

Only Collett arranges memorable events

Arizona Republic

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WHO: Collett Kreizenbeck

WHEN: She went through 10 business plans before opening early this year.

WHAT: "Making an art of special occasions, whether you want to celebrate a memorable day, express thanks, honor someone or propose marriage. Only Collett can create a special experience," she said.

Kreizenbeck purchases gifts, plans celebrations, and presents small group workshops and consultations on gift-wrapping, table decoration and event and party design. Since she started, she's planned and presented a retreat, several brunches, luncheons, meetings and presentations, purchased gifts for the gifting-challenged, and organized one large and festive engagement party.

For each project, Kreizenbeck develops a proposal, with costs and budgets, and she specializes in exquisite coordinated packaging and presentation.

WHERE: Based in Phoenix.

HOW MUCH: The only details Kreizenbeck would admit are that she has a home office and that her initial major expenses have been investments in a stock of wrapping and packaging materials, business cards, and general office expenses. Her clients pay an hourly rate, plus the costs of whatever she's delivering.

HOW MANY: So far, just Kreizenbeck.

"But eventually? Oh, I want to open offices in other cities."

She's lived in five other states, and can envision meeting a distinct need in several urban areas.

WHY IT'S CALLED THAT: "I'm a complete perfectionist, and I love to give people something they really want or didn't even know they need. And I like to make it exactly what it needs to be. Every one has always said, 'Oh, only Collett would do it this way!' My name is my mother's maiden name, and when I needed a business name, it just seemed right."

BRIGHT IDEA: "Moving back to Phoenix. My foundation is here."

More than that, though, Kreizenbeck said the best idea she's had was just "having the guts to start this."

"It took a full year of planning, and constantly revising business plans. But this is my passion. I love doing this for people, and I always wanted to be an entrepreneur."

NOT SUCH A GOOD IDEA Nothing yet.

"After 10 drafts of that business plan, I felt pretty confident about doing this."

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: Finding that Phoenix isn't quite as sophisticated in some gift-giving arenas as cities along either coast. Kreizenbeck is planning on buying trips to New York City, among other urban centers, to procure additional supplies of the extraordinary and painstakingly coordinated packing, wrapping, and decorating materials she uses in her work.

WHY I DO THIS: "I've been doing parts of this for years."

Kreizenbeck suffered a major illness just as she was finishing college. She was ill for several years, but now sees that illness as a kind of blessing in disguise.

"I learned how important it is to be a caregiver, and I realized that, in my own way, through the care I take in giving and making people feel how special they are, I'm a caretaker, too. And life is too short not to do what you believe in."

THE NEXT BIG THING: Grow the business.

"I've been busy, really busy, since I started. There is just such a need for this."

LONG-TERM: "Definitely another office, possibly in San Francisco, at least the next one." She'd even like to add staff, something she freely admits will be difficult for a self-described "utter perfectionist" to do. How much of a perfectionist? Kreizenbeck cheerfully admits, "I rewrapped a package five times the other night. I wanted to have the seams perfectly aligned and straight. And it took . . . five times to do it right."

BOTTOM LINE: She's still looking forward to profitability, but "I believe in this, and I can see how it can work. I have a passion for this, and love the etiquette and thought that goes into it. I just know it's going to work."

What about all that gift buying?

"I work closely with the person who's giving the gift, to learn not just a budget limit, but what kind of person is getting the gift, what their personality is about, their hobbies, preferences, pleasures, even some of their wishes if it's relevant. And I bring a little more creativity to the purchasing."

So there's a distinct process to determining what could make a perfect gift?

"It's still the thought that counts."