



Café Chez Kiva™ ~ *Part I: “The Vision”*

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A rural café with a clear mission and unique market advantages

Viewed from the highway, Café Chez Kiva is a somewhat uncommon sight. By virtue of its farm-style buildings, dramatic landscape features, and bountiful organic vegetable gardens, this business offers qualities that are especially sought after today. Ostensibly built to draw traffic from the interstate, its greater purpose is enabling local people to meet their nutritional needs more easily and effectively.

For many families, the most important time spent together is around the dinner table. But, for many others relaxation and communion at mealtime has become an increasingly rare event. Serving as a community hub, rental facility and culinary boot camp for kids, this multi-purpose café brings that convention to an end.

Offering virtually every amenity a tourist or weary driver actually needs, this environment becomes a place that people of all ages and types are magnetically drawn to. Here, casual visitors will find spaces to visit with others, lay back, take a nap in the car, or peek into the production workshops and learn volumes, simply by direct observation.

We connote the term “community stakeholders” to mean all participants. And we can’t imagine a better way to generate workplace synergy than by opening up the traditionally guarded corporate restaurant doors. By expressing an “all-win” philosophy—and quietly chanting a “buy local” mantra—this business directly confronts big issues that affect the economic health of our rural communities today. We call our endeavors “partnering forward,” because this seems to be the essential spirit behind everything we choose to do.

Uniquely, Café Chez Kiva:

- Serves as buyer of first resort for local growers, providing service personnel and throughput channels for small family farmers and conventional food distributors alike.
- Fosters a format for career mentorship that is attractive to everyone from expectant young mothers to established nutritional health coaches and culinary gurus.
- Renders open access to certified clean-rooms, kitchens and production workshops, elevating the local economic outlook by supplying material resources, managerial direction, business ideas and group support.
- Demonstrates a sustainable operating premise for remote farm communities, that we might encourage similar property owners to use their locations to meet similar community needs.
- Supplies material supports to schools, municipal agencies, associations, churches and allied organizations, broadening the impact of our mission and area outreach.
- Reduces direct food costs to needy consumers, through bakery surplus, workforce acceleration programs and produce gleaning.

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Our Synergistic “TEAL” Management System

The inclusive TEAL management system is unique in the way it nurtures leadership. This plays a vital role in our ability to assemble and sustain all three branches of our innovative production unit. It enables us to distribute accountability and material resources among vertical and horizontally arranged teams. This flexibility allows us to work as partners. To mentor new interns most effectively as they are brought into project-focus groups. The process enables us to establish a healthy rapport with community members and children of all ages.

This endeavor requires a constitutional rules system wherein each division works internally to provide the best possible services to the whole. In practice, a self-leveling workplace-hierarchy evolves by way of continual and timely discussion. Decisions are enacted based on active staff interest and in accord with the capabilities of the individuals involved. Critical administrative operating issues are not especially predicated on individual whims or consensus.

Functioning independently of the café, our leading product producers, as well as the catering and security staff, won't be as closely involved with the customers as those in the “not-for-profit” side of the operation.

In practice, half a dozen people with experience in a given specialty, like cakes and pastries, could effectively teach, or mentor up to a dozen interns in an open continuing education format. We do this so kids can gain self-confidence through simple acts of discovery. They may have a special fascination for baking or enjoy working with mechanical devices and understand technical processes. Maybe they will learn to excel at the business of farming. Without the pressure of school-fees, or expectations of payment through labor-in-trade deals, this workplace never stops prospecting dedicated future customers and employees.



Sustainable open systems, versus “single-ended” propositions

Throughout my life, (literally since age 4,) I’ve held an extraordinary interest in our family’s succession of very successful restaurants. At Juanita’s, as we entered our second decade, it became evident that in order to maintain sufficient customer value we needed to provide better employee outcomes. I learned that people will not independently seek to improve most Pyramidal organizations. That restaurants built on this platform strive to uphold an air of authenticity by following scripted formulas long after the owner’s excitement wears out. Typically, they do not make use of their original assets as they attempt to scale.

To us ‘*management*’ needn’t be a top-down proposition. Our community-centered model offers a stronger basis for hiring, and an effective means of rewarding those who contribute their best. Aligning teams in “Circles-Of-Three™,” encourages stronger alliances and creativity to emerge between members. This is empowering for trainees as they gain self-confidence, time management and critical thinking skills.

Expanding on this flexible production model can effectively breathe new life into rural communities and towns. It may also seem woefully unstructured to first time visitors as they witness some of our youngest and brightest interns actually act as if they are literally in charge.

Maintaining first-quality outputs in an environment that changes this rapidly involves a hub of independently directed teams, each possessing sufficient internal direction to insure that people feel completely confident about their role in the operations, as soon as possible.

We seek to match people’s strengths with our overall organizational needs, allocating sufficient human resources to present a firm back-end vertical chain of command to support a looser array of horizontal customer services and product offerings.

In proposing this food services mentoring center, as a community hub, farmer’s market and CSA storehouse, we can anticipate substantial built-in daily traffic. Our partner organization, *The Food Circle™* enhances our internal capabilities by way of a frictionless means of building stronger local supply partnerships and effective financial collaborations. Although we are not connected with *Kiva Micro Finance®* we endorse their support for individual business start-ups. We plan to offer similar incentives to employees wishing to become future vendors as well.

This multi-discipline model is readily franchisable, without need to conform to top-down, regulatory constraints. As people “get” the value in directly participating in their community, they begin “partnering forward” in support of our open mentorship and customer acquisition platform. This quickly becomes the townspeople’s hub, and quite possibly their very favorite “go-to” place for quite some time.

About Us:

Chez Kiva, Llc., is a collaborative food services corporation established in 2009, to create private label finished goods for an expanding quality and health conscious market sector.

Founding partners, Nancy Lee Bentley and Tom-Scott Gordon, have been immersed in culinary interests and holistic health for several decades.

We believe that clean, mineral rich water is required every day for a full range of healing conditions to occur. And, that the natural vitamins, minerals, proteins, amino acids and enzymes, and particularly those found in organic produce, are vital for healthy cell regeneration and maintaining cognizant mental functions. The absence of these nutrients affects everything people think and do.

After years of working independently toward our dream healthy food businesses, we finally realized that a shared hybrid version was what we needed to discuss and engineer. Suddenly, our efforts shifted to encompass a different range of challenges, leading us to explore a more critical range of potential stakeholder outcomes than either of us had imagined on our own.

In 3Q, 2015, Nancy pitched our ideas to a group of food and hospitality ‘tech’-investors from Bordeaux. Fairly certain that we would Not win, (having only rough financial projections and location interests at the time,) we remain steadfastly determined to pitch our US venture to these enlightened French vintners again at some future time. After dining and toasting their way across the USA, any real hope of “*penetrating America with more noble French brands,*” had possibly dissipated somewhere between Red Bank New Jersey, and Crowley’s Ridge, Arkansas. Kidding aside, we remain humbly grateful to 33Entrepreneurs and the judges at Bon AppéTech, for listening to our pitch and for inspiring us to arise to the challenge in taking this crucial first step.

Please also read: *Part II: “The Visit”*

Check us out at: <http://chezkiva.com>, or write to: chezkiva@att.net, for more information.