

ASCEND WELLNESS HOLDINGS

How this state-of-the-art cannabis operator is bettering their bottom line and saving more than money with Una.



AT A GLANCE

Ascend Wellness Holdings is a multi-state cannabis operator focused on changing the way the world thinks about cannabis.

By partnering with Una, Ascend Wellness was able to streamline purchasing, drum up savings, and utilize resources to help them form a comprehensive procurement strategy.



“Working with Una was a great and easy process. Cindy [Rittel] was extremely helpful and led us down the right path based on items we were focused on.

[It is] nice to have an ally.”

Kyle Crowley

Senior Director of Procurement

INTRODUCTION

Ascend Wellness Holdings (AWH) is a multi-state cannabis operator focused on changing the way the world thinks about cannabis.

Founded in 2018, the AWH team runs state-of-the-art cultivation facilities and has become a trusted community partner to deliver a quality and consistent cannabis experience.

As AWH continued to explode within the cannabis marketplace, their need to consolidate spend across multiple categories and strengthen supplier relationships became crucial.

Una’s vast contract portfolio and diverse supplier list proved to be the quickest and easiest way to realize savings while still focusing on delivering quality products to their consumers.

ABOUT ASCEND WELLNESS HOLDINGS

Cannabis is one of the fastest growing industries in the United States, raking up \$27 billion in sales in 2021 alone. While full legalization hasn’t happened yet, more and more states are opting to pass recreational-use legislation in addition to their existing medical marijuana laws.

Ascend Wellness had dreams of making cannabis accessible to everyone. To reach their goals, AWH focused on establishing strategic flagship locations in viable markets, producing top-of-the-line strains, partnering with premium cannabis brands to deliver quality products, and building a team consisting of experienced cannabis managers and industry leaders.

AWH is also a proud partner of the Last Prisoner Project, a nonprofit dedicated to cannabis criminal justice reform and getting non-violent cannabis offenders released from jail.

Over the last few years, Ascend Wellness has donated more than \$1 million to the Last Prisoner Project.

AWH'S CHALLENGES

Continuing to grow a business amidst a global pandemic is no easy feat but when the cannabis industry saw a 35% increase in sales from 2020 to 2021, AWH knew they had to stay the course. They brought in industry leaders to help them navigate the stringent state laws and regulations and successfully expanded into 6 states.

By the time AWH connected with Una, they had tens of millions of dollars in spend that was decentralized across locations and becoming increasingly difficult to manage. Kyle Crowley was hired as AWH's Senior Director of Procurement and tasked with consolidating that spend, taking inventory of their existing supplier contracts, and drumming up savings.

While AWH had what suppliers may consider to be significant spend, limited resources in terms of staffing and time proved to be roadblocks to savings. As Kyle researched his options, he decided to look into partnering with a group purchasing organization to take AWH to the next level.

WHY PARTNER WITH UNA?

The very first discovery call Kyle had with the Una team explained everything he needed to know: Una's robust supplier portfolio and readily available pre-negotiated contracts were the quickest way for AWH to realize savings within certain categories. Turnaround times were fast and Una's level of customer service appeared to be unparalleled.

Supplier diversity was also important to Ascend Wellness, so when Kyle learned that Una has access to over 140 diverse suppliers within our portfolio, it further solidified his desire to move forward with a partnership.

Together, AWH and Una developed a plan to deliver cost savings quickly and efficiently in key categories and then branched out to find ways to improve the contract management process and enhance procurement efficiencies.

By partnering with Una, Ascend Wellness was able to improve their bottom line in terms of monetary savings and unlock resources that allowed them to remain focused on company growth.

Ascend Wellness was able to save 10-15% in key categories of spend within weeks of joining Una.



UNA'S RESPONSE

Knowing time is valuable, the Una team quickly assessed AWH's spend, starting with the shipping and packaging categories. Una ran a cost analysis based on real Ascend Wellness data and compared it to our on-contract pricing that showed a 10-15% savings.

Next, Una and AWH tackled their JanSan and MRO categories to better understand what was being spent, and where, as Ascend Wellness continued to expand.

Several locations in varying states meant spend visibility was low and AWH needed a way to ensure their already-lean procurement team had an easy and accessible way to purchase what they needed to get new locations up and running.

Savings percentages in this category were lower compared to shipping, but when it comes to millions of dollars spent each month, even a 5% savings adds up to a significant amount.

AN ONGOING PARTNERSHIP

When working with a GPO, finding savings is often the first step but at Una, our work doesn't end there. The relationship between Ascend Wellness and Una has continued to develop over the years and is built on transparency and trust.

Ascend Wellness Holdings is now supported by Una's Member Experience Team. The goal of Member Experience is to ensure companies like AWH see continued success in all areas of business. Regular calls and quarterly check-ins allow for Una to keep a pulse on the needs of members like AWH and help identify other savings opportunities.

In an industry experiencing rapid growth, Ascend Wellness is poised to continue making their mark within the cannabis marketplace. This is thanks in part to their procurement department's dedication to finding cost savings and delivering continuous value in terms of solid supplier relationships, spend analytics, and accessing resources offered by Una to build a comprehensive sourcing strategy.

By utilizing all of the benefits that come along with an Una membership, the AWH team is also saving countless hours of time and effort when it comes to negotiating purchasing agreements and managing supplier contracts.

Combined, the cost and time savings Ascend Wellness Holdings is realizing are working to better their bottom line, and allowing the AWH team to focus on their mission: bettering the lives of their customers.

READY TO BE THE NEXT SUCCESS STORY?

Whether you're needing help with a single category or are looking for ways to implement a cohesive procurement strategy, the Una team is here to help.

Membership is always free and there are never any purchasing requirements or exclusivities.

Get started with a no-obligation discovery call to learn more.

Visit us at www.una.com or email support@una.com for more information.

