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Fashion Sense

Sandra Reiman '12

Last fall, while her [MBA](#) classmates were enjoying the weekend in Pittsburgh, Sandra Reiman found herself on an isolated dirt road in [El Cerrito, Colombia](#), en route to a tannery celebrated for its old-world leather craftsmanship. Reiman was on a mission. She had the crazy idea of starting a luxury handbag company. And she wanted Colombian artisans to hand-make her bags, for Colombia was her birthplace and home until she moved to Pennsylvania at age 7.

"Finding the right leather tannery was the most difficult," Reiman recalls. "The place we picked was in a small remote town. The tannery is its lifeblood. Typically, they don't work with small clients, but I got a tour, which was unusual."

As it turns out, Reiman (MBA'12) had found her leather maker. The partnership was an important milestone in the creation of [Sandra Cadavid LLC](#). She markets the handbags—which Reiman describes as inspired by Cartagena, designed in Pittsburgh, and handcrafted in Colombia—to career-driven women who have disposable income, but aren't about to plop down \$2,000 for a Louis Vuitton bag. Today, her Sandra Cadavid bags, in addition to being sold online, are carried in a handful of boutiques in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Boston, and Denver. Early on, she received a chance celebrity endorsement from E! News anchor Giuliana Rancic and later her bag showed up on the Today show.

Reiman admits that fashion is not the first industry that comes to mind when one thinks of business schools. Finance, manufacturing, health care, consumer packaged goods, energy, and others claim that distinction. But in truth, a clothing brand's success owes as much to strategy and infrastructure, sourcing and marketing as it does the artistic design. Alumni records show that Reiman, who formerly worked at PNC Financial Services Group, is one of hundreds of University of Pittsburgh MBAs and BSBA's who hold prominent positions in what can broadly be called the clothing retail industry. These Pitt alumni stories show that while a culture's aesthetic tastes may change, employment prospects in this sector are never out of style.



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