

Detailed Entry Strategy and Business Plan: Lucchese Boot Company's Expansion into Australia

Global Business with an Ethical Lens 084 – Group 4

Executive Summary

Lucchese Bootmaker has built its reputation over 140 years on craftsmanship, exclusivity, and intentional growth. Since its founding in 1883, the company has avoided mass-market expansion, focusing instead on maintaining the integrity of its artisanal identity and Western heritage. As Lucchese considers international expansion, the goal is to identify a market that allows for controlled, sustainable growth while preserving brand authenticity and superior craftsmanship.

Australia emerges as a strategic candidate due to its strong consumer purchasing power, appreciation for quality leather goods, and cultural resonance with Lucchese's rugged yet refined image. The Australian luxury footwear market reached approximately USD 887.6 million in 2024 and is projected to expand to USD 1.2 billion by 2033, with a steady 3.1% CAGR (IMARC Group, 2025). Australia's stable economy, high GDP per capita, and transparent legal and regulatory system further strengthen its attractiveness.

Additionally, the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement (AUSFTA) eliminates tariffs on nearly all U.S. goods, ensuring cost-efficient market entry and smoother logistics (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2024; DFAT, 2024). Combined with strong consumer demand for ethically made, heritage-inspired products, Australia presents both economic and cultural compatibility.

To guide Lucchese's decision, this report evaluates four analytical lenses: legal structure, cost structure, strategic alignment, and market fit. The goal is to recommend a market entry strategy that maximizes control, minimizes risk, and aligns with Lucchese's brand philosophy of "growth through authenticity".

Market Entry Strategy

Overview of Expansion Goals

Lucchese Bootmaker has built its brand on intentional, heritage-driven growth. Since its founding in 1883, the company has expanded selectively, maintaining its handcrafted production and premium positioning. As Lucchese considers international expansion, it seeks a market that aligns with its artisanal values, luxury image, and ethical craftsmanship standards. Australia presents a compelling case due to its mature luxury retail sector, strong economic fundamentals, and cultural appreciation for quality and authenticity.

The Australian luxury footwear market was valued at approximately USD 887.6 million in 2024 and is projected to grow to USD 1.2 billion by 2033, representing a compound annual growth rate of 3.1% (IMARC Group, 2025). This steady growth, combined with Australia’s affluent middle- and upper-class consumer base, supports Lucchese’s focus on limited yet high-value market entry.

From a trade perspective, the Australia - United States Free Trade Agreement (AUSFTA) eliminates tariffs on nearly all U.S. manufactured goods entering Australia, streamlining import processes and supporting Lucchese’s cost efficiency (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2024; DFAT, 2024). Moreover, Australia’s political stability, transparent legal system, and low corruption (CPI score = 75/100) make it one of the most favorable destinations for U.S. investment (Transparency International, 2025).

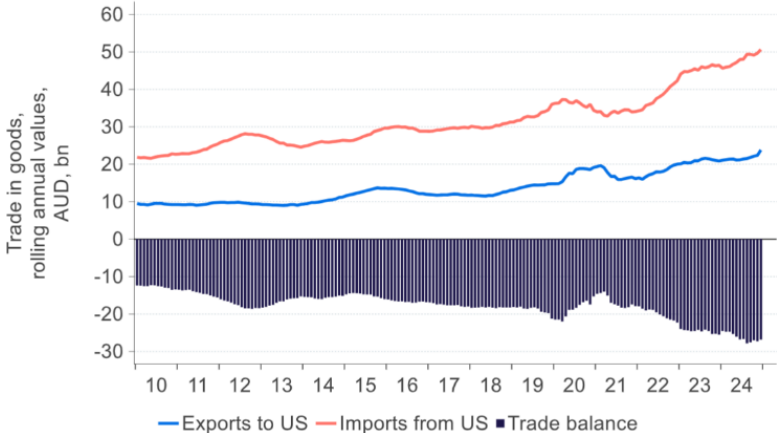
With these factors in mind, our team evaluated three main market entry modes, which are Exporting, Joint Venture, and Wholly Owned Subsidiary, to determine which best balances cost, risk, and brand control.

Entry Mode Comparison

Exporting (Direct-to-Consumer and Boutique Retail Partnerships)

Exporting offers Lucchese a low-risk, low-cost method of entering the market. Under AUSFTA, over 99% of U.S. goods enter Australia duty-free, while import Goods and Services Tax (GST) remains at 10% (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2024). This allows Lucchese to leverage its existing e-commerce infrastructure to serve Australian consumers directly, supported by established logistics providers such as DHL and Australia Post.

Australia’s goods trade deficit with the US amounted to AUD26.8bn in the year to December 2024



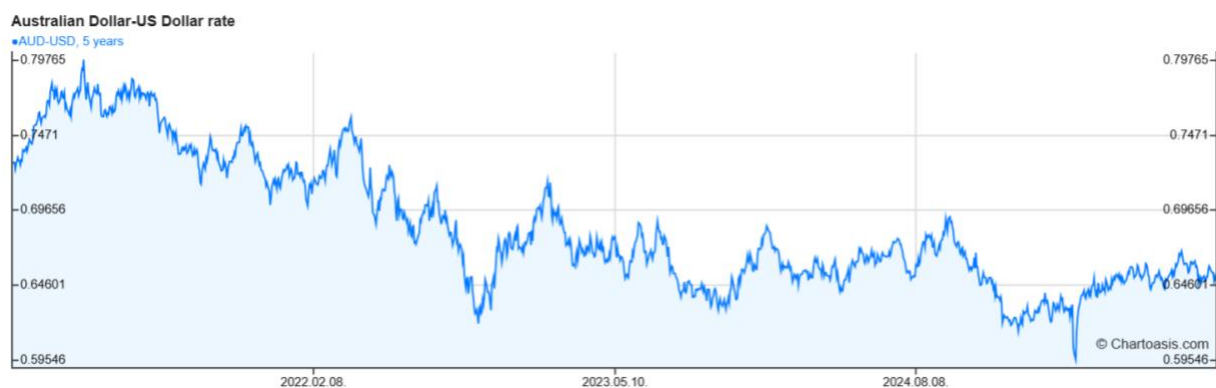
Source: ABS, Macrobond, ANZ Research

However, export limits control over customer experience and brand presentation, which are critical elements for a luxury brand. The absence of a physical retail presence could hinder Lucchese's ability to convey its heritage craftsmanship and luxury aesthetic in a market where experiential shopping is vital for differentiation. Thus, while exporting serves as a cost-efficient entry point, it should be considered a short-term or testing phase rather than a sustainable long-term strategy.

Joint Venture (Local Partnership Model)

A joint venture with a well-established Australian luxury retailer offers Lucchese a strategic balance between brand control and local market expertise. Australia's luxury retail industry, valued at roughly USD 7.7 billion (IBISWorld, 2025), is driven by high-income consumers who favor heritage craftsmanship and premium materials. Partnering with retailers such as David Jones or The Iconic would allow Lucchese to leverage their existing infrastructure, market credibility, and customer base already familiar with luxury footwear brands like R.M. Williams and Ariat. This approach enables Lucchese to introduce its Western-inspired luxury identity in a way that complements the current market landscape rather than competing directly within it.

From a legal standpoint, establishing a joint venture in Australia is relatively straightforward. The country's common law system closely mirrors that of the United States, and foreign investors enjoy a transparent, low-barrier environment for business formation. Australia ranks among the top 15 economies globally for ease of starting a business, supported by clear regulatory frameworks and efficient administrative procedures (World Bank, 2025). Business registration through the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) typically costs around AUD \$538-\$700, depending on structure, making setup relatively affordable compared to major European markets (Australian Government Business, 2025).

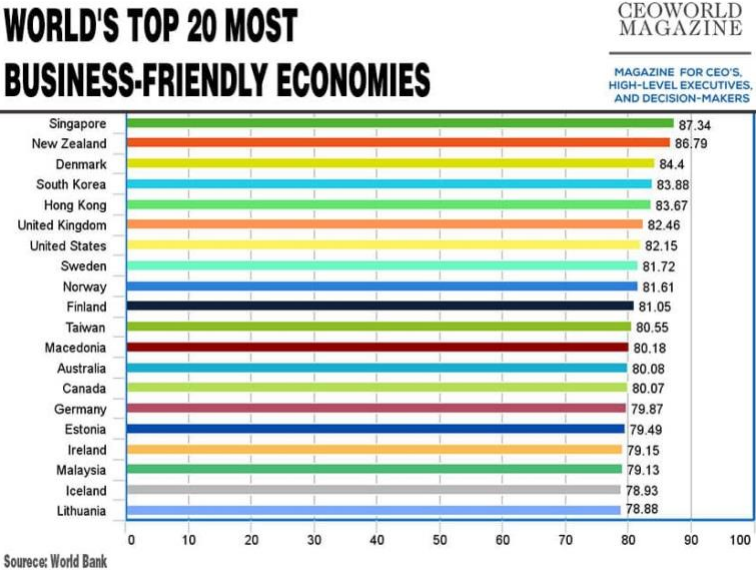


Cost-wise, a joint venture allows Lucchese to share investment burdens in retail space, marketing, and operations, thereby mitigating its financial exposure during early market entry. Currency volatility remains a moderate risk, with the AUD/USD exchange rate averaging 0.65-0.68 USD per AUD over the past five years (Trading Economics, 2025). However, this can be managed through pricing flexibility and financial hedging strategies.

Strategically, a joint venture aligns strongly with Lucchese’s long-term objectives. It maintains significant brand control while integrating valuable local expertise in consumer behavior, seasonal retail cycles, and luxury market expectations. Moreover, a local partner can assist Lucchese in navigating Australia’s increasing emphasis on sustainability and ethical sourcing, which are becoming critical differentiators in the country’s premium footwear segment (TechSci Research, 2025).

Wholly Owned Subsidiary (Flagship Retail Store)

A Wholly Owned Subsidiary (WOS), like a flagship boutique in Sydney or Melbourne, would give Lucchese full operational and branding control. Australia’s Ease of Doing Business ranking is among the world’s best, reflecting its transparent regulations and robust infrastructure (World Bank, 2025). However, this approach comes with significantly higher upfront costs.



Retail leases in Sydney’s Pitt Street Mall, one of the country’s premier luxury districts, average over AUD \$8,000 per square meters annually, alongside high labor costs (minimum wage is AUD \$24/hour) (Fair Work Commission, 2025). Although the WOS model maximizes brand experience and long-term equity, it carries the highest financial and operational risk. As such, it should only be pursued once brand awareness and demand are firmly established through earlier entry modes.

Competitor Strategies and Market Fit

Domestic competitor R.M. Williams, acquired by Tattarang in 2020, successfully revitalized its luxury craftsmanship positioning through localized storytelling and selective global expansion (IBISWorld, 2025). Similarly, Ariat has built its presence in Australia through selective partnerships rather than company-owned retail outlets. These examples suggest that strategic partnerships and gradual expansion are more effective than immediate flagship investments for footwear brands entering the Australian luxury segment.

Lucchese's Western heritage and handcrafted production provide differentiation in a market saturated with European luxury aesthetics. By emphasizing its Texan authenticity, sustainability practices, and limited-edition craftsmanship, Lucchese can appeal to Australian consumers seeking individuality and ethical luxury (Vogue Business, 2025). This aligns closely with evolving consumer values that favor heritage, sustainability, and transparency (TechSci Research, 2025).

Recommendation and Rationale

After weighing the legal, financial, and strategic dimensions, Lucchese should adopt a phased hybrid entry strategy:

Phase 1: Phase 1 (Years 1 to 2 Exporting and Boutique Partnerships)

Launch direct-to-consumer e-commerce and collaborate with select luxury boutiques in Sydney and Melbourne. This phase will validate demand, collect consumer data, and establish brand visibility with minimal financial risk.

Phase 2 (Years 2 to 4): Joint Venture Formation

Partner with a reputable Australian retailer to gain physical presence, local management expertise, and shared operational costs. This move will allow Lucchese to maintain brand control while expanding retail footprints sustainably.

Phase 3 (Years 4 to 5+): Wholly Owned Flagship Store

Once brand traction is proven, Lucchese can establish a flagship store in a prime location to solidify its luxury positioning and long-term market presence.

This phased strategy ensures control, scalability, and risk management, aligning with Lucchese's legacy of deliberate, sustainable growth. The Joint Venture phase represents the

optimal balance between financial prudence and brand integrity in Australia’s luxury footwear market.

Competitive Analysis

Competitors

The Australian boot market is competitive, with a mix of domestic brands, international Western footwear companies, and global luxury fashion houses. Key players include R.M. Williams, Ariat, Tony Bianco, and global luxury brands such as Gucci and Louis Vuitton, as well as notable heritage brands like Blundstone. Understanding these competitors provides context for how Lucchese can position itself uniquely in the Australian market.

Competitor	Market Position	Key Strengths	Key Weaknesses
R.M. Williams	Premium heritage Australian brand	Deep cultural connection, trusted quality, strong domestic loyalty, large retail footprint	Limited variety in styles beyond classic Chelsea boot; less “Western luxury” aesthetic
Ariat	Performance Western and equestrian brand	Affordable, durable, widespread retail presence, comfort technology	Mass-market perception, less luxury appeal
Blundstone	Iconic durable lifestyle/work boot brand, native to AU	Known for comfort, practicality, and rugged design; strong Australian identity and export presence	Less luxury appeal, workwear-focused aesthetic
Tony Bianco	Women’s fashion footwear brand, native to AU	Customization options (Made-to-Order), stylish design, Australian-owned, boutique presence	Focused on women only, mid-luxury pricing, limited Western/heritage appeal
Luxury fashion brands (e.g. Gucci)	Global luxury houses	High prestige, strong marketing, trend-driven	Less authentic craftsmanship in Western-style boots, much higher prices

Market Positions and Strategic Advantages

Direct Competition

R.M. Williams is Australia’s most dominant bootmaker, holding the top position by revenue in the domestic footwear manufacturing industry (IBISWorld, 2025). Founded in 1932 by Reginald Murray Williams, the brand was established after Williams learned to make and repair leather goods in the South Australian outback (R.M. Williams, n.d.). Over the decades, R.M. Williams has become deeply woven into Australia’s cultural identity, representing rugged

craftsmanship, endurance, and national pride. The company's success is rooted in its reputation for producing durable, handcrafted leather boots, supported by its extensive retail network and a loyal domestic customer base. Its core audience primarily consists of middle- to upper-income consumers who value quality, heritage, and supporting Australian-made goods (R.M. Williams, n.d.).

Structurally, R.M. Williams operates as a proprietary company that generates most of its income from the footwear manufacturing industry. In 2021, the company reported total revenue of approximately \$193,243,000 USD, including sales and other revenue streams (IBISWorld, 2021). Beyond footwear, R.M. Williams also derives income from the manufacturing, importing, wholesaling, and retailing of clothing and accessories, as well as publishing ventures like R.M. Williams OUTBACK magazine (IBISWorld, 2025). The brand's iconic Craftsman boot, a staple of Australian style, averages around \$650 USD, depending on the specific leather and finish (R.M. Williams, n.d.). This pricing places it firmly within the premium footwear segment, appealing to consumers seeking high-quality craftsmanship and heritage design, but also creating a potential barrier for price-sensitive buyers.

Customer perception of R.M. Williams remains largely positive, with many consumers and reviewers describing it as "a true icon of Australia" and affirming that "if you're an Australian male, you own a pair of R.M. Williams or you are on your way to buying one" (Nick English, 2025). However, recent consumer feedback and media coverage indicates emerging cracks in the brand's once-untouchable reputation. Some customers have voiced dissatisfaction with declining quality and inconsistent service: "I've been a loyal R.M. Williams customer for years, but their service has completely deteriorated... For a premium Australian brand that charges premium prices and trades on its heritage and trust, silence and zero customer care are unacceptable. R.M. Williams has lost the quality, responsiveness, and respect it once stood for" (Elad S., 2025). Others reported durability issues inconsistent with the brand's image, with one reviewer stating, "Saved up for the pricey boots with the expectation they'd be the last boots I'd ever need. Six months later the sole has worn through, and repairs cost \$200 each time" (Dave McCafferey, 2025).

Local Australian media have also highlighted these concerns. The New Daily (2024) reported a growing narrative around the "declining quality of boots," citing analysis by leatherworker and YouTuber Weston Kay of Rose Anvil. After dissecting a pair of R.M. Williams' boots, Kay concluded that the heel construction had shifted to cheaper materials following the company's 2020 acquisition by Andrew Forrest for approximately \$190 million USD (The New Daily, 2024). These findings reinforce a broader consumer perception that R.M. Williams' craftsmanship may have diminished in the years following the ownership change.

For Lucchese, this changing landscape presents both a challenge and a strategic opportunity. While R.M. Williams still commands strong brand loyalty and national pride, emerging skepticism about its quality and customer service opens space for a premium foreign

brand known for consistency, craftsmanship, and customer care. Lucchese's reputation for bespoke bootmaking, meticulous hand-stitching, and exceptional fit could resonate with Australian consumers who are growing wary of mass-produced "heritage" products that no longer meet their expectations. Furthermore, Lucchese's strong emphasis on customization, a feature R.M. Williams largely lacks, could serve as a major differentiator in a market where consumers increasingly value personalization and authenticity. Ultimately, R.M. Williams remains a strong competitor with deep cultural roots and dominant market presence.

In addition to R.M. Williams, Ariat is a global Western and equestrian performance footwear brand with a strong and growing footprint in the Australian market, supported by over 280 brick-and-mortar retail partners across the country (Ariat, n.d.). The company entered the Australian market in the early 2000s, initially focusing on equestrian and performance gear before expanding into casual, Western, and workwear apparel (Fibre2Fashion, 2025). Today, Ariat Australia is widely recognized among both rural and urban consumers, from ranchers to city professionals, for delivering technically advanced boots. The brand's estimated Australian revenue is approximately \$43.8 million USD, positioning it as one of the leading international players in the Australian boot and workwear market (ZoomInfo, 2025).

Ariat's product portfolio reflects its broad appeal and market adaptability. While the brand's global line includes styles such as cowboy, work, hiking, Chelsea, and equestrian boots, its Australian market is dominated by the Heritage Roper and Heritage Western R Toe styles, both celebrated for their classic design, comfort, and durability (Ariat, n.d.). These models consistently rank as bestsellers on Ariat Australia's website and are frequently praised by consumers for their versatility and reliability. Some designs, such as the "Stanbroke" boot, mirrors the iconic pull-on silhouette popularized by R.M. Williams.

Ariat's success also lies in its technology-driven craftsmanship. Unlike heritage-based competitors, Ariat has built its identity on performance innovation, engineering boots that perform under the physical demands of riding, outdoor work, and rural life. Its signature ATS (Advanced Torque Stability) footbed system provides superior cushioning and ergonomic support, setting it apart from traditional bootmakers (Ariat, n.d.). The company collaborates with world-class biomechanical research institutions and testing labs to improve product performance, comfort, and durability (Equitana Melbourne, 2021). By continuously innovating materials that are lighter, cooler, and more resilient than competitors', Ariat reinforces its reputation as a functional leader rather than a luxury brand.

Their focus on performance is supported by strong strategic partnerships and community engagement. Ariat is the Official Clothing and Footwear Partner for Equitana Melbourne and the Australian Equestrian Team, which are two of the country's most prominent equestrian organizations (Equestrian Australia, 2014). These collaborations not only strengthen Ariat's credibility among professional riders and enthusiasts but also build emotional connection and visibility in a niche, loyal customer segment. In contrast to competitors like R.M. Williams,

which rely heavily on heritage branding, Ariat's identity is grounded in innovation and reliability, appealing to both men and women who lead active, outdoor-oriented lives.

From a pricing standpoint, Ariat offers a wide range that broadens its market accessibility. Its premium exotics line, which includes Nile Crocodile, American Alligator, Caiman Belly, Full-Quill Ostrich, and American Bison leathers, retails between approximately \$350–\$1,000 USD, while its core performance and casual lines are priced affordably in the \$150–\$350 USD range (Ariat, n.d.). This tiered structure allows Ariat to capture diverse market segments, from everyday workers and ranchers to high-end equestrian riders. Lucchese will need to strategically consider this when designing a product line that reflects the versatility and lifestyle demands of the Australian market.

Ariat products are designed and developed in the United States but manufactured globally, with most leathers sourced from American cattle ranchers (Ariat, n.d.). While this allows for scalability and cost efficiency, it also distances the brand from local production narratives, presenting a weakness in a market like Australia, where 86% of consumers say buying Australian-made is important to them (Sancell, 2025). Furthermore, Ariat's mass-market perception, while supporting accessibility, limits its aspirational value among luxury consumers seeking exclusivity and bespoke craftsmanship.

Ultimately, Ariat's position in the Australian market demonstrates the strong appetite for Western-inspired, durable, and performance-driven footwear. However, its broad accessibility, industrial manufacturing, and limited bespoke options leave a clear opening for Lucchese to establish itself in the high-end segment, offering the refinement, heritage, and craftsmanship that elevate the Western boot from functional to fashion icon.

Blundstone, a Tasmanian heritage brand, is a globally recognized work and lifestyle boot manufacturer. Known for its slip-on comfort and rugged construction, it appeals to tradespeople, travelers, and city dwellers (Blundstone, N.D.). Strengths include durable, versatile, and comfortable products, iconic branding, accessible pricing, and exports to over 70 countries. Weaknesses are less luxury appeal and a focus on functionality over craftsmanship. Blundstone's Australian revenue is estimated at \$33.3 million USD (IBIS World, 2025), and its bestselling Men's Chelsea Boot retails for around \$220 USD (Blundstone, N.D.). Time notes that, "in its 15th decade, the 100% Tasmanian family-owned company is having a major global moment" (Time, 2024).

Indirect Competition

Tony Bianco is a 100% Australian-owned and family-run women's fashion footwear brand founded in 1972 in Melbourne, Australia (Tony Bianco, n.d.). The brand focuses on modern, minimalistic luxury, offering products with "considered details, dynamic heel heights, and a focus on leather textures" (Tony Bianco, n.d.). It currently operates 10 boutiques across

Australia and sells through various national and international retailers. The average boot retails for around \$300 USD, positioning the brand within the affordable luxury category.

Tony Bianco's product line includes heels, boots, flats, handbags, and a Made To Order collection that allows customers to select a style and tailor the leather and finish to create a personalized pair. Each Made To Order shoe is handcrafted and delivered within 8 to 10 weeks (Tony Bianco, n.d.).

When compared to Lucchese's fully Custom Boot programs, Tony Bianco's customization is more limited and fashion-oriented. While Tony Bianco emphasizes personalization through style and finish, Lucchese offers true craftsmanship-based customization, allowing clients to choose from a range of leathers, toe and heel shapes, stitch patterns, and detailing.

This comparison highlights an opportunity for Lucchese to differentiate itself in Australia by appealing to consumers who value heritage craftsmanship, authenticity, and longevity rather than trend-driven fashion. Tony Bianco's success with Made To Order demonstrates local demand for personalized, handcrafted footwear, suggesting that Lucchese could successfully position itself as a premium, artisanal alternative that merges Western tradition with luxury design.

In a broader sense, luxury fashion brands, such as Gucci, Prada, and Louis Vuitton position themselves as an indirect competitor to Lucchese. The Australian luxury goods market is estimated to generate around \$4.0 billion USD in revenue in 2024, with a projected annual growth rate of 3-4% (Vogue, 2025; Statista, 2025). Within this market, Louis Vuitton is the leading luxury fashion brand by revenue, with an estimated \$608.2 million USD in 2025 (IBISWorld, 2025). Other major global luxury brands, such as Gucci and Prada, offer high-end footwear with prices ranging from \$1,170–\$2,600 USD per pair in Australia (Gucci Australia, 2025).

These brands primarily compete on prestige, design, and trend-driven appeal, targeting urban, affluent consumers who value exclusivity and status over functionality or Western heritage. While they dominate the luxury market, their focus is on fashion aesthetics rather than artisanal Western-style bootmaking, creating a clear differentiation opportunity for Lucchese. Lucchese can position itself in Australia as a heritage-driven, handcrafted luxury boot brand, appealing to consumers who value authenticity, craftsmanship, and longevity, areas that global fashion houses do not emphasize in this market.

Differentiation

Lucchese can differentiate itself in the Australian market through a combination of heritage, craftsmanship, and premium service. Unlike R.M. Williams, which has experienced declining product quality and customer service in recent years (The New Daily, 2024; Nick

English, 2025; Dave McCafferey, 2025), and Ariat, which focuses primarily on performance-oriented boots for rural and equestrian consumers (Ariat, N.D.), Lucchese emphasizes handcrafted Western boots made from premium leathers, including exotic hides, with a level of customization that surpasses competitors. While Tony Bianco offers a limited Made-to-Order program for women's fashion boots (Tony Bianco, N.D.), Lucchese allows customers to choose leather types, toe and heel shapes, stitch patterns, and intricate detailing, creating a truly personalized luxury experience.

In addition to craftsmanship, Lucchese stands out through durability and long-lasting quality. While Australian consumers are accustomed to high-quality boots, such as R.M. Williams' classic boots averaging \$650 USD, recent reviews indicate dissatisfaction with R.M. Williams' quality and repair policies (Nick English, 2025; Dave McCafferey, 2025), which presents an opportunity for Lucchese to emphasize superior construction and reliability. Lucchese also targets a distinct market segment: affluent consumers who value authenticity, Western lifestyle alignment, and personalized luxury, in contrast to Ariat's functional value proposition, Tony Bianco's fashion-focused offering, and global luxury brands like Gucci and Prada that emphasize trend-driven style and urban prestige (Gucci Australia, 2025; IBISWorld, 2025).

Finally, Lucchese can leverage premium service and customer experience as a differentiator. Consumer feedback highlights a decline in service quality from domestic brands such as R.M. Williams (Elad S, 2025), which allows Lucchese to position itself as a brand where personalized consultations, e-commerce support, and aftercare reflect the premium nature of the product. Its pricing strategy, situated above mid-tier fashion boots and comparable to global luxury brands, reinforces its exclusivity, while its focus on heritage and Western craftsmanship offers a distinct alternative to both domestic performance boots and international fashion-focused luxury brands. Overall, Lucchese's entry into the Australian market allows it to bridge the gap between tradition and luxury, appealing to consumers seeking authentic, high-quality, and customizable Western boots.

Marketing and Sales Plan

Consumer and Market Segmentation

Australia's population is concentrated in a few major urban centers, with nearly 70% of people living in the eight capital cities. The most notable of these cities are Sydney and Melbourne, which together account for more than 10 million residents (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024). These cities are not only economic hubs but also trendsetters for lifestyle and fashion, making them the ideal starting points for Lucchese's brand introduction. Outer suburban areas of Sydney and Melbourne are expanding quickly, attracting younger households who are still willing to invest in high-quality goods (The Australian, 2025). Australia's median disposable

household income is about AU\$1,192 per week, showing a relatively strong middle class with solid purchasing power (ABS, 2023). With household growth expected to continue rising in the next 20 years, Lucchese can expect a steady influx of new consumers moving into higher spending brackets (ABS, 2024).

Economically, Australia's luxury footwear market, offers a stable base for a heritage-focused brand like Lucchese (IMARC Group, 2024). With the market being valued at US\$887.6 million in 2024 and projected to exceed US\$1.2 billion by 2033, there is no doubt room for opportunity for the company to tap into. Lucchese's potential customers fall into three main profiles. First, there are the "luxury professionals." This group consists of career urban buyers who value craftsmanship and understated prestige. Second, "urban-outdoor crossovers" are a younger group of professionals and creatives who want versatile products that move seamlessly from city to country. Finally, "heritage enthusiasts" are drawn to authentic, long-lasting products with a strong backstory. All three of these groups appreciate quality but tend to reject brands that flaunt wealth or exclusivity too loudly. This attitude is tied to Australia's cultural trait known as tall-poppy syndrome, where people or brands perceived as showing off success are subtly "cut down." (Billan, 2023). Tall-poppy syndrome will be covered a little more when talking about Brand Positioning.

Australia's culture prizes modesty and authenticity. Fortunately, these values align perfectly with Lucchese's handcrafted, purpose-driven approach to doing business. The brand's positioning as quiet luxury could resonate deeply with Australians, who tend to respect genuine craftsmanship (Peeters, 2004). In addition to these cultural traits, Australia is a digitally advanced market, which will make it easy for a U.S. brand to connect directly with consumers. Internet penetration sits around 95%, and roughly three-quarters of the population use social media regularly (DataReportal, 2024). Mobile phones are now the main way Australians access the internet, with smartphone adoption in the mid-80% range (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2024). For Lucchese, this means that there is a strong opportunity to build awareness through mobile marketing ideas, personalized online experiences, and digital customization that highlights craftsmanship.

Brand Positioning

Entering the Australian market presents a large opportunity for Lucchese to expand its luxury boot heritage into a foreign market. In order for the brand to be successfully adopted by Australians, it must adapt to local cultural values while preserving its company heritage and craftsmanship. Economic data shows that Australia's luxury footwear market reached about \$887 million in 2024, and is projected to grow to \$1.2 billion by 2033, growing at an extremely strong rate (OpenPR, 2024). This steady growth indicates a wide segment of consumers that will be accepting and interested in high quality luxury goods. The success of capitalizing on this large market will depend on Lucchese's ability to navigate acceptance into Australian culture-

particularly the “egalitarian” culture and the frequently touted “tall-poppy syndrome” within the country.

Australia’s luxury culture differs from that of the US. Journalists describe the tall poppy syndrome as a social concept in which brands and individuals that appear to be too self-important are “cut down” by public opinion (LearnMate, 2022). This attitude again is rooted in the egalitarian culture, where the belief is that everyone deserves equal respect and opportunity regardless of status or wealth. Business writer Dr. Karen Billian noted “Egalitarianism and humbleness are central to Australian culture, and there is an expectation that [companies] should not be boastful or act in ways that are perceived as flagrant” (Billian, 2023). For Lucchese, this means that any marketing emphasizing celebrity, exclusivity, or high-status display could alienate Australian consumers. Instead, the brand should project a blend of authenticity, function, and humility that earns respect through its historical craftsmanship.

Lucchese’s go-to-market strategy should prioritize credibility over coverage in order to protect brand identity. The brand should secure placement in David Jones, Australia’s premier luxury department store with over five million annual customers, supplemented by an e-commerce platform (Qantas Newsroom). Several boutique-style shops in Sydney CBD and Melbourne could help anchor the brand by offering boot-care stations and fit consultations to reinforce craftsmanship and their staple of custom boots. Select distribution through independent boutiques—particularly those catering to equestrian or heritage-wear clientele—would extend reach while keeping exclusivity. Subsequent phases should emphasize the Australian website launch, a nationwide repair and refurbishment program, and subtle pop-up experiences at cultural events like coastal markets or small tourist towns. All these avenues will help protect Lucchese from being deemed a “tall poppy,” while enforcing their foundation of craftsmanship, luxury, and exclusivity.

When considering brand position against existing competition, Lucchese’s place in the Australian market sits between two homegrown legends: Blundstone and R.M. Williams. Each of these companies contains their own loyal following and cultural identity. Blundstone has long represented everyday durability and rugged simplicity. It’s the boot for people who want something they can wear anywhere, from a workshop floor to a weekend festival. On the other end of the spectrum, R.M. Williams embodies refined Australian craftsmanship, combining rural heritage with urban polish. Lucchese can carefully enter this landscape as the international craftsman alternative. They should try to establish themselves as a brand that blends global prestige with the authenticity of the Western frontier. Rather than competing on national heritage, Lucchese should highlight its shared values with these Australian icons. These values are concepts like hard work, resilience, and timeless quality. If positioned slightly above R.M. Williams in price, Lucchese will keep its luxury status while remaining approachable to customers who appreciate premium goods but also want practicality. The result is an identity of understated luxury, and boots that feel sophisticated yet grounded. Lucchese’s quiet confidence

allows it to fit naturally into Australian life, and for it to be respected for its craftsmanship and quality, and embraced for its authenticity rather than status.

Pricing Strategy

Setting the right price point is one of the most important steps for Lucchese as it enters the Australian market. Based on Lucchese's strong values, the price should reflect its luxury positioning but also be fair and justified to Australian consumers. Australians are known for valuing authenticity and practicality over flashiness. With the median disposable household income sitting around AU\$1,192 per week, the middle class has solid purchasing power but is careful about how they spend it (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Combined with Australia's cultural trait of tall-poppy syndrome this means Lucchese must present its products as worth the price, not above the people (Billan, 2023). In other words, the price should tell a story of craftsmanship and heritage, not status or exclusivity.

Lucchese's sweet spot in the market is to position itself slightly above R.M. Williams, while staying below the price of ultra-luxury European designers like Gucci or Saint Laurent. R.M. Williams' handcrafted boots generally retail between AU\$700 and AU\$900, while high-end designer boots can sell for over AU\$1,800 (OpenPR, 2024). Lucchese can comfortably launch in the AU\$950–AU\$1,200 range for its core line. This will show refinement and international craftsmanship without alienating practical buyers. Limited edition pairs featuring unique materials could range from AU\$1,500 to AU\$2,000 as long as the brand is transparent about its ethical sourcing and compliant trade practices. This level of honesty about materials and production would go a long way toward building customer trust from transparency and integrity.

Instead of competing on price alone, Lucchese should lean into a value-based premium model. Australians are willing to pay more when they feel they're getting something genuinely better. That's where Lucchese's handmade construction and repair programs give it an advantage. If Lucchese can explain that every pair of boots is the result of hours of skilled labor and built to last for years, the higher price becomes part of the story rather than a barrier. Including complimentary boot care, conditioning services, or lifetime repair options would make the value feel even more tangible. It's not about being the most expensive boot on the shelf but about being the most honest one. That approach aligns with Australian consumers' preference for practicality and straightforwardness in the brands they support (IMARC Group, 2024).

Promotional Strategy

Through our extensive research into the Australian market dynamics, we've identified three distinct customer profiles that require slightly altered approaches to effectively reach. From the high-income urban populations of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane to the rural

traditionalists in Queensland, Australia has an extremely diverse population. Our strategy will emphasize subtle, culturally aligned messaging that caters to the Australian ethos of understated, genuine luxury. The “Tall Poppy Syndrome”, which favors humility over showmanship, requires a campaign that highlights the brand’s deeply rooted history, craftsmanship involving more than 150 handmade steps, and the longevity of its products rather than over the top status flaunting (Luxury Society, 2024). Our initial promotional strategy will consist of three phases, targeting our identified customer segments with a detailed, analytical approach highlighting the most compatible aspects of Lucchese’s storied brand.

Phase 1 (Months 0-9)

Phase one of the campaign should focus on digital storytelling through targeted ad placements in high-profile Australian lifestyle and fashion news channels including Vogue Australia, GQ Australia, CNET, Guardian Australia and The Australian Financial Review (Prowly). These stories should center on the American heritage and dedication to craft, supported by high-quality visuals captured in authentic local settings to forge emotional resonance. Accessories such as belts, wallets, and handbags crafted from Lucchese’s signature exotic leathers can serve as introductory products to navigate strict biosecurity regulations, lower the initial purchase barrier, and build the foundation of brand familiarity in a risk-averse market. Lucchese should complement this with influencer collaborations with Australian artisans and fashion leaders. This approach taps into trusted community voices rather than celebrity endorsements who might be more boastful and egotistical, building loyalty among discerning consumers seeking authenticity and exclusivity (TechSci Research, 2025).

Phase 2 (Months 9-24)

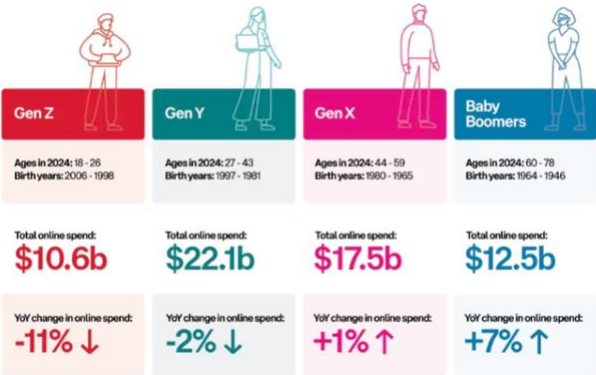
Building on this foundation, stage two should deepen engagement through strategic partnerships with well-recognized Australian designers, providing collaboration and data that are responsive to local tastes and climates while preserving Lucchese’s identity (IBISWorld, 2025). A virtual fitting service can account for the challenges of distance and fit uncertainty common in international e-commerce, delivering personalized consultations through the main distributors and designers in Texas. These service innovations would distinguish Lucchese from traditional luxury companies by combining craftsmanship with cutting-edge customer experience, a combination highly valued in Australia’s competitive luxury market (Australia Post, 2025). Given that 46% of Australian Millennials and Gen Z consumers prioritize sustainability in luxury spending, Lucchese’s messaging must underscore its ethical sourcing and product longevity, positioning each boot as a lifelong accessory rather than a disposable fashion item (Australian Retailers Association, 2023). Innovative slogans such as “A Legacy, Not a Landfill” appeal directly to evolving consumer values and are essential to fostering long-term brand trust (IBISWorld, 2025).

Phase 3 (Months 24+)

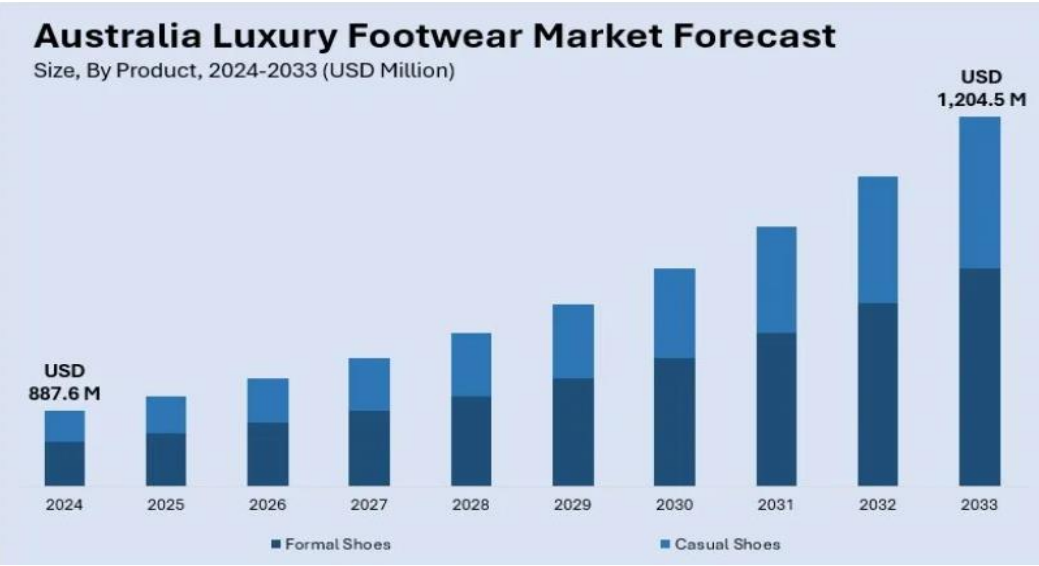
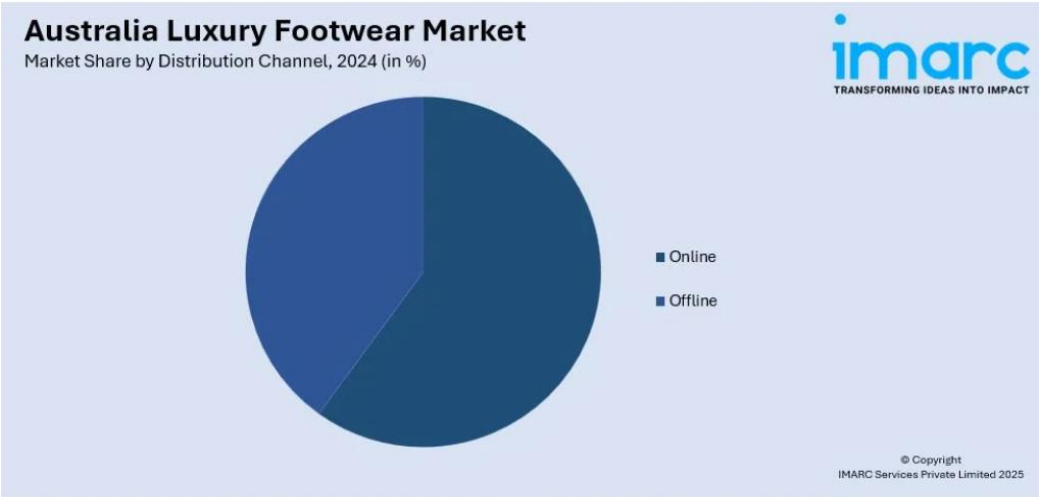
Phase three of Luchese’s marketing process focuses on long term sustainability by embedding the brand into targeting local institutions through event sponsorship. However, competitors like R.M. Williams and Ariat dominate the working class and rodeo scene, making it critical to avoid sponsoring events in this field (Concrete Playground). Instead, they should focus on the equestrian and music industries, collaborating with events like Portsea Polo and Melbourne Cup on the equestrian side to reach a high-end customer base. For the music industry, there are plenty of concerts and venues to choose from. However, we’ve decided Tamworth Country Music Festival (Lamitschka, 2024) would align most with the values of the company, giving us a major venue to showcase Luchese’s products. Instead of positioning our products as an exclusive “VIP” brand, we’ll sponsor the whole event, avoiding any implications of showmanship and being inclusive to the entire market. Moreover, to establish the ethical morality of the brand, Luchese should partner with local charity groups. This could be an Australian wildlife conservation group or a fund dedicated to preserving the outback heritage, directly supporting our sustainability narrative and building community trust.

Sales Channel

Distribution strategy must simultaneously balance exclusivity with accessibility by integrating a dual-channel model responsive to Australia’s expansive geography and sophisticated urban markets. The creation of a dedicated Luchese Australian website, combined with Australian dollar pricing, is essential for direct-to-consumer sales, preserving Luchese’s sale margins and brand control (Secomm, 2025). Efficient logistics partnerships with third-party vendors specializing in luxury goods will enable Australian consumers to receive orders within 1–3 days. Luchese should complement this with a transparent return and repair policy, tailored to the Australian consumer protections and service expectations (Redsearch, 2025). On the ground retail locations should adopt a showroom feel rather than push for volume sales, embedding Luchese within flagship department stores such as David Jones, creating high-end brand experience reinforced by a well-trained, professional staff (Luxury Society, 2024). This selective physical presence can be amplified by pop-up events aligned with prestigious Australian gatherings like those discussed above. This distribution plan should enhance brand visibility in affluent luxury markets while still providing access to the rural areas (IMARC Group, 2023).



The Australian luxury footwear environment is characterized by competition and tradition, with established local players like R.M. Williams and Ariat commanding the workwear and everyday boot segments. Lucchese’s challenge and advantage lies in appealing to affluent urban markets and rural equestrian customers seeking exclusivity and style beyond functionality (IBISWorld, 2025). With nearly 23 million Australians projected to be online shoppers by 2029, and fashion e-commerce expectancy reaching AUD 12 billion in annual sales, the pathway for Lucchese’s hybrid sales approach of online and physical retail is clearly supported by macro consumer behavior trends (Statista, 2025). As shown in the graph below, most of the Australia luxury footwear market is bought online. Pairing this data with cultural promotions and an agile distribution system will enable Lucchese to stand out as a premier provider of timeless craftsmanship tailored to the nuances of the Australian luxury market.



Ethical Issue: Sustainability in Exotic Leather Production

Lucchese is a company known for its handmade boots and its long tradition of using high-quality materials like ostrich and crocodile leather. That craftsmanship is what has made the brand special for more than a century. But as Lucchese looks to expand into Australia, it faces a new challenge: how to stay true to its traditions while meeting modern expectations around ethics and sustainability.

Many Australian consumers today care a lot about where their products come from and how they're made. They want to support brands that treat people, animals, and the environment responsibly. This is especially true in the luxury market, where buyers expect not only high quality but also transparency and ethical practices. Because of this, Lucchese has to decide whether to keep using exotic animal leathers, which are part of its heritage, or move toward more sustainable and ethical materials that fit better with current values.

Both options have pros and cons. If Lucchese keeps using exotic materials, it risks criticism from consumers and environmental groups. But if it changes materials, the brand could lose some of the craftsmanship and identity that make it unique. The decision becomes even more complicated when you consider Australia's strict laws about animal trade and ethical production, such as the Modern Slavery Act (2018), CITES, and BICON import regulations, which all require transparency about sourcing and treatment. The choice it makes will show whether the brand can honor its history while also adapting to a world where consumers expect luxury and responsibility to go hand in hand.

Stakeholder Analysis

Artisans and suppliers

Lucchese works with small, specialized suppliers like American Tanning & Leather Co. in Georgia and Tusting & Burnett Ltd. in England (Lucchese Bootmaker, 2020). These partners rely heavily on Lucchese's orders and employ skilled craftspeople who use regulated exotic hides under CITES (2024). If Lucchese stops using exotic materials, these suppliers could face financial loss and job cuts, threatening generations of craftsmanship.

However, many suppliers are already exploring eco-friendly methods such as vegetable tanning and lower-impact dyes. Partnering with them to expand these efforts could preserve their livelihoods while helping Lucchese shift toward sustainable practices.



Factory and tannery workers

Thousands of workers worldwide depend on exotic leather production. In many regions, regulated trade provides jobs and incentives to protect wildlife. Also, according to CITES (2024), ethical sourcing programs can help conserve species when properly managed. If Lucchese immediately cut off these materials, it could harm these communities more than help the environment. A balanced transition plan would limit social and economic disruption while still moving toward sustainability.

Customers

Australian luxury shoppers expect transparency and ethical sourcing. YouGov (2023) found that 46% of Australians are more likely to buy products labeled “sustainably made,” while Euromonitor International (2023) notes that conscious consumerism is growing. If Lucchese continues using exotic leathers without clear documentation, it risks losing credibility. Still, removing exotic materials entirely could disappoint customers who value Lucchese’s distinctive craftsmanship. Offering both ethical exotics and sustainable alternatives would allow the brand to satisfy both groups.

Regulators

Australia enforces strict rules on imported animal products through BICON (Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 2024) and labor transparency laws under the Modern Slavery Act (2018). Failing to comply could result in shipment delays or fines. Lucchese will need detailed traceability for all materials to meet these regulations and maintain its reputation.

Employees and Leadership

How Lucchese's leadership handles the decision around exotic leathers and sustainability will directly affect the company's internal direction. If Lucchese continues using exotic leathers, leaders and employees could face reputational pressure, especially in markets like Australia where sustainability expectations are high. Marketing and design teams may struggle to promote the brand in an environment where transparency and ethical sourcing are becoming the norm, and the lack of clarity around Lucchese's sustainability goals could create internal tension. On the other hand, if the company decides to transition toward more sustainable or non-exotic materials, there could be short-term operational challenges and cost increases as new suppliers are vetted and production processes adjusted. However, in the long term, this shift would help align leadership decisions across departments and strengthen Lucchese's credibility as a responsible luxury brand.

Framework Applications

Utilitarianism approach

From a utilitarian point of view, Lucchese's decision should focus on creating the greatest overall benefit for everyone involved. As the company expands into Australia, it faces stronger expectations around sustainability and ethical sourcing. Nearly half of Australian consumers say they are more likely to buy fashion items that are marketed as "sustainably made" (YouGov, 2023). Continuing to use exotic leathers might protect existing jobs and profits for now, but it could also harm the environment, animal welfare, and Lucchese's reputation over time. Many Australians view materials like crocodile and snake skin as outdated and unethical (The Conversation, 2024). On the other hand, shifting toward sustainable materials could create more long-term value by building consumer trust and showing environmental responsibility. Competitors like Ariat have already proved that sustainability and profitability can go hand in hand by promoting their eco-friendly manufacturing practices (Ariat, n.d.). Overall, the utilitarian choice would be for Lucchese to gradually move away from exotic leathers in order to create the most positive impact for people, animals, and the company's future.

Rights approach

The rights approach focuses on respecting the basic rights of all stakeholders involved. Every person in the supply chain, from raw material workers to end consumers, has a right to fair and safe treatment. Continued reliance on exotic leathers introduces a moral conflict, as these materials often come from farms where animal welfare standards are inconsistent, and the tanning process may expose workers to hazardous chemicals (National Geographic, 2023). Moreover, Australian consumers have the right to make informed purchasing decisions, which requires transparent labeling and marketing about sourcing and materials (Modern Slavery Act, 2018). Choosing to continue with exotic materials without clear ethical safeguards could violate these rights. Alternatively, transitioning toward sustainable or ethically farmed leathers honors these rights by ensuring humane treatment of animals, safer working conditions, and transparency for buyers. From this framework, Lucchese's responsibility is not only to meet legal requirements but to actively protect and respect the dignity of every party impacted by its production process.

Fairness and justice approach

The fairness and justice approach emphasizes equal treatment and equitable outcomes for all. Within Lucchese's operations, this means fairly balancing the needs of its suppliers, employees, and consumers across both the U.S. and Australia. Continuing to source exotic leathers could perpetuate inequity if suppliers in developing regions face stricter regulations or reputational harm while Lucchese reaps the benefits. In contrast, shifting toward sustainable sourcing - such as plant-based leathers or ethically certified farms - would distribute benefits more fairly across stakeholders. Australian regulations under the Modern Slavery Act require companies to address potential exploitation in their supply chains, ensuring fairness for all workers (Australian Government, 2024). Taking proactive steps to meet or exceed these expectations positions Lucchese as an ethical brand that treats all participants equitably. In this framework, justice is achieved when workers, suppliers, and consumers are all treated with equal respect and when environmental responsibility is not sacrificed for profit.

Common good approach

The common good approach considers what decision best supports the welfare of society as a whole. Environmental sustainability and ethical sourcing are not just business choices but social responsibilities that influence community well-being. Australia has one of the world's most comprehensive biosecurity systems, with strict import standards to protect ecosystems and native wildlife (BICON, 2024). Choosing to reduce or eliminate exotic leathers would contribute to this larger public good by lowering risks associated with invasive species, habitat destruction, and unethical farming. Moreover, studies show that 46% of Australian fashion consumers are more likely to purchase from brands that market their products as sustainably made (YouGov, 2023). Lucchese has the opportunity to contribute positively to both environmental and cultural health by modeling responsible business practices. Under the common good framework, the most

ethical choice is the one that supports both the planet and the long-term prosperity of the communities that depend on it.

Virtue Approach

The virtue approach focuses on character and integrity: doing what a “good” company would do, even when it’s not the easiest or most profitable. Lucchese has long built its reputation on craftsmanship, honesty, and quality. Applying this same integrity to its sourcing decisions is essential. Continuing to use exotic leathers could be seen as inconsistent with the values of respect and transparency that the brand promotes. In contrast, pivoting toward sustainable alternatives - such as responsibly sourced leathers or innovative materials - demonstrates courage, humility, and forward thinking. Luxury companies like Gucci and Burberry have already phased out exotic skins entirely, proving that heritage and ethics can coexist (The Guardian, 2021). For Lucchese, the virtuous path is not about perfection but about progress. By taking measurable steps toward sustainability, the brand can uphold its legacy while showing moral leadership in a changing industry.

Recommended Approach and Next Steps

We believe the most ethical and realistic path for Lucchese combines ideas from both the utilitarian and virtue approaches. From a utilitarian view, the company should aim to create the greatest overall benefit for everyone involved—its workers, suppliers, customers, and the environment. At the same time, the virtue approach reminds us that Lucchese’s reputation has always been built on values like honesty, craftsmanship, and pride in doing things the right way. Following these principles can guide Lucchese to make ethical choices that still make business sense.

In practice, we think this means gradually moving away from exotic leathers and investing in more sustainable, traceable materials. This transition would allow Lucchese to protect its long-term reputation while also respecting the growing expectations of Australian consumers, who are becoming more aware of sustainability and animal welfare issues. In fact, research shows that 46% of Australian consumers are more likely to buy products labeled as “sustainably made” (YouGov, 2023), and many luxury shoppers now expect transparency about sourcing and production (Packaging News, 2025). Responding to these expectations early can position Lucchese as a leader in ethical craftsmanship rather than a brand playing catch-up.

To put this approach into action, Lucchese could take a few clear next steps. First, the company could introduce a limited sustainable collection, featuring boots made from plant-based, recycled, or ethically sourced materials. This would allow Lucchese to test consumer interest and prove that premium quality doesn’t have to come at the expense of ethics. Second, the company should increase transparency by publishing detailed reports about its sourcing

practices or working with independent sustainability certification partners. This step would help meet Australia's Modern Slavery Act requirements and reassure consumers that Lucchese is serious about responsible production. Finally, we recommend a marketing shift that focuses on "Heritage Meets Responsibility." This would highlight the company's deep craftsmanship roots while communicating a genuine commitment to sustainability and innovation.

We believe this combination of approaches and solutions reflects who Lucchese is as a brand: respectful of its traditions, but ready to grow in a way that benefits both people and the planet. Taking these steps won't just protect its reputation, it will strengthen its connection with new customers and give Lucchese a meaningful edge as it enters the Australian market.

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