



## Brand & Message Focus

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by Copysmith Creative

## Category Overview

Helping people around the world and around the corner are both important movements that have spread and evolved across all generations in recent years.

That growth can be attributed to many reasons; social media and broadcast media being among the most important and influential.

Every minute of the day, people are exposed to images, messages and videos showing poverty, violence, and hunger happening right now around the world.

People who are moved to action look for ways to help through donations, volunteering and often, by supporting “online retailers with a purpose.”

It’s a positive thing for any organization or business in these categories, and that includes **Alex + Ikat**.



## Introduction - The Birth of Alex + Ikat

Alex Woodbury didn't embrace sewing as a child, though her mother, Linda Lee, is a nationally-recognized seamstress who's taught thousands of women to sew. She grew up making a pillow here, or a carry-all there, and the occasional garment. While she loved the creativity of it, she never viewed sewing as a path to positively impacting the community around her.

But in college, that all changed.

As Alex grew, so did her desire affect the lives of others in a positive way, The desire motivated Alex to pursue a degree in Family Ministry and Counseling from Manhattan Christian College.

And it was here in this environment of charity and spiritual connection that Alex's love for creative arts and beauty crossed paths with her studies.

### Inspired in Africa.

Alex found great satisfaction in her summer internships, which included multiple trips to Kenya with Compassion International/Bigstuf Camps and Choose to Invest. Her heart broke for the people she met along the way. Alex found herself swept up in the idea of identifying a greater vision that would help her fulfill her desire to help people.

This was Alex's vision:

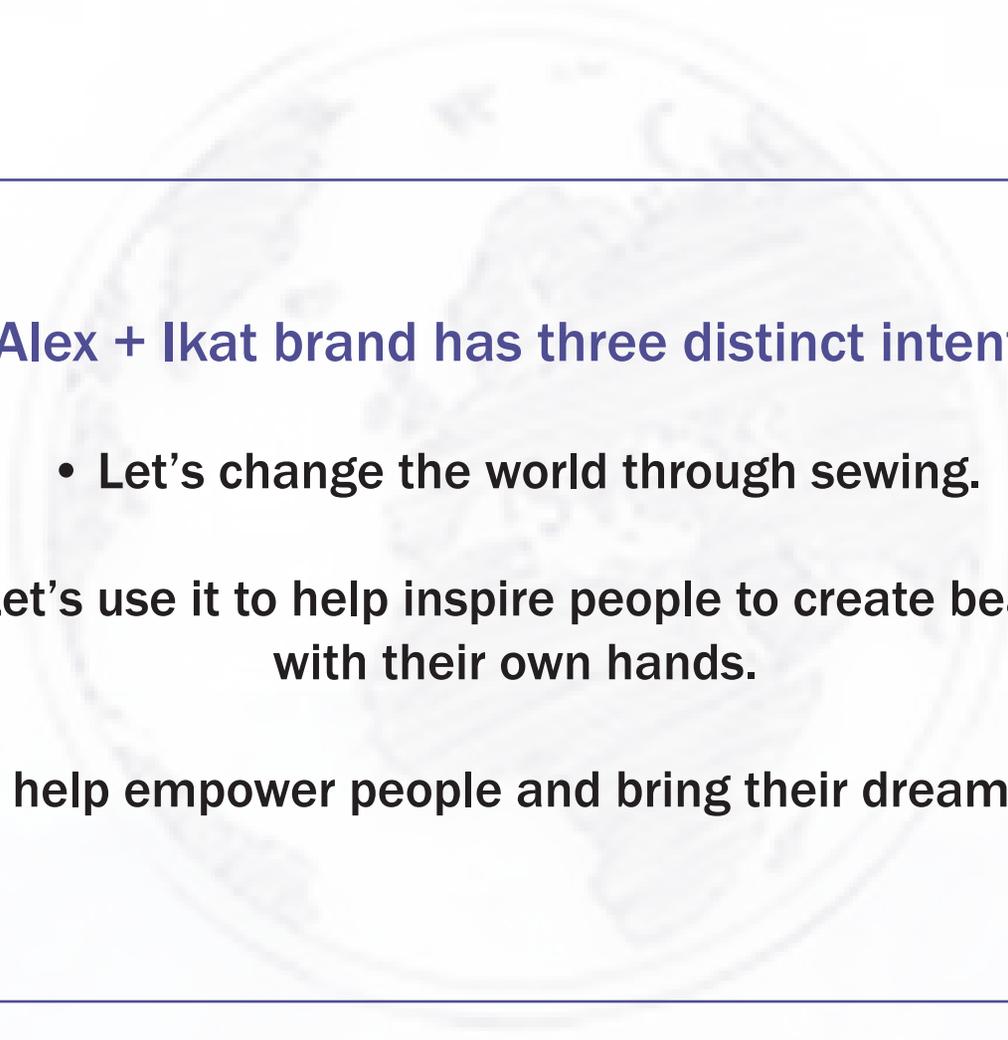
***"To help my community's and the world's underprivileged, specifically women, and allow them to step into the freedom and beauty of who they truly are – this became my cause."***

Sewing took on a new definition and purpose – Alex saw it as a means of helping people and perhaps providing them with a learned trade, which would not include 3rd world country participants, but also at-risk participants right here in the United States..

Through further studies and several years of planning, Alex's vision slowly took shape, gaining focus and direction.

**Through these deep and powerful experiences, the Alex + Ikat brand was born.**





**The Alex + Ikat brand has three distinct intentions:**

- **Let's change the world through sewing.**
- **Let's use it to help inspire people to create beauty with their own hands.**
- **Let's help empower people and bring their dreams to life.**

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The Alex + Ikat Brand | Who are we and what will we be known for?

## Our essence

The Alex + Ikat brand can be distilled down to the influence and vision of one girl – Alex Woodbury.

Alex dreamed of a way to connect the act of sewing with world change.

The Alex and Ikat brand embodies Alex's personal journey and path of self-discovery -- to find her place in the world and discover the impact she can have on it. It is Alex's hope that her process of self-discovery is one to be shared and experienced by every follower of the brand.

## What is our company model?

Alex + Ikat develops and sells original sewing kits and sewing patterns for crafting high-quality, functional and beautiful carry-all bags and garments. Every Alex + Ikat pattern is an exclusive design.

Alex + Ikat bag and garment patterns are known for their unique art-inspired fabric options, and are loved, crafted and worn by women of all ages who appreciate that beauty and art can go hand in hand with utility.

Each kit and pattern is associated with a community organization selected by the company for its unique and valuable contribution it makes to it's neighborhood. The organization receive a portion of the proceeds from the sale of each pattern kit.



## Who are we - today and tomorrow

**Today our business model** focuses on the development and sale of original sewing patterns & kits that honor a specific city organization. With every pattern or kit sold, the organization receives a portion of the proceeds to further their cause.

**Tomorrow's vision** sees Alex + Ikat as a lifestyle brand with a global impact. Our goal is to “sew beauty and hope for the nations,” expanding the concept worldwide to teach, inspire and empower women to make and sell products through our site, and use the proceeds to benefit individuals and communities on a global level. We see this as a way for more women to become empowered and realize their potential through self-expression and self-sustenance.

**Our hope** is that Alex + Ikat will attract women to our brand because of its focus on global responsibility, community activism and inspired creative expression. Through their experiences of making their own items as they wish and wearing them as they desire, we hope to imbue a sense of freedom and joy that comes from experiencing creativity in its purest, most honest form.



*The “Ikat” in the Alex + Ikat name refers to the Indonesian word meaning ‘bright, patterned textiles’ that are ‘tied, bound, or knotted’.*

*It is fitting name in that we feel our mission ties together the concepts that guide us: beauty, creativity, honesty into a single and very powerful focus.*

## The four steps to accomplishing our dreams

Dreams take time to become reality. They start with a vision. They're shaped by passion, focus and hardwork. And then one day, they take on a life, a face and a presence. The dream becomes real, but the work – that's never really done, and we're happy to keep doing it.

**Step One:** Hosting sewing classes in urban core communities and inviting people of every age (children, at-risk women, friends, everyone!) to experience the art of sewing and the process of creating beauty. As part of this experience, student sewers will learn the story behind our brand, be inspired by our passion and our dream, and become brand ambassadors for Alex + Ikat by carrying their creations and motivating others to participate.

**Step Two:** Founding the Alex + Ikat Seamstress Academy to train those who are inspired by our classes and want to expand their talent and creative limits; and also help counsel them/help place them in occupations in related fields like fashion design, either by working with Alex + Ikat or by embarking on careers of their own.

**Step Three:** Cultivate the next generation of fashion designer/ seamstresses by providing them with the space, machinery, technology and resources to grow and excel in their field.

**Step Four:** To help sustain the Academy and help more students realize their goals, scholarships could be created and supported by women-owned businesses and women-centric organizations like 100 Women Who Care. Give back to the community through our own fundraising or proceeds donations from Alex + Ikat events, sales, etc.

### **Our Mission**

To inspire and cultivate creativity, self-esteem, community and confidence through the simple, satisfying act of sewing.

### **Our Vision**

To share our passion and skills for sewing functional items that are also things of beauty with at-risk groups;

To help them translate their enthusiasm and newly developed talent into opportunities to become financially and emotionally self-sufficient.



## Our Brand Voice

If we could assign human attributes to Alex + Ikat, they would be these:

- Adventurous
- Bold
- Strong
- Beautiful
- Graceful
- Unique
- Fearless
- Authentic
- Honest
- World-aware
- Cool
- Empowered



## What is the three-part meaning behind the Alex + Ikat brand?

1. Alex is the girl with the story and Ikat is the process of creating beautiful things
2. Alex + Ikat is a creative company that inspires individuals to explore their creativity through the journey of sewing and wearing their own creations using original sewing patterns and the corresponding kits.
3. Alex + Ikat touches the creative soul and brings out the empowering entrepreneurial spirit inside by giving individuals the skills and confidence to developing original designs in sewing patterns and kits.

### How will we be unique in the eyes of our customers?

Alex + Ikat believes deeply that creative expression feeds the human soul, delivering courage, empowerment and connection to others.

We want our customers to believe in the story behind each product (and every product does, indeed, have a story), just like we want you to believe in your own story.

The outer beauty of our products will draw you toward the inner story – the “why” behind them and the reason they were created. It will also inspire you to see the hope in which you were called to. With each bag, product and fashion, there’s a story to be told. And Alex + Ikat is about bringing these stories to life just as much as bringing your own journey to life.

As a company, Alex + Ikat is a people-centric, globally-focused entity whose founder is committed to remaining integral to every creative and business decision that steers us toward the future. And that future will be bright, colorful, inspiring and beautiful.

### Why does this matter?

We love what we do. We love how our work affects each of us in such powerful, positive ways. And we especially love how it lifts our customers hearts, minds and creativity to new heights. We make what we love, and love that we inspire our customers to do the same.

Your journey is important. Your story matters. You will see that in the journeys of Alex and the other designers and makers.

With every product we make, it has a voice. Our designs are made with purpose and with a specific focus in mind. Each detail, each color or fabric choice, each stitch is mulled over and given proper care. No creative detail is gone unnoticed.



## Brand Manifesto

We believe...Beauty is a powerful concept

We believe...Stories and journeys are important and meant to be shared

We believe...Each person has value that is worth being illuminated

We believe...The most important thing a someone wears is their confidence

We believe... Everything is worth doing in excellence

We believe... In nurturing identity and empowerment in peoples lives

We believe...Encouragement is the best form of medicine

We believe...People's dreams can can become reality





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Your Customers | Who are they and what are they seeking?

## Customer One - Megan

*“The 20-Something Who Looks  
For Ways To Make A Global Impact”*



### Who is she?

- Educated, college graduate, likely employed but probably not in a high-powered job
- Invested in women-centric causes
- Thinks & acts on global change
- Outgoing, self-possessed, big heart
- Individualist, mature beyond her years
- First to volunteer for recycling events, food banks, community stuff, etc.
- She is a hobby seamstress who enjoys creating/sewing to reflect her own style and decor items; it speaks to her desire to explore and celebrate her individuality

### What is she seeking?

- Ways to help on a global level
- Unique ways of self-expression in the way she dresses
- Satisfaction that comes from helping those in need
- Connection to the community through volunteerism/activism

### What does she think?

- It feels good to shop with a purpose and support companies that share my belief in supporting and uplifting others.
- I like knowing that what I buy improves the lives of people and communities
- I appreciate the work and meaning behind handcrafted goods, and knowing they stand for something much bigger than a fashion statement
- Wearing handmade items reflect the down-to-earth, unique individual that I am

## Customer Two - Jenna

### *The 30-Something Who Likes To Set Unique Style Trends”*



#### Who is she?

- Educated, college graduate, likely employed
- Interested in the concept of empowerment for women, but more as a discussion not action
- Thinks of herself as an empowered woman
- Likes others to recognize that her retail purchase supports a cause
- Feels good that she recycles at home
- Outgoing, self-possessed, big heart
- Individualist, mature beyond her years
- She is a hobby seamstress who enjoys creating/sewing her own style and decor items; this speaks to her desire to explore and celebrate her individuality

#### What is she seeking?

- Getting noticed by girlfriends for what she wears; wants to be known as a trendsetter
- Needs her circle of girlfriends to feel grounded
- Gratification through shopping and finding cool things
- Connection to the community through cultural events

#### What does she think?

- I like being able to take small actions to make a difference such as donations and buying Fair Trade goods
- I try to surround myself with beauty and good design because it makes me feel happy
- Interesting accessories get me noticed and I like that

## Customer Three - Linda

*“The 40 to 50-Something Who Marches To Her Own Drummer”*



### Who is she?

- Educated, college graduate, probably with post-college degrees
- Supporter of anything that bolsters a healthy community/city: culture, new business ventures, restaurants, etc.
- Outgoing, self-possessed, artistic
- Individualist, enjoys bucking the trends in style for women her age
- Enjoys finding unique little shops and restaurants and sharing her finds with friends/likes being the “pioneer”
- She is a hobby seamstress who enjoys creating/sewing her own style and decor items; this speaks to her desire to explore and celebrate her individuality

### What is she seeking?

- Health, happiness and satisfaction but only when achieved her own way
- The fulfillment she gets from having a close circle of girlfriends
- Novel ways to give back to friends, community and the world

### What does she think?

- Fashion has to be fun and a reflection of my personal style not what the trends say
- Handmade items really appeal to me
- I’ll buy from any kind of store where I find what I like and I do appreciate a good value

**Positioning Statement to Customers**

*For female hobby seamstresses who are drawn to all things creative and who have a strong global awareness...*

*Alex + Ikat is the purveyor of original sewing patterns & kits that inspire and empower its customers to manifest their creativity, sense of goodwill, and connection to community...*

*Because Alex + Ikat is committed to spreading beauty and creativity, and to sharing its bounty of sewing skills and dollars with deserving organizations and individuals.*



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## ADDENDUM - OVERVIEW OF OUR COMPETITORS





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### **The Competition | Who are they and what do they stand for?**

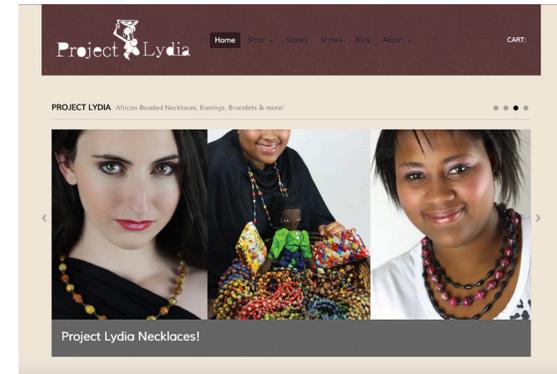
On the following pages are examples of your competition within the categories of “online retailers with a purpose” and/or online retailers who focus on selling Fair Trade goods.

They all share your mission. Though none are an exact match of your current business model, they do represent what you hope to become in terms of a world presence and global helper.

## The Competition - Project Lydia.org

*Business Model: Empowering impoverished women by teaching them to craft and giving them a venue to sell their handmade bead jewelry made from recycled products.*

Project Lydia is an economic development project that lifts women out of the worst of poverty, restores purpose, hope, and dignity. Their paper beaded necklaces, bracelets and jewelry are made out of recycled material. Project Lydia is a Fair Trade member.



## The Competition - Noonday Collection.com

*Business Model: Independent U.S Sales rep-based selling Fair Trade Goods made by artisan entrepreneurs*

Noonday's unique business model centers on the Ambassador Opportunity, where women across the United States launch Noonday businesses in their communities. Noonday Ambassadors are stylists, storytellers and social entrepreneurs who earn an income by selling beautiful products handmade by Artisans around the world.

The mission of Noonday is to alleviate poverty through entrepreneurship. The business uses fashion to create meaningful opportunities around the world.

The founders travel the world to identify artisan entrepreneurs who share their dream of creating meaningful opportunity in vulnerable communities. by designing and selling jewelry and accessories.



## The Competition - GlobalMamas.org

*Business Model: Similar to Project Lydia in that they empower impoverished women by teaching them to make and sell handmade goods through the website.*

Founded in 2003, the Global Mamas community is comprised of thousands of people from around the world working together with the mission of creating prosperity for African women and their families.

Global Community is made up of our Mamas who produce beautiful products using traditional methods; our employees who manage production, ensuring high quality and delivering personal customer service; our international volunteers and interns who contribute their time and talents to further the development of our Mamas' expertise;

Global Mamas realizes their dreams of having the opportunity to support their families, send their children to school, improve their health, and save for the future.



The screenshot shows the top portion of the Global Mamas website. At the top right, there are links for 'NEW CUSTOMER | MY ACCOUNT'. Below this is a navigation bar with 'Our Story', 'Our Impact', 'Get Involved', and 'Shop'. A 'Fair Trade' banner features a photograph of a group of women. Below the banner, the text reads: 'Global Mamas - A Fair Trade Organization. "Fair trade" means that an equitable partnership exists between producers of goods in developing countries and retailers in developed countries. The fair trade approach supports a variety of social business practices that advocate for higher standards in regards to producers' pay, work atmosphere and environmental protection, among others. Fair trade partnerships work to provide otherwise marginalized artisans and farmers with a living wage.' Below this text are the logos for the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) and the Fair Trade Federation (FTF). A small note at the bottom states: 'Global Mamas is proud to be a full member of the WFTO and FTF, and is recognized as a fair trade manufacturer and distributor. This distinction was granted after a thorough investigation of our business practices to ensure the African women who comprise the Global Mamas producer network are the primary beneficiaries of proceeds from product sales.' The footer of the page reads 'Embracing Fair Trade Principles'.

## The Competition - OneWorldFairTrade.net

*Business Model: A Fair trade vendor that identifies global artisans and provides a venue to sell their handmade goods. Commitment to education/awareness for their customers about Fair Trade.*

One World Fair Trade specializes in unique handmade gifts, jewelry, home decor, art, sculpture, textiles, clothing and women's accessories representing the diverse cultures of artisans in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Middle East and the United States.

Their Mission is to create opportunities for underprivileged people to earn a living wage by connecting their products and stories to our customers. They strive to empower customers with the knowledge of Fair Trade as a fair and just global economic system and understand how their purchase makes a difference.”





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### Your Inspiration | What brands inspire your vision for the future?

In our discussions, you indicated two brands you wish to aspire to in terms of appeal, tone and success. They are reviewed on the next two pages. This is what I believe makes both of them attractive to you:

- A real person is the “face” of the brand
- They each appeal to who you feel is your primary target
- They both had a “come from nothing” beginning
- Sewing, handmade goods, quality and creative design are at the heart of both
- Beauty without rules and goodness are at the heart of both

## Your Inspiration

### Alabama Chanin

<http://alabamachanin.com/>

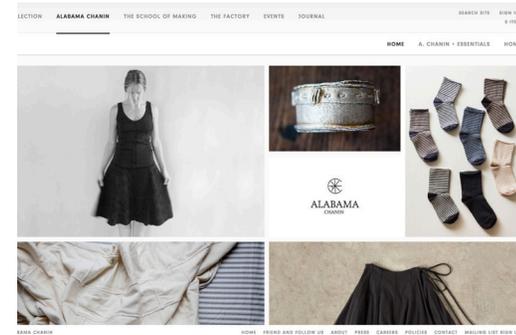
Alabama Chanin is a lifestyle company producing well-designed and thoughtfully-made goods for the person and for the home. They use 100% organic cotton jersey fabric in their designs, sourced sustainably from seed to fabric. Though “giving back” is not their focus, they do give back to the world through sponsorships, product donations, cash donations and employee engagement.

#### WHY THIS BUSINESS IS MEANINGFUL TO YOU:

First and foremost, AC is regarded as “a fashion icon focused on environmental stewardship” by their followers. AC stands for a lifestyle that has been embraced by a demographic/psychographic segment(s) that Alex+Ikat also desires to reach.

AC’s influence extends far beyond the Internet – they meet their customers on a personal level through event hosting, partnering with other organizations, teaching classes, and even extending the AC brand into a cafe concept that serves locally-sourced foods. Philosophically, this is your desire as well.

Bottom line? AC embodies one of your primary long-term goals: To reach a wide variety of markets and individuals, and impact positive change through multiple channels.



*“Alabama Chanin’s mission is to preserve traditions of community, design, producing, and living arts by examining work and life through the act of storytelling, photography, education, and making.” Their tagline is: Thoughtful design. Responsible production. Good business. Quality that lasts.”*

## Your Inspiration

### Sew Caroline

<http://sewcaroline.com/>

Caroline Hulse is a fabric designer, a pattern designer and author of the creative lifestyle blog SewCaroline.com She has a passion for handmade fashion and loves designing and sewing clothes that are easy to wear every day.

Caroline is a self-taught seamstress who loves to bend the rules of sewing. Not being taught to sew traditionally, she strives to show her blog readers that the process of sewing can be done in more than one way! She loves to inspire the art of sewing and creativity in her online space.

**WHY THIS BUSINESS IS MEANINGFUL TO YOU:** Sew Caroline embodies one of your primary long-term goals, which is to become a lifestyle brand led by an authentic, creative and inspiring individual that women can identify with and feel connected to. In the case of Alex + Ikat, that would be YOU.

