

## The Path Forward for Dusty Rocker Boots

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### Synopsis

Leslie Thompson started a western boot business based on her idea of an interchangeable decorative inlay, visible through a patterned opening in the boot shaft. Her process was to receive shipments of the boots from her only supplier in Mexico, store them in a warehouse near her home in west Texas, and fill orders to retail stores. Her part time sales force in the field sold to small boutique retailers, with minimal online orders direct to consumers. While the quality of the Mexican-made boots was excellent, her lead time was increasing and becoming more of a problem with keeping her customers satisfied and was a constraint for future growth. She was thinking about several options for sourcing the boot production. She must also decide if she should continue performing distribution/order fulfillment herself versus outsourcing that process, and if she should try to sell more boots online directly to consumers.

### Learning Outcomes

In completing this assignment, students will be able to:

1. Compare the pros and cons of a single source supplier.
2. Investigate the significance of a supplier cluster for a specific industry.
3. Evaluate make/buy sourcing options for distribution/order fulfillment.
4. Evaluate make/buy production sourcing options, both foreign and domestic.
5. Assess the financial and operational impacts of shifting from an environment dominated by batch wholesale orders from retail stores, to a mixed demand environment having a greater proportion of single orders to individual consumers.

### Application

The case is for use in operations management, logistics/supply chain management, and entrepreneurship courses.

### Key Words

operations management, supply chain management, logistics, distribution, entrepreneurship

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