

COOPERATIVE CASE STUDY WITH KANDIS QUAM & ELROY NATACHU JR. OF ANCESTRAL RICH TREASURES OF ZUNI (ARTZ)



Location:
Zuni,
New Mexico



Member information: The ARTZ cooperative has 32 members ranging in age from 20 to 80. Artists must apply to be ARTZ members and once accepted can sell their work in a volunteer-operated gallery. Proceeds from gallery sales are split 60/40.



HOW IT STARTED

“We are very special in a way that we have a job ware market. This is where outside individuals come into our reservation and purchase artwork at very low pricing... then they sell it to a gallery to make a profit.”

We found out from other artists that they lacked business education in terms of pricing their wares, and they needed education in cultural traditions and preservation.

WHY THE COOPERATIVE STRUCTURE?

“Our organization is open to everybody, and our community is very open. Our foundations in our own culture relate very well to the cooperative model in terms of cooperation and assisting one another.”

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT

“Within the first six months of operation, without marketing or advertising, we had gallery and website sales totaling \$20,813.35. Within that time frame, we paid out more than \$12,000 to the artists/ cooperative members.

“The ARTZ Cooperative is the only Pueblo artist-owned and operated cooperative in New Mexico. The formation of the cooperative was founded to give back the power to the artist—to ensure they receive the full monetary value they ask for.”



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Q:

Is there anything that you believe sets your cooperative apart from others or makes it more successful?

A:

With our membership fairly big... we started to lean on one another and create a family within ourselves. This has helped with a lot of the backbone of the cooperative.

We also do all the paperwork, so the artists/members don't have to handle any of that and can just focus on their art.

Q:

What were some of the things that went into figuring out how to market your cooperative?

A:

We had nothing in terms of marketing to start out (no website, no Facebook page, etc.). We were very fortunate that our members had clients we could tell about the opening of the cooperative. It all spread by word of mouth and was very successful. We now have a website, Instagram, a Facebook page, and other marketing strategies.



POTENTIAL COOPERATIVE PITFALLS TO AVOID

Source: Nebraska Cooperative Development



Lack of clearly identified mission



Lack of member commitment



Inadequate planning



Lack of competent management



Failure to use experienced advisers and consultants



Failure to identify and minimize risks



Lack of member leadership



Poor assumptions



Lack of financing



Inadequate communication



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