

## WORK SAMPLE: ARTICLE

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### TomboyX: Designing Underwear for Badasses

Underwear is pretty darn important. It's the first thing we put on with each new day. Our relationship with it is intimate. We wear it close, like a second skin. We have no secrets from our undies. Typically, only those closest to us get to see us in our skivvies, and our underwear goes with us everywhere we go.

Shouldn't it reflect who we feel we are?

Fran Dunaway and Naomi Gonzalez think so. They're the founders of TomboyX, a Seattle-based clothing line for women and they can't be bothered with flowery frills or filmy, barely-there fabrics that can't be fully lived-in.

TomboyX was born out of frustration. At home in Seattle, Dunaway had come to favor men's button-down shirts because their fabric was usually of better quality than that used to make women's shirts. Naturally, however, men's shirts lacked the right fit, often overwide in the shoulders and with sleeves that dangled ridiculously long.

Dunaway and Gonzalez looked at one another and asked, "How hard could it be to start a clothing line?"

That was in 2011, when TomboyX was feeling its way and experimenting with everything from shirts to hats to tank tops.

Then they hit on something big.

"Naomi and I were at a Seattle Storm game when we met Carma Clark," says Dunaway of a self-described androgynous police detective who couldn't seem to find the right underwear. "She became our fit model and underwear connoisseur. We worked with her and a host of other women with different body types to get the fit of our boxers just right. It took months. But now, women's boxers are our core product. They're what we're known for."

TomboyX seems to market to women who never hesitate to live life on their own terms. "Badass" is a word that crops up often in their copy, such as in a recent blog post about "Inspirational Badass Doris Whitehair – Lapping the World from Her Wheelchair". A 2015 promotional road trip was dubbed the "Not Your Granny's Panties" tour, hinting at defiance in the face of tradition. And the winner of last year's TomboyX Model Contest was fire engine captain Kris Larson.

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“The TomboyX customer is definitely a doer,” says Dunaway. “She’s not afraid to roll up her sleeves and get in on the action. I think our boxers help women feel comfortable, confident and unafraid to move.”

It’s also important to Dunaway and Gonzalez that their intimate apparel is accessible to women of all shapes and sizes. Most styles are offered in a range from XS to 4X.

The feedback from customers has been overwhelmingly encouraging. “We see ongoing interest from women who wear a set uniform to work, including police officers, firefighters and nurses,” says Gonzalez. “We also draw in a lot of athletes, as well as women who are just plain tired of uncomfortable underwear that doesn’t feel like ‘them’.”

Dunaway adds, “We’ve heard from a lot of women who used to wear performance shorts under their skirts. But once they tried our boxers, they never went back. Cheerleaders, roller derby competitors, waitresses, you name it.”

Sounds like women aren’t taking it anymore when it comes to the same old offerings, and TomboyX is right on time with classic style, no-nonsense comfort and an ideal fit.

From the get-go, the TomboyX mission has been validated. They entered the marketplace on a successful Kickstarter campaign that raised over \$76,000, and in a few short years they’ve attracted a passionate investor pool that’s 80% female. According to Dunaway, revenue has quintupled year over year for the past two years.

Being deprived of the perfect underwear isn’t a tragedy by any stretch of the imagination, but the impact of finally being able to wear what resonates with us is potentially tremendous. If in fact our souls dwell inside these corporeal vessels we call our own, then our underwear is closer to the soul than anything else we wear. And if skimpy and dainty don’t resonate or leave us feeling empowered, maybe it’s about time we wore something that does.