

# Five Themes Defining Footwear and Beyond

## Featuring insights from Beth Goldstein

U.S. footwear sales improved during the first half of 2018. With many brands and retailers in transition, market share is up for grabs. Here's a look at what's driving the turnaround and the trends leading growth.



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### **The market has returned to growth.**

Total footwear annual dollar volume hit a new peak at \$70.7B in the first half of the year. All segments and genders are growing, but men's footwear and the sport leisure category are the biggest drivers. Are you getting your fair share?

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### **Active and comfort are (still) killing it.**

Comfort is the new fashion, and this trend is here to stay. The biggest contributors to footwear growth across all segments are active/leisure and comfort brands. Consumers are choosing comfort over dress as workplaces and society overall have become more casual.

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### **The first half of the year is unpredictable.**

Seasons continue to blur, and consumers are looking for season-less footwear options. As a result, there has been very little consistency in top growth silhouettes in the first half of the year during the past three years. You can better plan for the unpredictable by leveraging your various selling channels to meet consumer demand all year round.

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### **The pace of innovation is picking up.**

Innovations in eco-friendly materials are adding newness to the market. In footwear, players leading the charge here are focused on sustainability, simplicity, transparency, and an omnichannel experience. Don't fall behind. Over-communicate features and benefits, but don't get too caught up describing the details.

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### **Sustainability and transparency are gaining traction.**

41 percent of consumers say eco-friendly/sustainable materials are important to consumers considering footwear purchases. 20 percent of consumers are socially concerned about human rights and fair wages when it comes to the production of footwear. Younger consumers are more likely to be concerned about these issues – and they're your future consumer base.

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