



TPSA Supports Buyer Mission To Indonesia to Meet With Footwear SMEs

After meeting TPSA SMEs at the Footwear Sourcing at MAGIC trade show in Las Vegas, the owners of woman-owned Lisbeth Joe Shoes and start-up Honey Brown Shoes embarked on a buyer's mission in April 2019 to meet with TPSA-supported footwear company Maine St. to finalize footwear designs for export to North America.

Background

In September 2018, after Lisbeth Joe, a woman-owned, U.S.-based shoe start-up, attempted to design and develop "barefoot" shoes with one of TPSA's selected SMEs, they decided to move to a new supplier and were introduced to Maine St., another TPSA-supported footwear producer. Their relationship flourished, with Maine St. working to develop a sample that would meet Lisbeth Joe's needs. The company's owner, Leontyne Ashmore, participated in a buyer mission to Indonesia in April 2019 to finalize designs and footwear samples for export to North America.

The same week, start-up footwear company Honey Brown Shoes also made the trip to Indonesia to meet with Maine St. Tim Wallace, owner of Honey Brown, had met several TPSA-supported SMEs at the 2017 Footwear Sourcing at MAGIC trade show. Maine St. began a relationship with Tim, and men's shoe designs were developed, but it was apparent that a face-to-face meeting was needed to modify and finalize the samples.

Lisbeth Joe "Barefoot" Shoes

Lisbeth Joe is a woman-owned and operated company that was crowdfunded on IndieGoGo, a site that allows people to raise funds for various projects including start-up businesses. Owner Leontyne Ashmore decided to develop "barefoot"



Lisbeth Joe meeting with Maine St.

shoes because of a foot condition she developed after the birth of her first child. It was recommended that she walk barefoot, but as she needed to go back to work, she needed a footwear solution, and Lisbeth Joe's minimalist shoes were born.

The company provided Maine St. with a specific requirement to develop a last, which is the shape of the finished product, from an original shoe they provided. Maine St. began the process of developing the last and designing the shoe to Lisbeth Joe's specifications. The buyer mission was an opportunity to work together to construct the shoes.



Design meeting with Honey Brown Shoes.

Maine St. developed the last from scratch, as well as the desired design construction and outsole. During the buyer mission, the shoe underwent many modifications, including a corrected toe cap and further changes to the topline and sides of the shoe and the elastic in the back.

"It's amazing how much Maine St.'s design team did in the 96 hours I was there. While I was contemplating staying a few days more, the appointment of Inda and her attention to detail made this unnecessary."

—LEONTYNE ASHMORE
Lisbeth Joe Shoes

Another issue addressed during the mission was the requirement for wider-than-normal outsoles. The outside sole measurement is a requirement unique to the barefoot category of shoes. It was difficult for Lisbeth Joe to describe, and took months of e-mail and online discussions with Maine St. to come to an understanding, but was successfully resolved by both parties working together during the buyer mission.

During the visit, Lisbeth Joe and Maine St. were able to agree on payment terms, a critical path for the final steps, and a target delivery date of July 2019.

Honey Brown Shoes

Tim Wallace, the owner of Honey Brown Shoes, met Maine St. while he was working for another company. As their relationship strengthened, Tim

narrowed his focus to his own start-up, concentrating on men's shoes for ballroom dancing. Honey Brown was looking for shoes that are very flexible and as "slippery" as possible for dancing, but look like classic dress shoes.

"Coming to the factory gave me an increased appreciation of the complexity of shoe design. Lisa, Phil, and Randy were a huge help in finalizing my collection. I would never have seen the Vachetta option for my uppers if I had not come on this trip."

—TIM WALLACE
Honey Brown Shoes

Honey Brown had specific and detailed requirements, several of which turned out to be difficult to explain remotely. In early March 2019, Tim sent shoe samples to Maine St. to help clarify these issues. The samples were held at customs in Jakarta for three weeks and required intervention by the TPSA office in Indonesia and the Indonesian Ministry of Trade to have the shipment cleared and sent to Maine St. After receiving the samples, Maine St. developed three shoes for the Honey Brown collection.

Honey Brown sent detailed construction specifications to Maine St. Key aspects of these shoes were the heel shape and the materials used. All men's leather-soled shoes have a rubber heel lift to avoid wear and tear, but the buyer's requirement was for leather soles and heels. Maine St. struggled with this type of construction because of the wear-and-tear issue. It was discussed during the



Modifications to the shoe made by Maine St. for Lisbeth Joe.



Discussion with Lisbeth Joe at the Maine St. factory.

buyer mission, and both parties agreed that the heel would be leather, hand-stained to match the colour of the upper.

Maine St. provided Honey Brown with modified samples that were reviewed and discussed at length.

During the buyer mission, most of the components of this small collection were changed to the satisfaction of both Maine St. and the buyer. Honey Brown has placed an initial order of 500 pairs for July or August 2019 completion, depending on the timely arrival of the new last and the confirmation of all final details.

Seminar on Exporting Footwear Products to Canada

While TPSA footwear expert Phil Zwibel was in Indonesia for the buyer mission, he also delivered a seminar in Jakarta on "Opportunities and Potential for Indonesian Footwear Products in the Canadian Market." Fifty-four participants (26 women and 28 men) attended from the Ministry of Trade,



Discussion with Tim Wallace at Maine St. factory.

industry associations, and private sector firms. The seminar presentations focused on Canadian market information, including trends, designs, size of the market, competitors, agents, distributors, and wholesalers. Mr. Zwibel also shared his observations and learnings from the TPSA program's interventions over the past three years, including the export successes achieved by the footwear SMEs.

About the TPSA Project

TPSA is a five-year, C\$12-million project funded by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada. The project is executed by The Conference Board of Canada, and the primary implementation partner is the Directorate General for National Export Development, Ministry of Trade.

TPSA is designed to provide training, research, and technical assistance to Indonesian government agencies, the private sector—particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—academics, and civil society organizations on trade-related information, trade policy analysis, regulatory reforms, and trade and investment promotion by Canadian, Indonesian, and other experts from public and private organizations.



Reviewing the collection produced by Maine St. for Honey Brown.



Participants at the seminar.

The overall objective of TPSA is to support higher sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty in Indonesia through increased trade and trade-enabling investment between Indonesia and Canada. TPSA is intended to increase sustainable and gender-responsive trade and investment opportunities, particularly for Indonesian SMEs, and to increase the use of trade and investment analysis by Indonesian stakeholders for expanded trade and investment partnerships between Indonesia and Canada.

The expected immediate outcomes of TPSA are:

- improved trade and investment information flows between Indonesia and Canada, particularly for the private sector, SMEs, and women entrepreneurs, including trade-related environmental risks and opportunities;
- enhanced private sector business links between Indonesia and Canada, particularly for SMEs;

- strengthened analytical skills and knowledge of Indonesian stakeholders on how to increase trade and investment between Indonesia and Canada;
- improved understanding of regulatory rules and best practices for trade and investment.

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