Pottery Business Plan

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POTTERY BUSINESS PLAN

by

Jessi Clark

Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduation with

University Honors

with a major in
Psychology
in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Approved:

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Committee Member
Dan Murphy (second mentor)

University Honors Program Executive Director
Dr. Kristine Miller

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, UT

Fall, 2021
BrickEarth Pottery

Business Plan

Jessi Clark, Owner

Created on September 1, 2021
Abstract (Elevator Pitch)

BrickEarth Pottery sells quality homemade ceramic pieces. Specifically, we specialize in ceramics that have a simple, elegant, and functional design. The product line includes things like mugs, vases, tableware, pots for plants, berry bowls, nativity scenes among other things. A few things that set BrickEarth Pottery apart from other competitors include our commitment to sustainability, our fair prices, and our strong online presence. To explain these ideas a bit more at BrickEarth we value sustainability by working to keep minimal packaging when items are shipped and maintain this in mind when making our pieces, like always reusing clay and using minimal glazes. Second there is an effort to keep prices fair, so to reach a broad public. We may have a wide range of sizes and take into consideration the time spent making the pot, which creates a wide variety of prices. The third thing that sets BrickEarth Pottery apart is our online presence. With handmade ceramics those who do work keep it local and on a smaller “street fair” level. In Utah, and Logan, specifically there are few online presences and those that are there are quite small and do not ship their products. At BrickEarth we plan to ship our pots and continue to expand our online presence. We hope that each piece will bring a smile to your face each time you use it; and add a unique quality to your home reminding you things are always better handmade.
**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my mentors Polly Conrad, Dan Murphy, and Crissa Levin for supporting me and providing me with the resources needed to succeed. I am also incredibly grateful for my husband Thomas who gives thoughtful feedback and who has also been an enthusiast for my work from the beginning. Also, my parents, family members and customers who are patrons of my work.

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Executive Summary

Product

BrickEarth Pottery sells quality homemade ceramic pieces meant to target any budget. The product line includes things like mugs, vases, tableware, pots for plants, berry bowls, among other things. Each piece is hoped to bring a smile to your face each and every time you use it; and add a unique quality to your home reminding you things are always better handmade.

Customers

The target audience for BrickEarth Pottery is any and everyone! Especially people who enjoy natural, handmade things and like to support local living. At BrickEarth Pottery, we want to target a larger demographic of people than many other pottery companies out there. Handmade things do take more time and therefore the price normally reflects that, but we believe that it can be more reasonable as well. The style and aesthetic that we reflect in our pottery adds to a simpler approach for people who enjoy earthy tones and a clean look.

Homemade ceramics pieces will bring life to objects that otherwise go without any extra thought; this attention and care for those things that we have around us every day makes life a little brighter. We also strive to make all our pieces unique, simple, and for everyday use.

Future of the Company

Pottery has been around since 9000-10,000 BC. We hope to continue this long tradition in the modern world with a new twist while still honoring old styles too. BrickEarth Pottery will continue to offer staple pieces that can be bought at any time of year. In the future we will sell holiday specific gifts: nativity sets, Christmas houses and custom orders for other special occasions. Company Description
Company Description

Mission Statement

To make quality handmade ceramic pieces for those who want to add more joy into their space.

Principal Member

Jessi Clark- owner, maker, and sales

Legal Structure

BrickEarth Pottery is a Sole proprietorship corporation, incorporated in Logan, Utah 2021

Market Research

Industry

BrickEarth Pottery will join the handmade ceramic and pottery industry. With handmade ceramics you can find a few online competitors and people around you doing ceramics on smaller “street fair” level. In Utah, however, there are few online presences and those that are there are quite small and do not ship their products. Especially within Logan there are even fewer that have really established a brand and online presence. Larger handmade ceramic companies, such as Pottery Barn, work globally and have lost their handmade appeal because of how they have shifted their vision. Ceramic companies like ours have a history of working locally- not extending their reach farther than their own community.

Homemade ceramics have continued to rise in popularity and have become a huge trend around the same
time the farm to table movement did when people wanted to get back more to the roots of things. In a New York Times article written in 2015 it describes the rising trend of handmade ceramics. An editor at Vogue that wrote the magazine’s ceramics article, Robert Sullivan, said that ceramics are popular now because they are “among the most obviously and literally handmade things” also that they are “an antidote to all the electronics,” he added (McKeough, 2015).

It helps to understand more of the hard statistics on how popular they have become. According to the IBISWorld, the current market size of the ceramics manufacturing business is $2.4 billion (about $7 per person in the US) in the United States. It has also shown that the growth rate in the last five years (2016-2021) has grown at 0.9%. This source also predicted that during 2021 it is expected to grow 3.1%. Market trends analysis shows that now is a suitable time to start a pottery business, especially one in Logan, Utah.

**Detailed Description of Customers**

The target customers for BrickEarth Pottery are homeowners, apartment renters, college students, well-off individuals, or families, and anyone who wants to liven up the space where they live and support local handmade ceramics. Specifically, we specialize in ceramics that have a simple, elegant, and functional design. BrickEarth Pottery will target millennials because many people of this age group support the ideals and design concepts that we will uphold. There will be an effort to keep prices fair, so to reach the broad public. In all products there will be a focus on creating pieces that are both aesthetically pleasing and functional.

**Company Advantages**

BrickEarth Pottery is a business designed to serve customers from local and surrounding areas. We will have an advantage over other competitors because we will have a stronger online presence and will include shipping. We will be unique to Logan because there are few pottery business with an online presence and those that do are vastly different in style. Modern looking pottery and reasonable prices will
allow BrickEarth Pottery to appeal to college students and other younger demographic customers.

**Regulations**

BrickEarth Pottery although a local and handmade business, must meet all federal and state regulations to obtain an official business license. Although not a legal regulation, many do worry about handmade ceramics if the product is food safe. At BrickEarth we assure you that we will only use ceramic materials that will meet this criterion.

**Service Line**

**Product/Pricing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$40 and under section</th>
<th>Under $100 section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• herb marker ($8)</td>
<td>• salt cellar with spoon ($42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• match striker ($15)</td>
<td>• coil fruit bowl (starting at $45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• vases (starting at $20)</td>
<td>• holiday nativity set with candle ($45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• spoon rest ($20)</td>
<td>• berry bowl ($47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ring holder ($22)</td>
<td>• butter dish ($50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sponge holder ($25)</td>
<td>• utensil holder ($50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• desk size plant holder ($25)</td>
<td>• pitcher ($55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• mugs ($30)</td>
<td>• long bread pan ($62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• noodle bowl ($30)</td>
<td>• large serving dish ($70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• phone amplifier ($30)</td>
<td>• large serving bowl ($75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• windowsill plant holder ($32)</td>
<td>• large casserole dish with lid ($89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• hanging plant holder ($32)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Margins/How Price is Chosen

In an article by Clay Times entitled Marketing and Business they articulate the need to know your price point for selling your ceramics. One of the emphasis’ they make is the importance of not selling yourself short. There are many overhead costs that come into making pottery, including your time that you need to consider. Below is a list of things BrickEarth considers when choosing a price point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment/other costs:</th>
<th>Time required: (to throw a mug for example)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clay costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20 for 20 pounds (Normal firing will pay ~$80 total)</td>
<td>Wedging: 3-5 min. Throwing: 7-10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio rental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$170 every six weeks</td>
<td>Trimming: 7-10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firing costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30 for shelf firing $225 for private</td>
<td>Throwing handles/ cleaning up the piece: 5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equipment (one-time costs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brent C wheel- $1500 Gipp-n-grip- $250 General tools- $50-$100 Kiln- $1200-40,000</td>
<td>Cleaning up area: 5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cost of throwaways: (cracked pots, scraps etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20-$100 in a batch (this is very variable)</td>
<td>Bisque Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibit application/entry fees/ consignment fees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entry fees $20-$300 depends on the place</td>
<td>Sanding/ cleaning up piece: 5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consignment fees 10%-20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumables: Glazes/ sponges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear pint size jar $11-$18 (covers about ~8 mugs)</td>
<td>Decorating/ Glazing (cleaning up bottoms): 10-15 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaging for shipping fees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~10% of product cost</td>
<td>Glaze firing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is not an exhaustive list but covers the basis for the initial costs needed. As with all businesses, unexpected costs arise, and you need to budget for those things as well. Trying to figure out these costs can be difficult, especially when there are many variables like sales made and changes in time commitment. However, given the circumstances we have chosen our price by looking at these numbers and comparing them with other local and online competitors. We have tried to keep our costs below those of our competitors, while still maintaining the standard markup of 2.2-2/5 which is the standard markup according to Inc. (Mochari, 2021).
Product Lifecycle

All products at BrickEarth Pottery go through several steps to become the final product.

1) **Throw/hand build**- First, there is throwing that involves a pottery wheel along with other tools. This is a practice that takes a lot of skill and time to develop. Other pieces are built by hand using other tools.

2) **Trim/clean up**- Then, after they are dry to “leather hard” conditions we trim the pieces, using the pottery wheel, if they were thrown on the wheel.

3) **Dry clay**- After this portion, we let the clay dry until it is “bone dry” which is when there is no more moisture in the clay. Timing for these steps is extremely critical.

4) **Bisque fire**- There are two firing for all ceramic pieces. The first is called the bisque fire.

5) **Add glaze**- After the first fire is when we generally add the glazes to our pieces. This is the step where the color and design is added to the pieces.

6) **Glaze fire**- Then after they are dry, we fire them again, this firing is called the glaze fire. After this process the final product is ready!

After understanding a bit more about the lengthy process you can understand and have more pride in your products from BrickEarth Pottery. You will know that each piece is made with care and attention. *Note:* All products are food and dishwasher safe, because of the particular nature of how they are thrown there is variability in each piece.

Intellectual Property Rights

BrickEarth Pottery has considered IP protection; however, at this stage of business we have not filed for any protection for our processes or other intellectual property. One of the reasons for considering IP rights is when “Intellectual property rights increase the incentives for individuals to continue to produce things
that further create job opportunities and new technologies…” (InQuartik, 2020). Currently there is not a need for any legal actions to be taken for these things, however when the business expands to a point to create job opportunities for others; then these actions will be addressed.

**Research and Development**

BrickEarth Pottery is planning to conduct the following research and development:

- Create surveys after each sale for the customer to evaluate the product
- Track sales within various places pottery is sold to become more efficient
- Track when sales are highest also which pieces are the most sold
- Create surveys to find the most effective price point for each item.

**Marketing & Sales**

**Growth Strategy**

To grow the company, BrickEarth Pottery will do the following:

- Network at local stores to get retail space for customers to buy products there. We will go to places like coffee shops, farmers markets, boutiques, and furniture stores.
- Establish a company website that contains engaging multimedia content about our products
- Maintain a social media presence on Instagram, Pinterest, Etsy and Tic Tok to advertise
- As the business grows, advertising in publications that reach our target customers

**Communicate with the Customer**

BrickEarth Pottery will communicate with its customers by:

- Meeting with local managers within targeted companies
• Using social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Etsy and Tik Tok
• Providing contact information on the company website

How to Sell

Currently, the only person in charge of sales for BrickEarth Pottery will be myself. As profits increase, BrickEarth Pottery will look to add an employee to assist with social media and online marketing support. The company will increase awareness to our targeted customers through online advertising, attending farmers markets, local markets and consigning at local stores.

Future of the Company

How to Buy from BrickEarth Pottery

If you are a local in Cache Valley, Utah there are several options for where you can find and buy BrickEarth Pottery. The following list is stores that our work will potentially be consigned to if you want to look to see them in person.

• Earthly Awakenings, Spirited Goat Caffe Ibis, Westside Coffee Company, Eastside Coffee Company, and Island Market,

If you are not from Logan or want to see more products/make a custom order you can go online to our Etsy account, website, or Instagram to see more.

What to Expect if Ordering Online

At BrickEarth Pottery we find it important to maintain sustainability and package things with care and
with the least amount of packaging possible to reduce excess waste. We will also make sure to keep you updated along the way with where your package is, and do so with timely updates.

**Logo and Marketing**

At BrickEarth Pottery we have hired and teamed up marketing and design major Brynne Larsen to create a logo. We will also potentially work in the future with her to create a website and receive expertise with marketing. While teaming with Brynne the next steps are to use Go Daddy online business to receive a website name, to start [www.brickearthpottery.com](http://www.brickearthpottery.com) the following URL. We also plan to sell our products on this website and value having a secure website so we will investigate Dream Host company for having a secure website so people can be safe in entering in credit card information. Below are the following ideas for logos that will be added to our future pieces including future packaging options. We have received a blinker file for the letting type. Also, Eps and Png files so that we can add these logos to future websites, business cards, handouts, online presences etc. Included are also mockup photos of how future things could look with the new logo included.

![Logo options with colors and mockup photos](image-url)
Reflective Writing

In this reflection I would like to think back upon the immense value and meaning this capstone project has had for me in my education. In this paper I will share the challenges, problems, and successes I have had in my project and hope to share a few words of advice to future honors students. A few constant things that I had in the back of my head during my capstone was that of feeling excited but at the same time overwhelmed. I felt overwhelmed in part because I was trying to graduate with honors in one semester and doing a capstone with three different mentors who normally do not go together. Combining together psychology, business and ceramic professors for one project is an unlikely match. However I found that I stretched myself and was able to find many connections to psychology as I went through my project. For example understanding business analysis and customer experience in many ways ties into my behavioral analysis classes and understanding how you can influence others and change peoples behavior. Also I believe that psychology related to my project when creating my logo and marketing. I was able to understand colors and how they effect peoples psychology a bit better, which helped me convey the meaning I was trying to send across with my branding. Also in reflection with my capstone I defiantly realized that with hindsight bias I really could have chosen to focus on only the business plan or the pottery and make a capstone out of that. However, one thing can be said of this experience, I really did push myself and grew in this project. My first word of advice to future honors capstone students would be to make a realistic project. More than likely that project will end up pushing you even more than you originally thought. However at the same time one thing that kept me pushing through it all was how excited I was about the project so also make sure that you are doing something that you truly care deeply about. It will make things a lot more motivating in the long run.

One of the biggest ways that I feel that this capstone project has helped me is thought my mentor relationships. I am grateful for these positive interactions that I have had with those in my capstone committee, they have all provided just useful and poignant advice for what to do with my pottery business. I am grateful for these real-life learning experiences that I was able to have with Polly Conrad and Dan Murphy. I hope to continue these relationships and am now aware of future ways to deepen my
education because of them. From working with Dan, I have learned about a post-bachelor's degree option to be able to continue working in the ceramic studio which would be a tremendous option that I had no idea was available until I met with him. This is defiantly a path that I will consider now. Also working with Polly Conrad was unbelievably valuable to learn about concepts that I honestly had never heard of before. I was grateful for her expertise, and it allowed me to grow in new ways of thinking. She offered ideas for my future business. For example, being aware of data analytics and how I can adapt to that to make my business more successful and where I choose to sell. I am also grateful for my psychology mentor Crissa Levin; even though my project didn’t have an obvious connection with psychology she gave very helpful insights in what would work best and how in fact I can use psychology in my business. It helped remind me that psychology, and the things I’ve learned in my degree, can be applied to my everyday life.

Another thing that I believe was one of the biggest success of my honors capstone project was the real-life application that it has for my future goals. If I were to give advice to future Capstone students on the subject, I would tell them to take into consideration the real meaning of your capstone and what that work will do for you and your future goals. Unfortunately, not all the classes we take really help us with our future lives and sometimes we do the work just for the grade. However, one thing that I strongly believe should not be cavalier is your honors capstone experience. Honors is a self-elected part of college and should be there to serve you and your goals. I believe strongly that my project did just that. It was beneficial to me that path. Not only did my finishing this project make my honors experience worth it, it also made my degree more valuable knowing that I have more concrete plans for the things I plan to continue after I graduate, my pottery business!

Along with my experiences I found most meaningful were the interactions I had with the greater community. While I built my pottery, I was able to connect with a whole other network of people. I was able to create great connections and friends with the other students in the graduate and undergraduate ceramics program. I was able to learn from their expertise, especially when considering the new firings that I was able to participate in. I learned about the processes and work that goes into these types of firings and am now much more educated on these topics than when I started. I participated in loading, unloading, taking a 6-hour shift loading a word kiln, clean up after the landing and what goes into this. Especially for salt/soda
firings there is a lot of work with grading the kiln shelves. I also learned about a new technique that goes along with these firings like wading, slips and how the clay body changes with the effects of soda/salt. With all these experimentations I was able to learn so much and am so grateful for those experiences! I also grew a great appreciated and understanding of the local pottery scene. Along with this I was able to go to other pottery sales and search out business around town that I could potentially consign with. It was great to discover places and events that I had never heard of previously.

Overall, I was able to deepen my critical thinking in my degree and was able to become a more well-rounded individual because of my project. I am grateful for meaningful interactions and relationships that this project bought me. Despite being overwhelmed by the amount of work I needed to do to finish this project I was able to make it work thought the help of my committee and was able to learn a lot because of it. I am also very appreciative that this capstone helped with my future goals and was done for a greater purpose. I feel that one of the biggest ways that a future student could make their capstone meaningful is by choosing their topic wisely. I chose something that I was excited and passionate about which made the work much more enjoyable and meaningful to do. (Words,1,199)

Appendix

This next section includes professional photos of the BrickEarth Pottery products. These pieces have been fired with several different types of firings. Including: bisque fired from an electric kiln. For the glaze fire they have been done in several different types of reduction salt/soda firings, a few have been fired in a wood kiln, and lastly a gas kiln. This research and exploration has been valuable to the progression of BrickEarth’s pieces. In the future we hope to have a more cohesive collection of works. However, the ability to try these new firings has been an invaluable experience and learning process; thought this process we now understand which pieces are more reflective of the branding style we want and have learned things that we would change in the future. As I am sure will always continue to happen, with progression with the BrickEarth company. The numbers next to the title of the pieces indicate how many of the pieces were made.
BERRY BOWLS (5)
NATIVITY SETS (6)
SUCCULENT/HANGING PLANT HOLDERS (5)
WINDOWSILL PLANT HOLDER

PITCHER
UTENSIL HOLDER
PENCIL HOLDERS/ORGANIZERS

CASEROLE DISH
LARGE SERVING BOWL

SALT HOLDER WITH SPOON (WOOD FIRED)
MUG

TEACUP
SMALL LIDDED JAR (WOOD FIRED)

PHONE AMPLIFIER

RING HOLDER
SPOON REST

NOODLE BOWL (WITH CHOPSTICK REST)

VASE
BUTTER DISH

LONG BREAD PAN
TONGED FRUIT BOWLS
LARGE SERVING DISH
PICTURES OF THE PROCESS
Author Bio

Jessi Clark is graduating with a Major in Psychology and a Minor in Spanish. Before her college career she was able to serve a service mission for a year and a half for The Church of Jesus Christ and was able to obtain a fluency in Spanish. Since then, she has been able to work in many different jobs within the field of Psychology including care provider for several different companies, study coordinator/intern at United Health Group in MN, she also did a study abroad in Ukraine and taught English and other subjects to children there. She was able to graduate with Honors and complete her bachelor's degree at USU (Utah State University) in two years. During her studies she developed a passion for ceramics and was mostly self-taught and took a few classes in the community. After her graduation she wants to continue making pots and develop the BrickEarth Pottery Business, which she hopes to do as a side business. She has also currently started flying at Leading Edge Aviation and finished her first solo flight. She plans to accomplish her dream of becoming a commercial pilot. She hopes to combine her love of serving others, hence her bachelor's in psychology, with her love of flying and become an Air Ambulance Pilot.
Work Cited


DIRECTIONS:

As you complete your cover sheet, please leave all non-fillable language as it is. You should add information as necessary (title, name, major, department, mentor’s/DHA’s/committee members’ names).

All capstone projects MUST include signatures/approval from a capstone mentor, a Departmental Honors Advisor (may be in the student’s or the mentor’s home department), and the University Honors Program Executive Director (leave blank; signature will come after submission upon final approval). Some students work with an additional committee member with expertise in an area necessary for the project. If you do have that additional committee member, please enter their information and get their signature. If you do not, please fill out the form with only three signature lines. Contact honors@usu.edu with questions.