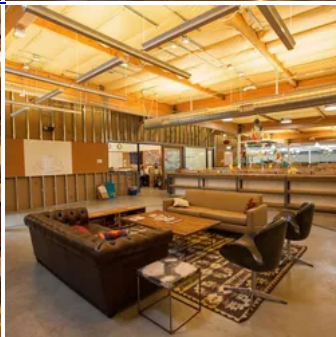
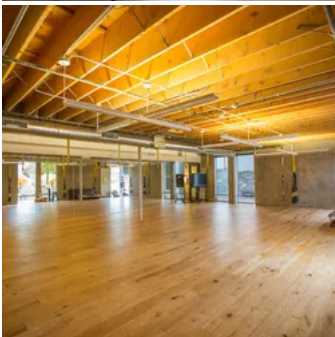
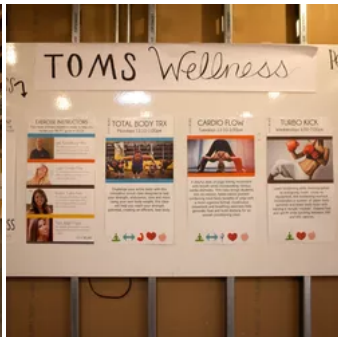
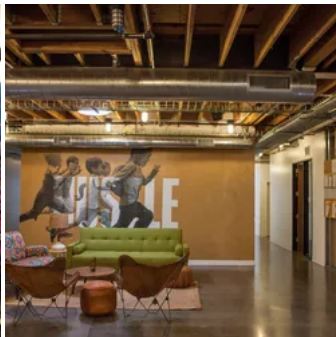


Slides, Baristas, Pilates: Inside TOMS Headquarters in Venice





In 2006, [TOMS](#) founder Blake Mycoskie took a trip to Argentina that would help shape the face of the fashion industry. Now, everyone knows his company's "One for One" mantra well. With the success of footwear, the brand expanded into eyewear, helping to give the gift of sight to a person in need with every frame sold and most recently, coffee. Originally from Texas, Mycoskie found himself in LA when he moved here in an attempt to start his very own reality television channel and in the midst of beginning an online driver's ed business, took that trip to South America that would reroute his path and the paths of employees lucky enough to score the coveted gig at the company.

Each of the TOMS's stores are set up as spaces where visitors can hang out, enjoy a cup of coffee and participate in community events. The Venice location is even dog-friendly, Mycoskie's favorite part of the store. In 2012, the entrepreneur moved his expanding company to their current HQ in Marine del Rey where the Finance Department is referred to as "Funance." We visited TOMS's infamous playground-like headquarters and yes, "infamous" is the appropriate word. We saw firsthand the doggie park, outdoor stage, in-session workout classes as well as those enormous blue slides—the only normal way to get from the second to first floor. We also caught up with the new dad who gave us some advice and hinted about exciting things on the horizon.—*Additional reporting by Danielle Directo-Meston*

How did you come up with the very first design for TOMS?

The TOMS Classic is inspired by the Argentinian Alpargata. In 2005, I traveled there with the intention of learning polo and ended up taking part in my first shoe giving experience. After that, I felt compelled to create a company that would do something meaningful. I wanted the design of the shoes to reflect the heritage of Argentina, where this movement all began, and landed on the classic style eponymous with TOMS.

How many pairs of TOMS reside in your closet?

You would think I have tons, but I usually stick with just a few tried-and-true pairs. I'm also sample size, so I get to test our new styles as they're created. We have some great men's boots coming out this Fall with improved traction that I can wear anywhere.

What was the most challenging part of writing your first book?

Probably keeping it to a manageable length. I try to write everyday and I've filled countless journals with thoughts, quotes and advice over the years. When I sat down to write Start Something That Matters, I had a ton of stories and ideas that I wanted to include. Most importantly, I wanted to make sure I was giving impactful advice to young entrepreneurs, things I wish I had known when I got started.

What advice would you give someone looking to make a difference in the fashion industry?

My advice would be to choose a path you are truly passionate about. When you have purpose behind what you're doing, your success depends less on how experienced you are and more about how meaningful your story is to others. This is key not only to start making a difference, but also to clarify your own personal identity and choices.

Describe a "typical" day in the life of Blake Mycoskie

A typical day in my life these days is much different than it's ever been. I'm a new father, my son Summit was born on Dec. 5 and I've been spending each day learning new things about myself as a dad. I'm also starting to learn the challenge of maintaining a work-life balance, but my family comes first and I've luckily been able to ease myself back into work while on paternity leave.

What do you wish you knew then that you know now?

You can accomplish anything you set out to do. Keep an open ear to your critics, but don't let them dictate your path.

You've done so much with your company since launching, what has been your proudest moment?

I get very excited every time we're about to launch a new product. I thought I couldn't have more proud than when we sold our first pair of shoes in 2006, but when we launched eyewear in 2011 I felt it on a whole new level. I'm still blown away every time the team comes out with a new collection. Launching coffee last year was a big risk, but it was one of the most rewarding feelings to see it come to life. When I take a step back and really think about all the people we're helping with each new product...my feelings are indescribable.

You now have both eyewear, footwear and coffee under your belt, what's next?

Believe it or not we're venturing into yet another product category in less than a month. Our next One for One will address issues in maternal health and potentially make the biggest impact we've made yet in our Giving – be on the lookout for our February launch!