

# **Business Plan**

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#### 1. Executive Summary

All Across Africa (AAA or "the Company") is a pioneering, for-profit company based in the US with offices in 5 African countries. The Company designs and produces high quality handmade products for the home décor, kitchenware, dining ware, and jewelry markets while creating much-needed employment across rural regions of Africa.

Since AAA's inception in 2013, US consumers have enthusiastically responded to the Company's mission and products, resulting in over \$5.5 million in sales. Sales: 2015: \$1.75M – 2016: \$1.9 M (projected). The Company has been able to achieve these sales goals by organizing and training over 3200 artisans thus enabling the delivery of custom orders in the tens of thousands to large customers like Costco, FTD, and Ethan Allen.

AAA was founded and is operated by Greg Stone and Alicia Wallace. AAA was created for the purpose of transforming the lives of the world's poor by developing and implementing a business model that creates sustainable jobs for the economically marginalized in Africa while connecting Western consumers to authentic and beautiful handmade products.

Over the past century the West has created thousands of poverty reduction programs in the developing world at a cost of hundreds of billions of dollars. Yet most of these programs have had a negligible long-term economic impact. AAA is reversing this trend and changing the world by executing on a business model that creates jobs for the rural poor and connects consumers to authentic and desirable handmade products.



A Snapshot of AAA's current customers.

AAA artisan biographical information:

- The Company supports a network of 3,200 rural and marginalized artisans.
- Each individual artisan supports an average of 5.7 dependents.
- Artisans earn the equivalent of the average pay of local college-educated school teachers.
- Within six months of joining an AAA-sponsored cooperative, artisans are able to realize 100% food security with sufficient access to nutritious food and an income that meets the expense of their children's school fees and health insurance.

Since AAA's inception in 2013, US consumers have enthusiastically responded to the Company's mission and products, resulting in over \$5.5 million in sales and making it possible for the Company to train and employ thousands of rural artisans in Africa.

By overcoming numerous barriers to entry, this business plan illustrates that the Company stands apart from its competitors. Not only has AAA developed sought-after products and proven strong sales partnerships with Costco and other large retailers; it has also developed and trained large groups of highly skilled rural artisans numbering in the thousands. With the Company's oversight, these groups can manage production of custom orders in the tens of thousands without compromising quality and consistency.

The Company anticipates increasing revenues from \$1.75 million in 2015 to \$6.1 million by 2019 while providing living-wage jobs to thousands of economically marginalized people. This will be accomplished by leveraging its unparalleled experience in this groundbreaking field, expanding its current market relationships, reducing its cost of goods (COGs), adding new strategic customers, and increasing its production capacity in Africa.

This business plan provides a comprehensive overview and analysis of the Company's current and future business opportunities and reveals the following trends in the marketplace:

- Buyers and consumers are seeking authentic products that have a global style (products that
  combine ethnic elements and contemporary designs) and are not mass-produced in countries
  such as China. This is a growing category and represents a tremendous opportunity for
  market growth for the Company.
- Market research has shown there is a growing market for unique handmade home décor and fashion accessory products, particularly in the high-end segment.
- Retail companies are realizing a profit as a result of offering unique handmade custom products (e.g., West Elm).

The Company's sales strategy calls for the expansion of its distribution network through the following channels:

- Costco Road Shows
- Wholesaling to large and independent retailers
- Direct-to-consumer sales through the Company's online shopping site
- Drop-shipping for third-party vendors
- Private-label partnerships
- Launching a sales strategy in the European market in 2017/18

The Company's five primary product categories – woven baskets, home décor, tableware, jewelry and handbags – are unique and difficult for competitors to replicate.

AAA revenues are projected to increase from \$1.75 million in 2015 to \$6.1 million in 2019 with its EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) increasing from a negative 11.4% in 2015 to a positive 15.1% by 2019.

The Company's future growth and profitability are based on implementing the following strategies:

• Procuring a \$1,500,000 equity investment in Q1 2017.

- Investing \$500,000 in inventory to eliminate expensive air freight and shifting its transport to more affordable ocean containers, drastically shrinking AAA's COGs.
- Reducing Costco's Road Show selling expense from 45% to 28% through the hiring of strategic staff/partners.

All Across Africa's mission is to create life-changing job opportunities for the most marginalized people in Africa by providing a consumer connection to artisan-made quality products, paying artisans a living wage that gives them the freedom to choose how they invest their earnings and create a greater impact on their families and community.

• Hire a professional sales and marketing team to diversify and expand customer base.

Several exit strategies will be viable options in the next five to seven years. By developing a strong brand, well-known for its quality handmade products and its social impact, AAA will be well-positioned as a candidate for acquisition by a larger company. An acquiring company would most likely be a retailer who has a track record of successfully AAA's products and would favor buying the Company versus spending years trying to build its own operation. They would also need to have similar values that take into consideration the impact their corporate decisions have on the artisans. An additional exit option that would be considered is to take the Company public. As a California-registered benefit corporation, AAA has no corporate or legal barriers to an IPO. The exit decision will be based on market conditions with the goal of maximizing both the Company's social impact and its shareholder value.

## 2. Company History and Mission

All Across Africa (AAA) was founded in March 2013 by Greg Stone and Alicia Wallace and is a California-registered benefit corporation.

The founding purpose of AAA is to employ marginalized people in Africa and connect Western consumers with quality, authentic handmade products produced in rural regions of Africa. AAA not only creates beautiful handcrafted products; it also solves a major global issue by training, employing and empowering thousands of unemployed artisans by giving their families financial security and a hopeful future.

AAA's professionally designed home décor and accessories allow US consumers the opportunity, at different price points, to purchase these highly sought-after products. Research has revealed that indigenous designs with a global style are a fast-growing category.

Greg and Alicia have 18 years of combined experience working in Africa, operating businesses, leading staff, producing products and designing and implementing training and education programs, all of which impact thousands of lives in Africa.

Prior to the Company's founding in 2013, the Company's model was developed and refined under Rwanda Partners (RP), a nonprofit organization cofounded by Greg Stone in 2004. RP's mission was to alleviate poverty and bring healing to genocide survivors.

After several years of experimenting with different programs and service offerings, RP concluded that jobs and business opportunities provided the best long-term solution for reducing poverty among the rural poor. Based on this conclusion, in 2006 Greg began developing markets in the US and creating production centers for handmade products woven by rural women in Rwanda.

The founding of AAA was based on the conviction that RP's growth, sustainability and profitability would be hindered by its nonprofit structure. Thus, AAA was formed with a corporate structure that provided for the flexibility of more traditional methods of raising investment capital, the ability to measure profitability and growth, and the ability to offer equity positions to investors and key management staff members. AAA is also committed to producing strong profit growth to reward investors and reinvest in the business.

AAA is committed to continuing and expanding its mission of paying fair wages, operating with better-than-fair-trade working conditions, and creating products that artisan producers are both proud of and that Western markets desire.

## 3. Industry Trends

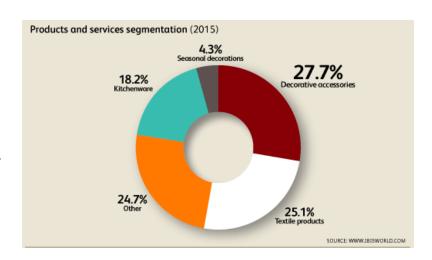
## **Home Décor Industry**

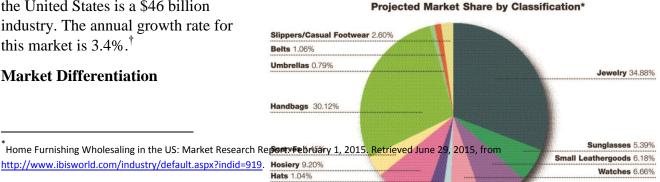
The home décor industry (wholesale, retail and online) in the United States is an \$83 billion industry with an average growth rate of 3% per year; it is expected to continue to grow at a faster rate than the overall economy.

#### **Fashion and Accessories Industry**

AAA's product lines include fashion jewelry and women's bags. The fashion and accessories market in the United States is a \$46 billion industry. The annual growth rate for this market is 3.4%.

## **Market Differentiation**





**Gloves 1.41%** 

A Measure of the USA Jewelry Market. Retrived June 29, 2015, from http://www.diamondshades.com/usa-jewelry-market/

A developing trend in the marketplace is a "China backlash" from both wholesale buyers and consumers. Concerned about customer perceptions, long order lead times and the knockoff of their proprietary designs (which quickly find their way into competing stores), wholesale buyers are increasingly interested in product sources outside of China.

Consumers now more commonly use an eclectic style, choosing a variety of individual pieces for different rooms rather than uniform products. According to *Home Accents Today*, product diversity remains the key to a retailer's success. As a result, even mass merchandisers such as Target have begun to feature multiple countries and cultures in their product development. Buyers across all market segments maintain global thinking as a way to stand out in the marketplace, believing that telling the story behind a product can help consumers distinguish a retailer from its competitors.

## The Rise of the Socially Conscious Consumer

The promise of Africa is that it can become a luxury producer. Africa is also a continent rich in what I consider today's true luxury: handcrafted products with a soul. – Suzy Menkes, former fashion editor of the International Herald Tribune

The rise of socially conscious consumers is creating a trend across consumer industries in the United States. Consumers are searching for options that have a positive impact on the producers who made the product or the environment, or how it gives back to others. Cone Communications study states, "Nearly all U.S. consumers say that when a company supports a cause, they have a more positive image of the company (93%) – up from 85 percent in 2010 and 84 percent in 1993. Americans say they are also more likely to trust (90%) and would be more loyal (90%) to companies that back causes."

Retailers seek unique products and materials that can help differentiate their brands. While consumers seldom base their purchasing decisions solely on a product's origin, customers shopping high-end brands expect to see labels reflecting diverse countries of origin and authentic sustainability messaging. Brands that support a cause "actually sell better," Bloomingdale's CEO Tony Spring recently told MarketWatch. "We are going to always look for what's the most exciting product. But if there's a human side to it, it sells even better."<sup>‡</sup>

This is true for mass retailers like Walmart and Target, who are placing a stronger emphasis on green and ethically sourced products. "Simply put, what matters to our guests matters to us," said Target's chief merchandising and supply chain officer Kathee Tesija in a recent statement. "We know our guests are looking for better-for-you and better-for-the-world products, and our research shows that they seek authenticity and transparency from the brands they buy." \$\)

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>‡</sup> Retailers are finding that 'sustainable' sells. Ian P. Murphy, Aug 19, 2015. <a href="http://www.retaildive.com/news/retailers-are-finding-that-sustainable-sells/403972/">http://www.retaildive.com/news/retailers-are-finding-that-sustainable-sells/403972/</a>.

<sup>§</sup> Ibid.

Based on the size of the home décor industry and the fashion accessories industry coupled with the increasing demand for socially, ethically and authentically produced goods, it is reasonable to

conclude that AAA's annual revenue will increase to over \$6 million in the next 3 years.

## 4. Category Segments

Currently, AAA has five product categories that it produces and sells. Based on the Company's most recent 12-month sales figures, the major segments are broken down as follows:

- Baskets 35%
- Décor 15%
- Kitchen and Dining 15%
- Fashion and Accessories 30%
- Organization and Office 5%



#### **Baskets**

The Company's main product line is intricately woven baskets produced by craftswomen in Rwanda. Master weavers use timeless tradition to weave carefully dyed sisal fibers and sweet grass to make stunning one-of-a-kind pieces rich in cultural meaning and purpose. They are the perfect fit for a centerpiece, shelf décor, planter or striking wall hanging.

#### Décor

From leather pillows, screen-printed fabric pillows and vases to lamps and lamp shades, our trained artisans have the capabilities to create uniquely designed, high-quality home décor pieces.

## Kitchen and Dining

#### **Tabletop**

Baskets display fruit beautifully, and trivets function as heat absorbers on countertops or tabletops. Additional hand-woven products also set the table in the form of chargers, placemats, table runners and coasters. Screen-printed designs colorfully enhance patterned placemats, runners and napkins.





## Serving

Baskets make great serving bowls for bread; they are woven into sturdy serving trays as well.

Fashion and Accessories

Jewelry

AAA currently produces four fashion jewelry product lines. Fashion jewelry is defined as costing less than \$100 and does not

utilize precious stones. The Company's primary line of jewelry is made Uganda from hand-rolled recycled and printed paper beads. Rwanda produces sisal-woven jewelry and Burundi produces horn and raffiawoven jewelry.

# Bags

AAA's bags are hand-sewn using local African print fabrics, leather, or specially designed and screen-printed canvas. Bags are produced in Rwanda and Burundi and the styles consist of shoulder bags, market bags, book bags, makeup bags, clutches and handbags. As a way to

draw a producer-consumer connection, each bag is hand-signed by the artisan who created the product.

#### Organization and Office

Baskets are versatile and can be used for organization and storage in the office or in the home. AAA's woven catchall, cathedral coin collector and pen storage baskets are practical in any office or home.

## 5. Product Insights

Collections – Assortments for Clear and Distinct Channel Strategy

In early 2015, AAA worked closely with industry experts to segment its existing product line into distinct tiered sales and marketing channels. By segmenting the products into four categories - Traditions Collection, Global Beat Collection, Inspired Collection and Curated Collection -AAA now has the flexibility to offer differentiated products at a range of price points to a diverse customer base from grocery stores (Whole Foods) to luxury retailers (Saks Fifth Avenue). See

# Attachment A.

## Functionality vs. Art

Baskets can function in many different roles; they can be used for organization, storage, setting a table or serving food. Additionally, the same pieces can be used as shelf décor, wall art or a conversation centerpiece for any home





in

party. The Company's products quality, design and versatility create a distinct and unique value for consumers.

Seasonal vs. Fashionable

The Company has control over its raw material supply chain and is able to change the designs and colors of its products on a seasonal basis, allowing for a regularly refreshed look that appeals to new and returning customers alike. The benefit of having design staff on the ground in Africa allows AAA the ability to create fashionable home décor, kitchenware and accessories that keep up with current trends and colors to stay in fashion.

Importance of Meaningful Patterns and Designs

Basket designs symbolize a variety of meanings in Rwandan culture, such as hope, unity and friendship. Baskets are often given as tokens of love and friendship to celebrate weddings, baby arrivals and graduations. Conveying the meaning of basket designs is an important component of AAA's sales and marketing strategy. These baskets can communicate a similar message here in the United States.

Artisan profiles and the design meaning are communicated on each hang tag and the point-of-sale display, increasing the brand awareness and social cause tied to the products.

## Occasion for Purchase

Quality handmade products that have a positive impact in the world make thoughtful and treasured gifts for Christmas, birthdays or Mother's Day. Bright baskets are also ideal for Easter and home holiday décor. Additionally, AAA's home décor, kitchen and dining product lines make great year-round housewarming presents.



The Company's broad price range offers an accessible price point for most consumers to refresh their home décor annually or seasonally.

Additionally, consumers purchase AAA's products because they love the designs or they want to give back or help others.

#### 6. Current Distribution Channels

With AAA's versatile product line offering many practical and decorative uses, these products can be found in club warehouses, department stores, gift stores, home and kitchen décor stores, museum and zoo gift shops, art galleries, garden centers and online at the AAA website.

#### Costco

Starting in 2010 with Rwanda Partners, the Company has over six years' experience delivering products on a large scale to Costco. Costco is currently AAA's major distribution channel, representing the largest percentage of AAA's total sales.

AAA performs an average of 200 ten-day road shows per year in Costco stores. Costco places a significant value on road show. Costco created road shows believing they create a unique offering and "treasure hunt" for their members that keep Costco new and exciting. Road shows are hosted by Costco in its warehouses and require AAA to supply



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**Costco Point of Sale Display** 

point-of-sale displays, product inventory and sales reps to provide product information and sales. Costco provides AAA with the majority of its sales revenue while providing brand exposure to millions of Costco members every year. Costco records the purchase at its registers, takes 13.5% of the sale price, and pays AAA the balance in ten to fifteen days. However, it also proves to be a challenging sales model requiring a high level of operational systems, efficiencies and management/staffing structures.



**Costco Road Show Crate** 

Until June 2015, AAA utilized the services of Smart Circle to set up and staff the road show locations, receiving 45% of the net sales from each road show. In 2016 AAA has taken the responsibility of staffing the shows in-house with the expectation that this change will reduce the sales and staffing costs to approximately 35% of the net sales. The long-term goal for the road shows is to diversify the product mix to reach new customers and increase the overall sales average from \$550 per day to \$800 per day.

In order to be a long-term Costco supplier, the Company has had to embark on a steep learning curve:

- Producing products with consistent quality with minimal returns in light of Costco's no-questions-asked return policy (AAA's Costco return rate is 1.5% versus the industry standard of 9%).
- Scaling up production to meet Costco's increasing sales demand (Costco's initial contract started

- with 60 weavers and now AAA currently works with over 2,500 weavers for Costco products).
- Consistently providing displays, inventory, and trained sales reps to all scheduled shows across the United States.

The Company was featured in the Costco managers meeting in 2012 and Costco's annual shareholders meeting in 2014. See Costco's co-founder and recently retired CEO Jim Senegal's endorsement of Rwanda Partner Road Shows here: <a href="http://vimeo.com/46336077">http://vimeo.com/46336077</a>.

#### AAA Online

AAA sells direct to consumers through its website. Online consumer traffic is driven by media publications, news and Google searches. Customers are able to view and shop over 350 different product SKUs per season on the AAA website.

# Online Drop-Ship

The online shopping sites One Kings Lane (<a href="www.onekingslane.com">www.onekingslane.com</a>) and To the Market (<a href="www.tothemarket.com">www.tothemarket.com</a>) are two recent wholesale customers that the Company has added as drop-ship accounts and who are providing a consistent stream of online business. To the Market is an online marketplace for trauma-survivor—made goods that generates a strong consumer interest. One Kings Lane is a high-end home décor online marketplace that curates products to a specific style and shows to their consumers.

Drop-ship customers shop and place orders for AAA's product at the wholesale customer's website (<a href="www.onekingslane.com">www.onekingslane.com</a>). The orders are then passed from the wholesale site to AAA to be fulfilled and shipped. The wholesaler receives a percentage of the sale (15–50%).



One Kings Lane featured AAA in a brand event on December 1<sup>st</sup> on their home page for 8 hours. It resulted in \$60,000 in gross sales and was deemed "a huge success" by One Kings Lane's corporate buyers. One Kings Lane schedule another brand event for Mother's Day 2016.

Additionally, AAA has signed vendor agreements with FTD, Houzz, Wayfair, Amazon Handmade and Fab.com.

## Independent Retailers

Since January of 2015, AAA has begun participating in Home Décor Trade Shows where The Company's products have been widely accepted by independent retailer buyers and national retailers, resulting in orders from 250 new customers. The Company currently has a customer base of over 300 independent retailers; almost all of these customers have been acquired since January 2015. AAA has experienced an 80% return buyer rate, purchasing on average 40% more product than its initial order based on its customers' buying response.

## 7. Competitive Advantage

The senior management team at AAA has 18 years of combined experience working in Africa creating high-quality artisan-made products while building teams and operational infrastructure in Africa. AAA has production facilities in Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, and Ghana and

has direct control over its supply chain, from the raw materials to the completed final product.

For most competitors in the African handicraft market, one of the biggest challenges is matching the speed with which colors, fashion styles and product designs change, resulting in increasingly shorter product life cycles. Historically, some products could be kept in stock for years. Now, a typical life cycle is three to six months. As retailers strive to stay ahead of competition, new products replace old ones with greater frequency.

AAA is able to keep abreast of fast-changing trends, new designs and products by utilizing its team of in-house designers who work directly with the producers to

incorporate the symbolic cultural meanings with the changing market demands into relevant products biannually. The Company's unique Pantone–color-forecasted products and regularly changing designs are not easily replicated by competitors.

The Company's unique designs have generated considerable media attention over the past 12

months at print publications such as *Elle Décor*, *Architectural Digest*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *House Beautiful* and many others. *See Attachment B*.

Every AAA product is produced by hand in rural villages across East Africa, enabling AAA to employ hard-to-reach populations that otherwise have limited access to markets and employment. The impact on lives is far-reaching; artisans report



that after six months of working for AAA, 100% of their children are in school. They also report that they now have the capacity to fully support their families (an average of 5.7 dependents) on their income. A full-time AAA artisan generates income comparable to that of a trained school teacher. These success stories are an important part of the Company's branding and consumer messaging. Included with every product is a hang tag that conveys a social impact story.

Time and experience has afforded AAA the ability to bring its weaving quality and products to the highest market standards. AAA's professional designs and tight weave give its baskets a superior finish and are thus of the highest quality in the industry. Moreover, the designs incorporated into AAA products symbolize meaning, purpose and tradition, communicating to the consumer encouraging messages such as hope, friendship and unity.

As a result of AAA's years of experience developing on-the-ground operational teams and working with talented designers and trained artisans, the Company has acquired the capability to produce thousands of consistently high-quality products every month, setting it apart from all other competitors. Today AAA has the capacity to produce 14,000 products per month and could quickly scale capacity from two to three times this level.

## 8. Competitors

AAA's competitors consist mainly of two types of businesses: small manufacturers of African products that work directly with producers, and large importers that buy and ship African products primarily using middlemen. Of the four companies that have more than \$1 million in annual sales and are capable of large production orders, only AAA has its own design and production team and is invested in the development of life skills, vocational advancement and education for the producers. This allows the Company greater flexibility to create relevant products that change with the market while constantly upgrading artisans' skills and techniques and ensuring a life-changing impact.

The producers and exporters that design and work directly with artisans currently are not capable of filling orders that require high production capacities, strict delivery dates, and specific labeling, packaging and packing requirements. AAA sets itself apart from its competitors with its ability to design, produce and ship on small and large scales, successfully serving its diverse customer base.

*Graph 1 – Competitive Matrix* 

	All	Ten	1	Baskets	6 4 11			24		
Factors	Across Africa	Thousand Villages	Indego Africa	of Africa	Swahili Imports	Serrv	Sseko	31 Bits	Soko	Azizi Life
Home décor	Х	Х	Х	Χ	Χ	Χ				Χ
Kitchen	Х	Х	Х		Χ	Χ				
Accessories	Х	Х	Х			Χ	Х	Х	Х	
Work directly	Х		Х		Х		Х	Х	Х	Х
with producers  Designs with meaning	X		^				^	X	^	^
Mass production capabilities	х	Х			Х		Х		Х	
Customization capability	Х		Х				Х	х		
Quality products	Х		Х	Х			Х	Χ	Х	
Channel strategy	Х									
Seasonal colors and design	Х		Х				Х	Х	Х	
More than \$1 million in annual										
sales	X	Х			Χ	Χ			Х	

## 9. Product Innovation/R&D

The home accessory market is strongly influenced by fashion and consumer purchasing patterns. Keeping up with frequently changing market trends presents a major challenge for handicraft importers. By employing its own team of Western-trained designers, working both in the United States and in the field with artisans, AAA has a distinct advantage over its competitors by retaining the ability to design to the needs of the US market without straying from the cultural connection and meaning of the products. Moreover, products can be individually designed and tailored to the distinct and specific needs of the retailer or distribution channel with short lead time.

The Company's teams of designers integrate both culturally traditional and market-trending designs that incorporate seasonal colors, creating new collections every six months.

AAA utilizes a diverse range of raw materials that the designers use to create new products, giving the Company the flexibility to design for both mass market and high-end art galleries and interior design firms.

The Company is currently designing prototypes for lamps, lamp shades, vases, tables, storage baskets, planters, storage bins, candleholders, etc.

## 10. Growth Strategy/Pricing

In late 2015, the Company finalized and began implementing a sales channel strategy that created four distinct product collections. This segmentation allows for greater price and product flexibility, allowing the Company to



sell different tiered products to a wide array of customers.

Segmenting the products into four categories – Traditions Collection, Global Beat Collection, Inspired Collection, and Curated Collection – allows AAA flexibility to offer a range of products with different price points to a diverse customer base ranging from Target to Neiman Marcus. This allows the Company the versatility to compete at the lower price end of the market that requires significant production capacity while also providing products to the luxury market that requires more focus on distinctive designs, higher quality and smaller quantities. While the lower end provides an opportunity for mass production and higher units sold, research conducted by *Home Accents Today* shows that 122 million Americans have the financial means to afford luxury goods.

*Graph 2 – Product Segmentation Target Retailers for Home Décor and Retail Price Points* 

# LARGE NATIONAL/REGIONAL RETAILERS – HOME AND KITCHEN (example only)

(example only)			
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
\$20 - \$50	\$30 - \$120	\$50 - \$120	\$200 - \$1000
Sam's Club	Pier 1 Imports	Crate & Barrel	Bloomingdale's
Barnes & Noble	Costco	Restoration Hardware	Mitchell Gold Co.
	Cost Plus World		ABC Carpet &
Target	Market	Macy's	Home
			Bergdorf
<b>Home Goods</b>	QVC	West Elm	Goodman
TJ Maxx	HSN	Belk	Saks Fifth Avenue
	Bed Bath &		
	Beyond	Pottery Barn	Neiman Marcus
	Trader Joe's	Nordstrom	Ethan Allen
	Whole Foods	One Kings Lane	
	Starbucks	Z Gallerie	
	<b>Urban Outfitters</b>	Anthropologie	
	Wayfair	Williams-Sonoma	
		Sur La Table	
		Williams-Sonoma	
		Catalog	

The Company's target volume from the four collections for the next 36 months is as follows:

Tier 1 − Traditions Collection − 15%

Tier 2 – Global Beat Collection – 40%

Tier 3 – Inspired Collection – 35%

Tier 4 – Curated Collection – 10%

#### **Pricing**

## Graph 3 – Historical and Future Pricing Chart for Four Example Products

Tier 2 – Global Beat Collection

#### **AAA Online**

#### AAA Product in Costco

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
12" large basket	\$39.99	\$50.00	\$58.00	\$58.00	\$68.00
10" medium basket	NA	\$40.00	\$48.00	\$48.00	\$50.00
Trivet	\$15.99	\$18.00	\$26.00	\$26.00	\$28.00
Bracelet set	NA	\$17.99	\$28.00	\$35.00	\$39.00

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
\$36.99	\$36.99	\$39.99	\$39.99	\$44.99
NA	NA	\$33.99	\$33.99	\$36.99
\$15.99	\$15.99	\$19.99	\$19.99	\$21.99
\$15.99	\$15.99	\$19.99	\$19.00	\$21.99

In December 2014, the Company received approval for its first price increase (17% average) on its Costco product line. The Company conducted several research and focus group studies in spring 2015 and determined that its products were priced below the market. As a result, the Company raised its online prices an average of 21% and saw little or no drop in online sales. Because wholesale prices are dictated as a percentage of the Company's online retail price, the 21% price increase also extended to the Company's wholesale customers.

## Expansion of National Retailers

As a result of a comprehension product category review and restructuring, the Company is now in a stronger position to develop significant new business revenue through national retailer accounts such as Nordstrom, Cost Plus World Market and West Elm, to name a few. In the next five years, the Company expects that this new business channel of national retailers will represent over 40% of overall revenue, resulting in a more profitable customer mix.

Specialty retailers such as West Elm, Crate & Barrel, Pier 1 Imports and Pottery Barn are a fast-growing group of lifestyle retailers with a focus on home accessory products, making them

potentially strong customers for customized products with high volume and production requirements.

West Elm's president, Jim Brett, stated recently in an interview with *Fortune*'s host, Leigh Gallagher that the company's handcrafted product line, specifically African baskets, was one of the primary reasons that the company attained profitability after many years of financial struggle. A clip of the interview can be viewed by clicking on the link below: http://fortune.com/video/2015/05/15/how-west-elm-finally-earned-a-profit/.

## Independent Retail Gift Channel

Independent retailers make up a broad category: small retailers with one or two stores, tourist shops, art galleries, museums and zoo stores, flower shops, coffee shops, garden stores, alternative trade outlets, etc. These retailers have a high potential for market expansion and growth for the Company.

The Company has plans to attend 8 markets per year to acquire orders from current independent retailers continuing to acquire new business. The four major home and gift markets in the country are Las Vegas, NY NOW, Atlanta and High Point.



#### Corporate Gift Program

The Company is regularly contacted by customers representing banks, hotels and universities who are interested in purchasing products as corporate gifts for their clients. Often these contacts result in large one-time purchases. AAA's quality products with their give-back message are the ideal corporate gifts for organizations seeking to bolster their images as socially responsible companies. The Company believes that a formal corporate-giving program with designated sales representation would result in both a high revenue and a high profit margin sales program. It is the Company's intention to roll out a test corporate-giving program in Q4 2015.

The Company is also pursuing catalog sales that appeal to corporate givers. National Geographic Store is interested in carrying AAA's product lines from Burundi.

## Customized Product Partnerships

After completing its strategic sales and marketing plan, the Company made its very first wholesale presentation to ProFlowers (purchased by FTD in 2015) in mid-June and procured a purchase order for 23,000 vases for its major Mother's Day event in 2016. FTD sold out of the vase one week before Mother's Day and had to pull the highly sought after vase from their website.

Below is the breakdown of the 2016 FTD order

Units of vases	23,000
Total PO from ProFlowers	\$272,000.00
Total cost	\$166,000.00
AAA net operating margin	\$106,000.00



FTD surveyed their AAA vase customers and learned that they were not price sensitive and purchased the vase based on its quality and attractiveness. As a result of this successful program, FTD has increased their order for 2017 Mother's Day to 25,400 vases and AAA has increased the price to \$12.40.

The size of the reorder placed by FTD validates the Company's conviction that there is a strong market from large retailers for the Company's artisan and mission-focused products

The Company projects custom made products will represent more than 20% of overall sales in the next two to three years.

## Private Label

With its on-the-ground production teams and the ability to create custom-designed products, the

Company is well positioned to acquire wholesale customers who only purchase private-label products. The Company has procured an initial order from Ethan Allen for luxury wall décor. The Company will continue to seek out private-label sales opportunities in 2017 and beyond.

## Internet/Online Sales/Drop-Ship

Prior to 2016, AAA has allocated only a minimal budget to fund search engine optimization (SEO), Google Ad programs and social media campaigns; as a result, the



Ethan Allen's exclusive private label collection

Company's online presence has failed to maximize on the benefit of its substantial media exposure. In Q2 2016, AAA will roll out a cohesive online strategy that will include SEO, social media, online ads and blogger engagement.

Due to its undercapitalization, the Company has a limited capacity and space availability to support two medium-size companies with drop-ship capabilities and is currently committed to two companies (One Kings Lane and To the Market). The Company signed vendor agreements with FTD, Wayfair, Houzz, Handmade Amazon, and Fab.com. The Company has had meetings and consistent conversations with Costco.com. However, capital is required to pursue these vendors along with additional drop ship vendors of significant size.

#### Live Broadcast Retail Channels

The Company believes TV broadcast retailers such as HSN and QVC would be strong retail avenues to pursue in 2017. TV creates the opportunity to showcase the product, introduce the artisan and share the design meaning with viewers.

## 11. Manufacturing and Distribution Plan

## **Manufacturing**

The Company has recruited and trained over 3,000 artisans in Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya and Ghana. Spreading its production across these four countries allows AAA access to a wide variety of handicraft production techniques and raw materials. Moreover, having multiple production sites afford AAA the freedom to quickly move production to a neighboring country where existing infrastructure is in place, mitigating threats of political instability that could cause disruption of production.

The Company has refined its model for working with artisans and setting up new production

sites. This model locates and organizes artisans already skilled and trained in a similar craft to the products the Company is seeking. This allows the Company to design and produce market-ready products very rapidly. The Company ensures that raw materials needed for production are widely available locally and there is little or no threat of production delays due to the scarcity of materials.

The Company has adapted its ordering and production process and tailored it to fit the limitations of working in rural villages with minimal formal infrastructure. Rather than placing orders to thousands of artisans directly, the Company places weekly orders through the artisan leadership at its rural production centers. The leadership in turn distributes the orders to the group members. Artisan groups are organized into cooperatives consisting of 20 to 200 members. Each cooperative is represented by a president,



vice president, secretary and treasurer. This innovative structure frees the Company to work directly with several dozen leaders rather than thousands of individuals. It also allows for increased opportunity for leadership development and production capacity.

Based on its current number of trained artisans, the Company is able to produce 14,000 handcrafted units per month and could quickly scale up to two to three times that volume if required.

#### Distribution

Most products are currently shipped via airfreight from Kigali, Rwanda, to Los Angeles International Airport and then trucked to the Company's warehouse in San Diego, California. While air freight provides the advantage of a quick turnaround time of five to seven days, it also adds a higher cost to each product; in some cases the shipping charges are nearly equal to the purchase cost of the product. At its current level of production, the Company would save an estimated \$150,000 annually by changing its shipping method from air freight to ocean container. The capital expense of having product tied up for four or five months while the container is filled and shipped has precluded the Company from changing its shipping method.

The current funding the Company is seeking will allow the Company to pay for 6-months of inventory and switch from costly air freight shipping to sea containers.

## 12. Management Team

# **Greg Stone, Chief Executive Officer**

After many years serving impoverished people in Rwanda, Greg cofounded AAA, a social business that creates markets in the United States for handmade products in East Africa. His first social business experience began with his founding of the Rwanda Basket Company in 2007 to create sustainable employment for people living in poverty. He is also the executive director of Opportunities Across Africa, a nonprofit organization that provides jobs and skills training for the rural poor in East Africa.

Before becoming involved with companies in Africa, Greg was the executive director of Eastside Academy in Seattle, an alternative high school for at-risk teens, and he held senior leadership positions at several Internet and technology companies. He holds a master's degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

## Alicia Wallace, Chief Operations Officer

Alicia's move toward making a difference in East Africa began in Seattle, Washington. During and after earning her BA in economics, she worked alongside the owner of an eight-lawyer firm in downtown Seattle as the firm administrator. She joined Rwanda Partners as director of operations and development, creating programming and products in Rwanda. Overseeing operations for AAA and helping the poor in East Africa has become her life's passion.

Alicia finds solutions to challenges that arise in the start-up production and retail business located in multiple countries. She regularly travels to East Africa, scaling handmade production

and impact, which has positively affected more than 18,200 people. As a constant learner, Alicia is leading the organization into new markets and product lines and is implementing the corresponding programs in new countries. Alicia holds a BA in economics from Seattle Pacific University.

#### Advisors

Rick Rockhill, Mac Clarke, and Terrance Bruggeman; see Attachment C.

#### 13. Historical Financial Data

In January 2015, the Company, with the help and guidance of industry experts, embarked on a rigorous course of self-assessment in its quest for profitability. As a part of this assessment, the Company also completed a comprehensive evaluation of its market potential, which is included in this plan. AAA revenues are projected to increase from \$1.75 million in 2015 to \$6.1 million in 2019 with its EBITDA increasing from a negative 11.4% in 2015 to a positive 15.1% by 2019. These figures are contingent on the following actions:

- Procuring an equity investment of \$1,500,000 by the end of Q1 2017
- Investing \$500,000 in inventory in order to reduce expensive air freight and shifting a significant amount of transport to more affordable ocean containers, drastically shrinking AAA's COGs.
- Reducing Costco's Road Show selling expense from 45% to 28% through the hiring of strategic staff and sales partners.
- Hiring a professional sales and marketing team.
- Implementing channel-specific sales and marketing strategies while maintaining a strong and steady stream of business with Costco.

The Company currently has a team of advisors and mentors who bring much-needed industry knowledge and experience. This has resulted in improved operational efficiency, tiered product assortments (giving the Company pricing flexibility in different markets, previously a major hurdle in the past, defined growth and channel strategy capitalizing on strong favorable consumer views of the products, better financial visibility and discipline, and defined roles and responsibilities for management.

**Attachment D** - 2014 and 2015 Profit and Loss

# 14. Management's Discussion and Analysis of the Financial Condition and Results of Operations

The following discussion should be read in conjunction with our financial statements and future operating projections.

#### **Results of Operations**

The Company's revenues increased from \$1,692,000 in 2013 to \$1,996,000 in 2014. This increase was primarily attributable to the fact that the Company only operated and reported sales for nine months in 2013. Historically, the Q4 holiday season is the period when the Company's sales exceed 40% of the total revenue for the year. However, the Ebola crisis that began in September 2014 adversely impacted sales; 2014 Q4 sales revenues were less than 25% of the year's total, resulting in a loss for the year.

AAA is in the process of putting a sound capital structure in place. AAA was founded in 2013 with nominal equity capital and loans (~\$500,000 from impact investors). In 2015 a number of the investors agreed to voluntarily convert \$325,000 to common equity in exchange for 12% of ownership interest in the company.

#### 15. Pro Forma Financials

AAA revenues are projected to increase from \$1.75 million in 2015 to \$6.1 million in 2019 with its EBITDA increasing from a negative 10.5% in 2015 to a positive 15.1% by 2019.

This projected increase stems from the Company's growing online sales, new customer acquisitions that include; new wholesale accounts from big-box retailers, high-end design firms, new private label relationships, and better sales margins at Costco by reducing its selling expense percentage from 45% to 28%.

The Company's future growth and profitability are based on implementing the following strategies:

- Procuring a \$1,500,000 equity investment in Q1 2017.
- Investing \$500,000 in inventory in order to eliminate expensive air freight and shifting transport to more affordable ocean containers, drastically shrinking AAA's COGs.
- Reducing Costco's Road Show selling expense from 45% to 28% through the hiring of strategic staff.
- Hiring a professional sales and marketing team.
- Hiring additional creative and design staff
- Implementing several channel-specific sales and marketing strategies while maintaining a strong and steady stream of business with Costco.

As a result of the increased revenues in the wholesale market Cost of Goods Sold percentage increases by 18% to approximately 43% from the 2015 average of 24.7%.

## Attachment H

# 16. Capitalization Chart

The Company is seeking an equity investment of \$1,500,000.

#### Use of Funds:

Inventory	\$500,000
Fixed assets	\$100,000
Marketing	\$300,000
Staffing	\$300,000
Reserve	\$300,000

## The current Capitalization Chart is:

Shareholder	Number of	% of total
	shares	shares outstanding
Gregory Stone	581,266	51.20
Alicia Wallace	387,510	34.13
David Hay	72,856	6.42
Jon Freeman	62,488	5.50
Ralph Broetje	31,224	2.75
Total	1,135,304	100

## 17. Organizational Charts

12-Month Organizational Chart; see Attachment F.

36-Month Growth Organizational Chart; see Attachment G.

# 18. Social Impact Created in Africa

The Company currently employs approximately 3,200 rural artisans across Africa and projects that this number will exceed 5,000 by 2019.

The positive impact that sustainable artisan jobs provide to the people in rural villages is considerable and far-reaching. Nearly all of the people the Company employs were formerly unemployed or



underemployed artisans with little or no education. An AAA full-time artisan's income equals that of a trained school teacher in the village. This income allows 100% of the Company's artisans to have full access to education and health care for themselves and their family members. Additionally, 80% of AAA's artisans are actively using their savings accounts for current and future investments. Over half of the artisans report that they have much greater access to nutritious food and, as a result, are significantly healthier.

Artisans support an average of 5.7 dependents, providing over 18,200 individuals with adequate food and housing, access to education and health care and the opportunity to save and invest in their future.

## 19. Attachment Index

Attachment A – Tiered Marketing Strategy – Collections

Attachment B – Media Product Features

Attachment C – Advisory Bios

Attachment D – 2014 and 2015 Profit and Loss

Attachment E – Historical and Forecasted Financials

Attachment F – 12-Month Organizational Chart

Attachment G – 36-Month Growth Organizational Chart

Attachment H – Capitalization Chart