

Tribal Fire: A Minority-Owned Cannabis Delivery Success Story

Cape Cod's Native American-Owned Cannabis Delivery Service Aims High

In the heart of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, a unique venture is making waves in the burgeoning cannabis industry. Tribal Fire, a Native American-owned cannabis delivery service founded by Chef John Marcellino, a member of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, is setting itself apart in a market that often presents significant challenges for minority entrepreneurs.

As the Massachusetts cannabis market continues to attract investors, Tribal Fire offers valuable insights into navigating the complexities of this industry. Marcellino's journey emphasizes the importance of community partnerships, especially when it comes to securing funding and complying with stringent regulations.

Strategic Advice: Find The Right Partner

Securing funding was a major hurdle for Marcellino and his team. "We were dead in the water," he recalled, highlighting the difficulties of raising capital while living on Massachusetts' only tribal reservation. Although Marcellino diligently completed the necessary paperwork and training with the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC), building the delivery facility proved even more challenging.

A pivotal moment came when Theory Wellness, a well-established cannabis company, provided a \$250,000 grant, enabling Tribal Fire to move forward. "It's hard to go to banks in this industry," Marcellino explained. Thanks to this support, Tribal Fire officially opened its doors on August 23, 2023.

Delivering Cannabis in Massachusetts

Currently, Tribal Fire exclusively delivers products from Theory Wellness, but Marcellino has plans for future expansion. "We focus on Theory Wellness because it's a fantastic product, but we do have the option to carry others," he noted.

What truly sets Tribal Fire apart is its commitment to discretion and customer care, particularly catering to a niche market that values privacy. "About 25% of our customers are people like clergy, police officers, or state workers who don't want to be seen walking into a cannabis store," Marcellino shared.

Their delivery service also promotes safety, particularly during late-night hours. "We often get calls from people who are already partying and don't want to risk driving out to get more alcohol or visit a cannabis store," he explained. By providing discreet delivery, [Tribal Fire aims](#) to reduce the risks associated with impaired driving. "In a few years, I believe we'll have solid data showing that our service is helping prevent accidents and keeping people out of trouble," Marcellino added.

The Cost of Compliance

Tribal Fire’s unique position extends beyond its delivery model. “We are the Mercedes-Benz of cannabis delivery in Massachusetts,” Marcellino quipped. However, this confidence is backed by a meticulous approach to security and compliance. The company operates from a state-approved facility, equipped with 14 cameras, motion detectors, and a generator to ensure operations remain secure during outages. Their investment in a steel-reinforced vault and delivery vehicles with cameras and GPS tracking highlights their commitment to safety. “Security is our number one concern, and we’ve ensured we meet every standard,” he emphasized.

Expanding in Cape Cod’s Elite Market

Tribal Fire is strategically positioned for growth in Cape Cod, an area known for its affluent tourists. Despite the challenges, Marcellino envisions exciting expansion opportunities, including packaging services and cannabis consumption lounges. “We have room for growth. I’m also interested in starting a consumption restaurant,” he said, merging his culinary expertise with cannabis-infused cuisine. “Imagine a lobster roll with a cannabis cream sauce,” he joked.

As a business located in one of Massachusetts’ most iconic coastal destinations, Tribal Fire is poised to attract clientele seeking discreet, high-quality cannabis experiences.

Takeaway for Investors

The Massachusetts cannabis market is among the most tightly regulated in the U.S., yet with the right support, businesses like Tribal Fire are proving that success is possible. Marcellino’s advice for aspiring entrepreneurs? “Be honest. Tell your story. People want to help you, especially in this industry. There are many good people out there who want to see you succeed.”

While Tribal Fire’s journey is just beginning, its early success serves as a beacon of hope for others in the industry. “We’re saving lives, preventing problems, and giving people options. That’s what we’re all about,” Marcellino concluded.

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