



# Doing It Themselves

## ROOTS CANADA

Toronto

Co-founders: Michael Budman and Don Green

Locations: 245

[www.roots.com](http://www.roots.com)

On its first day of operation in 1973, Roots Canada sold seven pairs of "negative heel" leather shoes designed to maintain proper spine alignment. Michael Budman and Don Green started the company "with the idea of bringing something different, authentic and unique to Canada," Budman says.

"Our idea was to make it ourselves, sell it ourselves and have complete control over determining what we were going to make and sell," he says, "and that principle has served us well."

The product mix now includes leather bags, jackets, natural fiber clothing, accessories and home furnishings.

The company has five Roots stores in the United States. Flagship stores, usually in high-traffic locations, are as large as 8,000 square feet; neighborhood stores average 2,500 square feet. Merchandising and décor focuses on the outdoors, creating a feeling of "rustic luxury" using all-natural materials such as wood and stone.

Customers respond to Roots because the company believes in a "win for the makers, a win for the customers and a win for the employees," Budman says. "And when you put all that together, you can create success."

**STORES**

— Liz Parks

