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Za'a Demi-Fine Jewelry: Cultural representation through the use of wearable crafts

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Za'a Demi-Fine Jewelry:

Cultural representation through the use of wearable crafts

by

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A project submitted in conformity

With the requirements for the

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Introduction

A- Brand Introduction and Overview

In some Mesoamerican legends the gods created humans using corn and their own blood.¹ The word *Za'a* means corn in Zapotec, a pre-Columbian language native to Oaxaca, Mexico.² As the brand name, it's meant to represent new beginnings and the reminder that we all come from the same place.

Za'a is an e-commerce demi-fine jewelry brand that gives its wearer the ability to explore, connect and give back to indigenous Latin American cultures. Za'a pieces are made with 14k gold, sterling silver, vermeil (solid gold electroplated silver), and semi-precious gemstones while incorporating traditional craftsmanship; incorporating elements such as woodcarving, embroidery, and painting. What makes Za'a's products unique is that they are designed and fabricated in conjunction with the communities, ensuring fair and ethical practices. This close collaboration turns the pieces into a cultural bridge of communication, an exchange of ideas, and an appreciation between consumers and the indigenous communities. The key attributes that give Za'a a competitive advantage are its strong community-centered focus built around ethical practices, product transparency, and its give-back initiative.

Za'a will position itself under the branded jewelry luxury goods industry, which has emerged as one of the hottest product categories within the luxury landscape post-pandemic.³ Initial estimates suggest retail jewelry sales grew by 26% over pre-pandemic levels and are expected to keep growing at 4% annually. ^{4 5}(Mckinsey & Company). This economic trend gives the company an opportunity to enter the market and capitalize on the potential growth in sales revenue. This is an attractive market for Za'a because it believes it can reach a target market of buyers who are socially conscious and are aware of social, ecological issues that are searching

¹ (Fondo De Cultura Economica Mexico 13)

² (Rodríguez Villegas)

³ (Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company)

⁴ (Rapaport USA Inc. 2022, 3)

⁵ (Mckinsey & Company 2021)

for high-quality pieces that foster the appreciation for what's different between newcomers and indigenous populations.

B- Company Mission

Za'a jewelry is made for those looking to be different, expressive and conscious. It explores and synthesizes different indigenous cultures, combining the traditional and the modern and making it its own. Za'a pieces are carefully handcrafted making each design into a timeless embodiment of the human experience.

C- Design Philosophy

Inspired by native materials, pigments, and motifs, Za'a crafts pieces that solidify the relationship between wearer and jewelry. Each texture, pattern, and color is an homage to those indigenous societies. This encourages the wearer to connect with the culture and view the world in a different way, growing with the process.

The Product

A- Product and Collection Description

Za'a's products will focus on the culture and traditional values of diverse communities. The brand's ethos is to bring forward these communities' values from Latin America. Given the origin of the brand's name and its compromise to celebrate diversity, Za'a's debut collection will focus on the Zapotec community of San Martin Tilcajete located in Oaxaca, Mexico.⁶ The collection will be named "Nahuales" and it will pull inspiration from the popular alebrije wood carving tradition and Zapotec heritage found in Tilcajete. The brand will collaborate with the female-owned El Sueño Zapoteco workshop to incorporate native materials, motifs, and colors from the community. The wood will be carved and painted with the textures and patterns of the traditional alebrije style. Za'a will then treat the hand-painted components of its pieces like precious gemstones, and highlight them with 24k gold leaf elements.

The Zapotec concept of *nahuales*, also known as *tonales*, believes that a person acquires a close spiritual link to an animal depending on the day they were born.⁷ A person's tonal also determines their nature — each day is associated with an animal that has unique characteristics.8 The brand has decided to focus on the *nahual* belief given its similarities to the zodiac calendar, its easy customization, and increasing popularity due to the Disney movie "Coco". These characteristics make *nahuales* a good introductory concept for the brand as the market has already been exposed to this cultural belief system. The collection concept ideas are shown below.

 ⁶ (Fondo De Cultura Economica Mexico 1993)
 ⁷ (Brinton 2009, 11)

^{8 (}Kaplan 1956, 363- 368)

Earrings, Necklaces and Rings Design Concept



B - Product Design and Customer Requirements

Za'a's jewelry is made to highlight the cultural and traditional values of Latin American indigenous communities.

The brand's ethos is to bring out these communities' beliefs and identities in every piece. For this reason, Za'a's first collection will be in collaboration with the community of San Martin Tilcajete in Oaxaca, Mexico. The brand values of transparency, sustainability, and ethical practice make it an attractive choice for socially conscious and culturally sensitive individuals that are looking to learn and appreciate diverse cultures. By combining traditional and contemporary aesthetics, Za'a's pieces become a syncretism of cultures, making them the ideal for its target market.

C- Collaboration, Materials, and Product TimeLine

Za'a will collaborate with the *El Sueño Zapoteco* workshop, which is part of the San Martin Tilcajete community. All components involving the use of traditional techniques and materials will be produced within the community. The collaboration will involve repurposing leftover copal wood from the workshop to create the central elements of the jewelry pieces. The wood will be resized and hand painted with acrylic paint in Tilcajete. A Za'a representative will do routine quality control inspections, making sure all aspects of production meet the brand's standards.

After quality control, pieces will be taken to various jewelry studios where the fabrication process, such as the implementation of sterling silver, 24k gold leaf, and semi-precious gemstones from fair trade sources, will be outsourced. The main processes will involve laser cutting technology and the lost-wax casting method, thus allowing for faster production time. Due to the handmade nature of the community's craft, no two pieces are completely alike. Slight variations are not only expected, they are meant to be embraced.

The total production time and quantity will greatly depend on the capacity of the *El Sueño Zapoteco* workshop to meet demand. Given the nature of the pieces, Za'a plans to start with a small production batch and test the market's response. According to Mireya Cruz, the workshop supervisor, the estimated lead time for a batch of 150 pairs of earrings, 80 necklaces, and 50 rings is three months. This way the brand can better understand demand and maximize revenue for both the craftsmen and the company, ensuring a mutual and lucrative partnership.

D- Competitive advantages

Za'a's main competitors are other demi-fine jewelry brands with similar price points and overlapping materials such as sterling silver, vermeil, and semi-precious stones. To some extent, the companies listed in the introduction and overview section share similar niche markets and company values. For example, the demi-fine jewelry brand, Omi Woods,

manufactures pieces that reflect the culture and ethnic designs of the African continent and diaspora. ⁹

Za'a's reinterpretation and incorporation of traditional handcrafted elements and procedures in mutual collaboration with diverse communities is a pioneer approach that no other demi-fine jewelry. Za'a's goal is to create timeless pieces that are not just beautiful but that also tell a story that is important to the community, while opening the doors for cultural appreciation. This will allow the wearer and the community to connect and learn from each other, setting apart Za'a from other brands and establishing the company's competitive advantage in connecting and showing a diverse culture through beautiful and meaningful designs. Given that the brand focuses on underrepresented Latin American communities, the possibilities for expansion are endless. The chart below summarizes the closest competitors to Za'a.

Demi-Fine Jewelry Competitors Chart

Brand	Company Niche	Strengthens	Weaknesses	Price Points	
Omi Woods	Manufacturer of	- Products'	-Demographic	\$59 - \$2,716	
	contemporary jewelry	materials range	niche: African		
	that reflects the ethnic	from vermeil to 24k	diaspora		
	designs and cultures of	gold.	- Small		
	Africa.		selection of		
			stones		
Fair Collection	Highlights and	-Transparency and	- No fine metal	\$28 - \$250	
	reinterprets artisanal	easy trackability.	- No gemstone		
	craftsmanship using		options		

⁹ (Omi Woods, n.d.)

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	native materials from multiple countries.			
Akola	Aims to empower women of the world through their pieces and process.	Transparency -Easy trackability	-No fine metal options	\$50 - \$295
Alighieri	Creates modern heirlooms that celebrate the beauty of human imperfection and vulnerability.	-Various metal options	-Limited gemstones options	\$129 - \$8,096
Mejuri	Creates jewelry for women to celebrate themselves	-Transparency -Easy trackability	-Standard designs	\$25 - \$4,000

E- Barriers to Entry

The traditional retail jewelry market is a tough industry to enter due to high material costs, word-of-mouth agreements, and manufacturers scattered worldwide. 10 However, many of these barriers to entry can be overcome or do not exist for direct-to-consumer brands given their lower capital requirements and more easily accessible products when compared to traditional establishments.11

¹⁰ (Collins and Saraceno 2021) ¹¹ (Gave and Muñoz 2021)

With current market trends, technological advances, and the increasing demand for everyday luxury, the jewelry industry's entry barriers can be regarded as mild.

The main barriers to entry for Za'a, given that its goal is to start as direct-to-consumer, are moderately low. Possible barriers for the the brand include:

- Investment in website and e-commerce platforms development
- Establishing and strengthening supply chain relationships
- Meeting consumer demand
- Impeccable customer service
- Investment in strong marketing strategies
- Building a strong customer base

Due to a shift in online channels caused by the global pandemic, the amount of new brands trying to enter the industry is increasing. 12 New and established players include multi-store brick-and-mortar retailers and new direct-to-consumer brands.

According to Mckinsey & Company, the biggest sales drivers in 2019 were unbranded (not internationally recognized) jewelry companies, making up 80% of annual sales. The remaining 20% of the market belongs to the branded segment. The companies that see the most success in converting customers from the unbranded segment of the market to the branded segment tend to be established brands, DTC, or luxury brands. 13

These percentages show a significant opportunity for brands to convert new buyers in the upcoming years. Za'a believes that the next three years would be critical in establishing a loyal consumer base. By 2025, the branded segment of the market is expected to grow 25 to 30%, with DTC brands expected to make up 20% of this growth. The longer a company delays entering the market, the harder it will be to compete against online jewelers such as established brands that have already built a clientele and reputation for themselves.

 ^{12 (}Moore and Forbes 2020)
 13 (Mckinsey & Company 2021)
 14 (Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company 2021)

Business

A- Business Headquarters

Za'a's headquarters will be based in Oaxaca, Mexico. It will be registered under Mexican law as an S.A. de C.V. commercial association, with a direct-to-consumer approach. This type of association is similar to a Stock Corporation and its main characteristics are:

- The company is formed and the company 'value' is split into shares which are usually protected through the use of creditors.
- Stock Corporations have no limits on the number of shareholders that can invest
 in the company. This means that raising the necessary capital (MXN\$50,000 –
 approximately USD\$2,700) is very achievable for new companies due to the
 unlimited number of people who can contribute.
- Although this structure includes certain bureaucratic and administrative burdens, it
 is undoubtedly the structure that has the largest potential for growth and profit.

Given the nature of this type of association, Za'a will only have 2 shareholders at the beginning with the option to invite more investors as the brand grows. This allows for steady brand development and the possibility of expansion.

A DTC brand sells products directly to customers, bypassing any third-party retailers, wholesalers, or any other middlemen. DTC brands are usually sold online only and specialize in a specific product category. Some direct-to-consumer brands have opened a limited number of physical retail spaces in conjunction to their main e-commerce platform in a clicks-and-mortar business model. These players aggressively acquire customers through social media and paid marketing, testing messages and techniques to most efficiently capture the target consumer.

B- Targets

1- To achieve brand awareness of at least 20% by year 5

Using both push and pull strategies, we can increase brand awareness annually to ensure more people in our target market know about Za'a. The brand aims to increase awareness by showcasing its personality; in turn, attracting more possible customers. To achieve an awareness of at least 20% in Year 5, we would extend our marketing to print media while increasing our presence on social media channels and at trade fairs.

2- Increase marketing effort through the pull strategy

After year 3, increase the marketing effort through the pull strategy, to gain awareness.

From year 1 to 2, Za'a will focus on the consumer end by concentrating on online advertising in order to introduce our products to our target demographic and possible consumers. From year 5

we will start adding print media advertisements through third parties such as magazines.

3- To appear in an additional retailer annually

One of Za'a's marketing strategies is to increase annual contract value (ACV) by having a strong social media presence, as well as appearing online in independent stores for the first three years. In the following years, Za'a plans to enter specialty stores and boutiques, in an effort to expand its distribution channels and create more brand awareness. ACV will increase throughout the years with Za'a's inclusion of one additional independent store per year from years 3 - 5.

4- Physical retail presence in department stores

From year 5 onwards the brand will start introducing its products in independent stores and department stores outside of Mexico. In an effort to introduce the brands products to both

international and national retailers such as the ones mention in the partnership and sponsorship subsection (page 20)

The Demi-Fine Jewelry Industry - Wholesale and Retail

A - Target Segment

Za'a's target market is composed of socially conscious and culturally sensitive individuals that are looking to express their values. Jewelry falls under the accessory category, predominantly dominated by self-identifying female consumers. When making purchases, one of their top concerns is supporting companies that prioritize transparency, sustainability, and ethical practices. We target these individuals because Za'a offers jewelry that celebrates cultural diversity and social responsibility. Demi-fine jewelry is a shopping product, meaning consumers will spend more time contemplating the purchase compared to other products. Therefore, consumer loyalty is of utmost importance. We anticipate our target market's desire to accessorize and affiliate with our brand values will make Za'a jewelry an attractive buy.

B - Market Size

Since Za'a will take a direct-to-consumer approach, the target segment is not necessarily located in one specific geographical area. Za'a will put more emphasis into growing its USA customer base followed by its national audience during the first two years. The brand will be able to estimate its target market size through the use of the latest jewelry market reports. After analyzing the reports, data demonstrates that 42% of the market's growth will originate from North America in the upcoming five years. ¹⁵¹⁶ At the same time, most demi-fine jewelry customers are self-identifying females with an income above \$50,000 USD. This makes up 57.8% of the USA female workforce population, which equals roughly 143 million possible customers. ¹⁷¹⁸

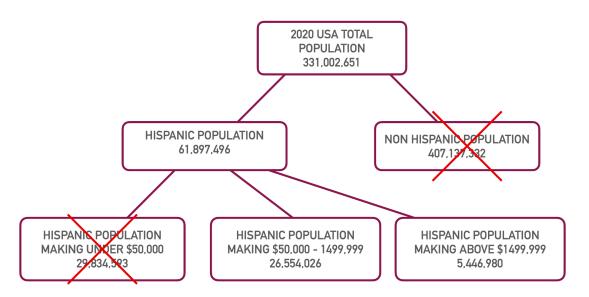
¹⁵ (Absolute Reports 2021)

¹⁶ (CISION PR Newswire 2021)

¹⁷ (Industry Data Analytics 2020)

¹⁸ (Market Study Report 2020)

Segmentation Tree Graph



C - Target Market

Za'a's target market will be determined by its customers' cultural background, age, and disposable income. The brand's values and design aesthetic will resonate more with members of mixed cultural backgrounds, individuals looking to connect with diverse communities, and second-generation citizens who by 2050 are expected to be 18-19% of the total USA population.¹⁹

These characteristics are more prevalent in the Millennial and Gen Z generations, ranging from early 20 to mid-30s. Za'a's clients' average income will be between \$50,000 to \$105,000 USD.²⁰ A key aspect of the company's customer behavior will be that the consumer is looking to accessorize while prioritizing a long-lasting and high quality product, in contrast with the fine-jewelry customer who is looking to make a significant purchase. ²¹

¹⁹ (Kramer 2013)

²⁰ (Clear Sale 2020)

²¹ (Berezhna 2018)

Target Market Size Projection Of Hispanic Females

2023	2024	2025 2026		2027
1,572,119	1,572,729	1,568,534	1,564,187	1,562,714

D - Market Research

The company's market research includes secondary and primary sources made up of both qualitative and quantitative data. Za'a began to make significant discoveries about the jewelry industry and its target market and ultimately relied on the information obtained. The brand analyzed the importance of the customers' desire to affiliate with a community and feel a sense of cultural connection. This helped Za'a gauge what attributes customers look for in jewelry.

Thus, Za'a positions its pieces against competitors according to these characteristics demonstrating its products' benefits, as shown in the comparison chart in the Competitive Advantage section. From this assessment, it became evident that a jewelry brand should offer well-crafted pieces, high-quality and ethically sourced materials, and aesthetics that customers identify with. A big takeaway from this research is how much a consumer desires customization options and the transparency of companies' ethical and sustainable practices. This is why Za'a decided that its advertising focus will rely heavily on the brand's collaboration with the communities. The *Jewelry Market Trends and Insights*'s table below

Jewelry Market Trends and Insights ²²

Branded jewelry is expected to grow to represent 25 - 30% of the market by 2025.	

 $^{^{\}rm 22}$ (Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company 2021, 53)

Online jewelry sales increase since the beginning of the pandemic, and are expected to be 18 - 21% of the market by 2025	
Approximatly 58% of younger consumers, who bought luxury goods, in 2019 say that sustainability is an important consideration in their purchase.	

Marketing Za'a may be challenging, but not impossible, due to the increasing number of demi-fine jewelry brands. Research indicates Za'a falls under the luxury brand umbrella, specifically the up-and-coming accessible luxury segment. Through its market research, Za'a found that competing brands like Omi Woods sell for well over \$2,000 USD, while most Akola pieces sell under the \$250 USD benchmark.²³ Za'a's price range would be between \$180 and \$850 USD. At the same time, none of the competing brands focus on collaborating with communities while sharing their cultural aesthetics and values. These discoveries — along with Za'a's mid-range prices — lead to the realization that its designs, prices, and values will boost its products to a different niche market.

Research shows that income was not the optimal customer attribution to define the purchase of intent, given that even the lowest income bracket of Americans during 2018 — those making \$15,000 or less per year — still spent near the national average of \$615 on jewelry annually.²⁴The brand's target market is mostly composed of second-generation citizens who make an average of \$58,100 USD per household. With this information, Za'a can focus its marketing campaigns on households that make above \$50,000 USD annually and are between the ages of 20 to 30 years old.²⁵ This data also helped solidify the idea that Za'a has a niche consumer: Someone who will convert as long as they identify with the cultures portrayed, support the brand's values, and resonate with the price point.

²³ (Canedo 2022, Products Summary)

²⁴ (Clear Sale 2020)

²⁵ (DQYDJ, n.d.)

Jewelry industry and market share research was key in determining Za'a's distribution channels. One relevant socio economic trend to note was the increase of buyers purchasing luxury goods from direct-to-consumer sites, with US and European markets seeing a 57% rise in the number of fine jewelry pieces ordered online in 2020 compared to 2019.²⁶ Also, the jewelry market did suffer an 18% decrease in sales from 2019 - 2020, while demi-fine brands doubled their digits.²⁷ This information helped Za'a reach the conclusion that using a brick-and-mortar approach, as well as using mass merchandisers during startup years, would hurt the business because of their declining sales. On an annual basis, Za'a anticipates selling predominantly through its online channels, followed by sales from independent retailers, with little focus on mass merchandisers.

²⁶ (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company 2021)²⁷ (Maguire 2021)

Marketing

A - Overview

Za'a will run creative advertisements on various social media platforms for the first two years, specifically Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, and Tik Tok. These three social platforms have a high engagement of users and influencers that fall into the brand's target market, and they proved to be its best option in terms of gaining awareness and bringing traffic to the company. Za'a's primary goal is to create brand awareness, followed by increasing traffic to its website. Due to this, the company would focus on cost per 1000 impressions (CPM) and cost per click (CPC). ²⁸ The average price for impressions is \$8.26 and \$2.58 for clicks making it the best cost-effective strategy.

On average Za'a will allocate \$500 USD a month to each platform for the first year, increasing or reducing during peak market seasons and customer growth. It is important to mention that the brand will increase the budget expenditure leading to markets peak seasons — Christmas, Mother's Day, and Valentine's — given the consumers' tendency to spend more on jewelry during those times of the year. The cost associated with these digital advertisement actions are determined by Za'a's goals and can be optimized as it grows. This is why the brand has decided to prioritize this kind of advertisement above others. After the second year, the company will determine if the brand would benefit by adding more platforms into its marketing campaigns.

B - Marketing Campaigns

- Digital Marketing

For the first 3 years Za'a will use three types of digital marketing strategies: Social platforms, Search Engine Optimization, and Email marketing. The brand will focus on these direct-to-consumer approaches because of the feedback and information they provide on the

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²⁸ (Chris 2021)

brand's target market behavior and desires. This data can be used to optimize Za'a's visibility and website traffic, resulting in more customer conversions in the long term.

Digital Marketing Costs per Click and Impressions 29

Social Media Platform	Average CPC	Social Media Platform	Average Cost CPM
Facebook	\$0.97	Facebook	\$7.19 per 1000 impressions
Instagram	\$3.56	Instagram	\$7.91 per 1000 impressions
YouTube	\$3.21	YouTube	\$9.68 per 1000 impressions
Average Cost	\$2.58	Average Cost	\$8.26

- Social Platforms

For the first two years, Za'a will run creative advertisements on various social media platforms, specifically Instagram, Facebook, and Youtube. These three platforms have high engagement from users and influencers that fall into our target market and have proven to be strong options for generating awareness and traffic for advertisers. Our primary goal is to create brand awareness, and our secondary goal is to increase traffic to our website. To achieve this we would assess our effectiveness based on cost per 1000 impressions (CPM) and cost per click (CPC). The cost associated with these buying strategies is determined by our brand's goals and will be optimized as we grow. After our second year, we will determine if the brand would benefit by adding more platforms into our marketing campaigns. ³⁰

²⁹ (Craig, n.d.)

³⁰ ("The 6 types of SEO you need to boost your site traffic" 2017)

First-Year Social Media Marketing Effectiveness

Social Media Marketing	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
												\$5,87
Social Media	\$150	\$200	\$350	\$450	\$575	\$550	\$600	\$625	\$750	\$775	\$850	5
											1,09	
Monthly CPC	19	19	39	78	742	710	774	806	968	1,000	7	7,579
	12,10	18,16	30,26	30,26	34,80	2,27	2,47	2,58	3,09		3,51	24,26
Monthly CPM	7	0	6	6	6	2	8	1	8	3,201	1	4

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

During the first three years, Za'a will put an emphasis on enhancing its SEO performance. SEO's ability to organically improve website ranking across search engines will allow Za'a to expand its online channel's visibility on platforms such as Google, Yahoo, and Bing. The enhanced visibility will result in an increase in traffic to the company's website. By allocating a percentage of its marketing budget to SEO, Za'a will also be able to identify the habits of its target audience as they search for products, providing the company with clear data on consumer needs.

Za'a's SEO plan would focus on three major strategies: On-page, technical, and off-page SEO. On-page SEO is concerned with the brand's online content and the way it is structured.

31Technical SEO focuses on improving back-end website settings, which help search engines crawl and index the brand's website better. Off-page SEO will help promote and improve Za'a's position in search engine indexes by increasing the number of times the website is mentioned on other sites. The main focus would be on YouTubers and bloggers with a large Hispanic audience, possible partnerships would include influencers such as Luis Torres Beauty, Salice Rose, and Dulce Candy among others.

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³¹ (Chris 2021)

- Email

Za'a's approach to digital planning would also involve the use of email marketing. This type of direct advertising will allow the company to promote its products, increase customer awareness, and drive engagement. Email marketing will also help Za'a build a better relationship with its audience while providing measurable insight into their behavior. This information is obtained thanks to email marketing's call to actions (delete, save, open, etc.) and the ability to track which of these actions a user takes. This online strategy would be fueled by the Social Media and SEO approaches used in the digital campaigns. Primary research shows that successful brands keep their audience engaged by sending marketing emails at least once a week. Za'a emails will include newsletters about the different communities that the brand collaborates with, company updates, and the addition of new products.

- Partnerships and Sponsorship

Za'a is set apart from other brands thanks to its collaboration and cultural representation of indigenous communities. After the third year of operations, Za'a will partner with different cultural events, organizations, and museums. In our early years, it is crucial to introduce the brand to all potential members of its niche market. This will be primarily achieved through the use of digital media, followed by the introduction of point purchases.

Za'a will showcase its pieces at artisanal craft shows and museum boutiques where traditional craftsmanship is on display. Given that jewelry is such an intimate item, Za'a believes the products need to be experienced firsthand to create a deeper connection, and these events are a great way to do so. The most relevant and cost-effective events for Za'a to participate in will be Las Manos del Mundo show in Mexico City and Presencia de Oaxaca, during March. The brand's pieces will also appear in museum boutiques such as Tienda Tamayo, Museo Belber Jiménez, and MACO. Za'a's goal is to use these channels as a point of purchase during the

corresponding exhibition periods. This point of purchase strategy will give the brand an added 5% awareness for each year during the first three years.

While we cannot promise a big collection due to all our pieces having handmade elements, the brand is sure there will be a reason for customers to be captivated by the jewelry on display. Both of the trade shows will have similar display themes and set-up. In museum environments, the brand will collaborate with stores to find a way to best display its pieces, but the final decision will be left to the retailers. Za'a plans to engage show-goers through the use of a minimalistic and rustic setting, which will allow the jewelry to be the center of attention. There will asl be brochures made of recycled materials explaining the core values of the company: collaboration, transparency, and cultural representation. At the same time, the collection pieces will be displayed with a short paragraph describing their meaning and stories.

The brand will be attending these two trade shows after the third year in an effort to reach a wider audience while building its resume to connect with possible retailers like Wolf & Badger, Galerie. LA, and Not Just A Label (NJAL).

Reviews

Based on research, Za'a products belong in the luxury goods market. Therefore, reviews will influence brand awareness over the first 5 years. The company expects around 50 to 75 percent of consumers who purchased its pieces to share their opinion and experience of the brand products within their social circles, as well as online reviews. It is of utmost importance that the sentiment associated with Za'a is positive, due to the fact that its products are part of the luxury market which requires an above-average experience in order to secure customer loyalty. Za'a's objective is to build lasting relationships with its target audience and suppliers. Delivering both high-quality products and personal experiences can ensure that consumers will be satisfied with their jewelry. Za'a believes that online reviews will take off after the first year, generating a 0.20% awareness in the second year, and it will continue to grow to by the end of year 5.

- Packaging

Za'a's packaging will follow the brand ethos and reinforce its values to its consumers. The brands' customers are not just purchasing jewelry, but an experience as well. For this reason, the story told by the brand's packaging is really important. Opening a Za'a box will convey the story of each piece found inside the box, along with a feeling of luxury. Each delivery will consist of five specific components: a recycled cardboard box on the outside (due to security reasons), a card made out of recycled paper with the design printed on it, a message about the piece's meaning and history, a smaller card with information on how the sale is giving back to the community, and the actual jewelry box with the brand's logo on top. Za'a's slogan: "Make your own heritage" will be displayed on the front side of the outer box. The slogan is intended to encourage consumers to make Za'a pieces their own. While our products are inspired by different cultures, at the end of the day they are worn and adapted by our consumers who possess their own style and essence. Za'a's packaging will convey a feeling of handmade luxury.

Packing Design Photo



- Marketing Effectiveness

To measure the effectiveness of its marketing strategies, Za'a will use Google Analytics to evaluate the brand's website traffic and sales volume. Since the brand's marketing strategy focuses on digital media, Google Analytics will be the primary method for the company to track visitors accessing its website from various devices and social platforms. Actual sales will inform how successful and effective Za'a's marketing campaigns are.

Production and Selling Cost

- Product Cost Analysis

Za'a jewelry design focuses on integrating traditional indigenous communities' values into contemporary aesthetics for the everyday luxury piece. To achieve this the brand's craft centers on comfortability, accessible price points, and impeccable craftsmanship. The main components of every piece in the *Nahuales* Collection are painted copal wood with the traditional Zapotec glyphs used by the San Martin Tilcajete community, sterling silver or vermeil metal components, and semi-precious stones such as freshwater pearls. The final price of each piece will be determined by the design and final finish, given the slight differences in raw materials and labor requirements. The graphs below show some examples of how prices will be determined.

Earring Sample Price

NAME	Nahual Earrings #2				
	VENDOR	PRICE UNIT	QUANTITY	COST	РНОТО
PARTS TOTAL				\$7.90	
OUTSIDE LABOR				\$24.80	
LABOUR			1	\$4.00	
PACKAGING				\$3.65	
OTHER					
SHIPPING				\$20.00	
TOTAL				\$60.35	
WHOLESALE PRICE				\$120.70	76
RETAIL PRICE		-	•	\$241.4 0	

Necklace Sample Price

NAME	Nahual Necklace #1				
PARTS	VENDOR	PRICE UNIT	QUANTITY	COST	РНОТО
PARTS TOTAL				\$5.80	
OUTSIDE LABOR				\$17.30	
LABOUR				\$5.00	
PACKAGING				\$3.65	
OTHER					
SHIPPING OF PIECES				\$20.00	
TOTAL				\$51.75	
WHOLESALE PRICE				\$103.4 9	
RETAIL PRICE				\$206.99	

Ring Sample Price

NAME	Nahuales Ring #1				
	VENDOR	PRICE UNIT	QUANTITY	COST	РНОТО
PARTS TOTAL				\$2.20	
OUTSIDE LABOR				\$21.83	
LABOUR				\$5.00	
PACKAGING				\$3.65	
OTHER					is a
SHIPPING OF PIECES				\$20.00	
TOTAL				\$52.68	
WHOLESALE PRICE				\$105.3 6	
RETAIL PRICE				\$210.72	

The wood for the earrings will measure from 10mm (0.4 inches) to 20mm (0.8 inches) depending on the model; necklaces, the measurements will vary from 20mm to 25 mm (1 inch); rings, the size will up to 20 mm depending on the size. The height for all the wood components will not exceed 5mm (0.2 inches) height. These measurements were specifically chosen for wearability reasons, as well as the sourcing nature of the wood, which is recycled from the unused pieces from El Sueño Zapoteco workshop. It is important to mention that due to the handmade nature of the production, no two pieces are exactly alike. Slight variations in measurements, are to be expected and meant to be embraced.

In the first year, the wood material for each piece will be obtained from El Sueño Zapoteco, and will cost \$2 for each final carved piece. The wood studio will provide the acrylic paint as well as the labor for painting the wood components, this will raise the final price to \$17 per piece. It is important to mention that a pair of earrings will be counted as a single piece.

The metal components of the jewelry will be obtained from different manufacturers. None of the silver manufactured parts of the Nahuales' collection will weigh more than ten grams, given that the production cost of casting is determined by the amount of metal each piece requires as well as hand labor. Fine silver prices have seen a 34.38% growth in the past five years, especially during 2020, but are expected to stabilize and stay within the \$20 to\$ 24 range. ³² For this reason, Za'a assumes that its production cost will see a steady increase in direct materials cost for the next five years. To counteract this Za'a will revise its prices on an annual basis.

For the first five years, all cast elements will be produced in the Taller Bimoda located in Mexico City. Bimoda's prices can be divided into two categories: labor and metal costs.³³ The labor will include the casting and clean up of the pieces and it will equal \$2.77 (55 MX), if polishing is required, the final price will be \$4.53 (90MX).34

^{32 (}Bullion by Post 2022)33 (Taller Bimoda 2020)

³⁴ (Lopez 2022)

Za'a will offer two possible metal finishes for its pieces, silver or 18k gold vermeil. In order for the jewelry to have a vermeil finish, they will be sent to another facility in Mexico City, Eurochapeado. There, the jewelry will undergo the plating process, which will cost \$7.5 (150MX) for every piece weighing 6 grams. This extra cost will be added to the already mentioned production price. ³⁵

All soldering procedures will be done in the Garcia, Bautista, and Gomez family workshops located in Oaxaca. The studios' close location to the brand headquarters will allow for better quality control and maximization of production time. The initial soldering cost for 150 pairs of earrings will be \$350 USD, 100 necklaces for \$300 USD, and 80 rings for \$350 USD. All families have stated that if production quantity increases the cost will be reduced.

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³⁵ (Eurochapeado 2022)

Channel and Pricing

- Distribution Channels

As a DTC brand, Za'a Jewelry will always be sold through its website. During year one, Za'a will swll its jewelry through its website and Instagram pages. During year two, Etsy.com will potentially be added as a distribution platform. This means that by the start of year three, online sales will fall into two categories: e-commerce, and non-Za'a online sales.

Za'a is combining independent online and retailer stores into one "Other" category of jewelry sales in the jewelry industry retail environment. For years three to five, Za'a anticipates minimal all-commodity volumes from physical retailers.

Za'a Distribution Channels

Distribution Channel	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Za'a's Site	zaajewelry.com	zaajewelry.com	zaajewelry.com	zaajewelry.com	zaajewelry.com
Social Platforms	Instagram Facebook	Instagram Facebook	Instagram Facebook	Instagram Facebook	Instagram Facebook
Online Independent Retailers	n/a	Etsy	Etsy Wolf & Badger NJAL Galerie. LA	Etsy Wolf & Badger NJAL Galerie. LA	Etsy Wolf & Badger NJAL Galerie. LA
Retail Stores	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Neiman Marcus Saks Fifth Avenue Shopbop

- Channels Strategy

Za'a plans on utilizing various channels of distribution during the first five years of business, focusing particularly on online platforms which will allow the brand to optimize unit sales by being available to consumers regardless of geographical location. During this start-up period, the brand's lack of sales history data to appropriately evaluate performance will make it

impossible to reach major retailers. This is why Za'a proposes selling to various independent stores and online retailers such as Wolf and Badger, NJAL, and Galerie. LA starting on year three.

Starting year five, Za'a will seek partnerships with bigger retailers —pecifically Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Shopbop — as the brand enters department and specialty stores.

Before entering department stores, Za'a will revise prices in order to avoid channel conflict in price points.

Website

Za'a's website will be designed to inform its vast target audience about the different traditions of indigenous populations the brand is collaborating with, and how the jewelry represents their values through elegant and everyday statement jewelry pieces. For this reason, the website will convey a feeling of luxury following a clean and user-friendly layout. Each collection will have an "Overview" section, which will contain the information and visuals about the respective community and craft that inspired it. The "Overview" section will highlight and guide the visitor through the brand's ethos and show how the products are not just an accessory, but a piece with meaning and appreciation for what's different.

Za'a's Target market is females between the age of 23 to 35 years with a connection or interest in underrepresented cultures, who place great importance on transparency and ethical practices. These characteristics show that the most important attributes for an upcoming demi-fine jewelry brand are high-quality pieces that follow fair trade and environmentally friendly practices. Za'a's transparency of its production process, which will be found on the website's "About" page, will emphasize the importance of corporate social responsibility and eco-friendly practices, addressing any concerns consumers may have. This will allow the target market's desire for not just quality products, but for ethical practices to be satisfied.

- Superior Website Functionality

Za'a's website will go above and beyond to prove an easy and visually pleasing experience for its visitors. Detailed product descriptions, high-resolution photographs and videos will be provided for every piece. The brand's website will provide diverse educational resources like interviews, videos, and certificates to showcase the company's commitment to the communities and high-quality standards.

Conclusion

After thorough research and projections, Za'a believes that the market it belongs to has the opportunity to provide not just high-quality jewelry, but an emotional connection to all possible buyers, and high returns to possible investors. The brand's transparent and conscious manufacturing process will serve as a platform to excel in this business. The marketing campaigns will help us establish the brand in the beginning years of operation. Za'a believes the combination of these marketing efforts and the increasing growth of its target market provides a solid ground for the company to grow. Considering all the risks that starting a business imposes, Za'a believes its products will penetrate the market and establish itself as a major competitor in the demi-fine jewelry business.

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