if you think about where we were 10 years ago, 15 years ago, 20 years ago, there is no doubt we're moving in a direction here. The question is, can your business survive until you're able to bank with a banker until you're able to? Exactly You know, if you want to have a franchisee program? You can do that? Yeah, you know what I mean? It's like this is all stuff in every other place. In any other part of the retail restaurant tour industry.

This stuff is all the normal state of business. We just need to get cannabis to that normal state so that it can be viable. And that's the thing. And the last thing I say to to is, and my take on this and I said this to Andrew and Steve and I talked about this years ago, my take has always been on this I back for a little bit tell a little story. A buddy of mine who is a chef in the Bay Area, we decided when the cannabis started opening up, we wanted to try to sell a healthy animal. Because when I was going to the early shops that were opening up, it was all like, you know, brownies in ziplock bags. And I remember there was a cooperative that I was dealing with, it was selling our healthy little sports bar. And of course, I went out and bought like a machine that would make rapid like it was the wrappers you'd see in a candy bar in a store. I mean, really trying to make it look as legitimate as possible. And I know that the reason why doors opened up is when I walked in with it, everybody was like, What the hell? That looks so cool. And like, yeah, it doesn't have to be like a brownie in a ziplock bag. And it doesn't have to be full of sugar. And it doesn't have to be full of all this crap. It can be this really healthy little thing that's got some cannabis that be good for after you work out before you workout. So what I was walking into, every time I went to meet with this one group in Berkeley, who will go unnamed we're no longer around is a back of house that was full of kids stoned out of their minds, I could never remember what the hell we talked about the last time I was there. And I would write things down and present it to them. And I remember sitting with the guy that was running the whole thing at that point. And I just said, Listen, I'm not going to sell in your shop anymore. But I'm going to say this to you, man. What you're doing here is what's going to make all of this

go wrong. Because you're misbehaving, what you need to do is be legitimate. I have no problem with people smoking cannabis. But if you're so stoned at work that you can't function, this whole boats gonna go down.

Bruce Eckfeldt

Yeah, how this all evolved over the last 10 years has been fascinating.

Christopher Peak

Very fast. Yeah, I agree with you. So it's like, certainly tricky. And you certainly don't want to step on anybody's toes. But we have to behave like adults here. Yep.

Bruce Eckfeldt

Christopher. Andrew, this has been a pleasure. If people want to find out more about the two of you about pipeline, what's the best way to get that information?

Andrew DeAngelo

Andrew D'Angelo dot com is the best place. We make one stop one stop.

Bruce Eckfeldt

I love it. I'll make sure that the links are in the show notes. Thank you so much for taking the time today. It's been an absolute pleasure. Great. Thanks, sir.

Andrew DeAngelo

Thank you, Bruce. Great to be with you today.

Christopher Peak

And a Happy Martin Luther King Day.

Bruce Eckfeldt

Yeah. Very good. Gentlemen. Thank you so much. Thanks, guys. Okay, bye bye. Bye.

About Eckfeldt & Associates

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