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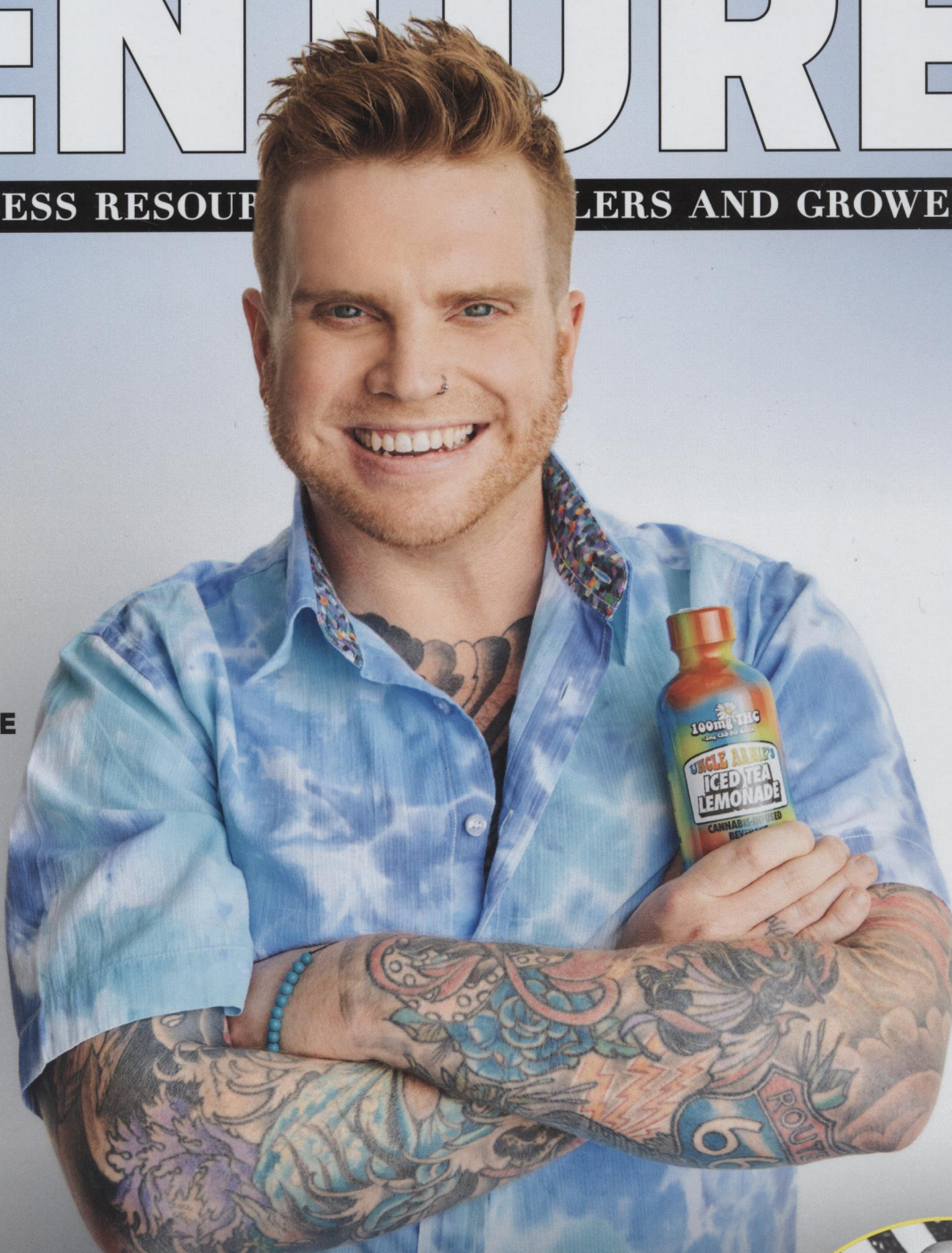
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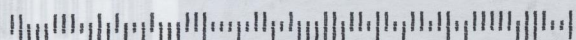


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A look at some leading canna-tech influencers

BY HARRY BRELSFORD

Readers will recall that I've published the CannaTech Ecosystem Stack in past issues of Marijuana Venture. The natural progression from the "logo chart" is to identify the people who are influencers in the canna-tech space.

WHAT IS AN INFLUENCER?

An influencer is a thought-leader who can move markets. It's one person who speaks authoritatively with many people. It's earned respect based on reputation. These individuals have domain expertise in their respective fields. According to the site Influencermarketinghub.com, an influencer is someone who has "the power to affect others' purchasing decisions because of their authority, knowledge, position or relationship with their audience" and "a following in a distinct niche, with whom they actively engage."

These individuals have built a personal and professional brand by several approaches:

- Blogs and published articles;
- Actively commenting on industry topics on LinkedIn;
- Attending industry events (both online and in-person);
- Speaking at industry events;
- Reading industry publications;
- Driving success via leadership and job role;
- Acting as a super-connector; or
- Being active in different communities such as trade groups.

I conducted extensive primary research to compile a list of more than 100 canna-tech influencers that can be found on my 420MSP community ecosystem site (<http://bit.ly/cannatechinfluencer>). The list includes Adam Benko (MJstack co-founder and head of partnerships), Cy Scott (Headset co-founder and CEO), Duane Roebuck (BlueStar senior marketing channel manager), Guillermo Bravo (Foottraffik co-founder and CEO), Henry Finkelstein (Cannabis Big Data founder), Jeffrey Harris (springbig co-founder and CEO), Joe Leucht (Heartland Computers director of sales), Liz Stahura (BDSA co-founder and president), Max Simon (Green

Flower CEO), Ross Lipson (Dutchie co-founder and CEO), Ryan Smith (LeafLink co-founder) and Taylor Jones (Pistil-Data vice president of revenue and customer success).

I sorted this list alphabetically and did not stack and rank the influencers, but in future updates, I hope to stack and rank so we can reveal the "top" influencers in canna-tech.

My full report includes much more data and was based on research that includes many interviews, introductions and contributions from experts such as Ryan Porter at toptender, a cannabis learning system.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

I believe that influencer marketing is right up there with paid and earned media campaigns to develop new business.

"Becoming a super-connector, my term for top influencers, takes significant work," says Jay McBain, principal analyst at Forrester. "These individuals have unique skills around knowledge gathering, communication and interpersonal relationships. Super-connectors tend to know almost everyone, and almost everyone knows them within an ecosystem. These people are very few in number and span multiple channel communities in a given area of specialization."

"I view influencers as the builders. In this case, the builders of technology," says Jonathan Covey, a consultant at Talent Tech Labs in Austin, Texas. "These people have undertaken the due diligence to learn a market."

NEXT STEPS

First and foremost, reach out to me if you have additions to my list of influencers. Also, if you see corrections, feedback is the breakfast of champions! And don't forget to visit my site for the full report.

Harry Brelsford is the founder of two technology communities: SMB Nation and 420MSP. He welcomes inquiries at harrybrelsford@gmail.com or 206-201-2944. Visit www.420msp.com for more information.