

Thom Browne

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Appendix

Thom Browne is one of the most influential designers for menswear today. He has single handedly changed the format of men's suit and how they are worn. Browne has created his look, in which several designers try to imitate, but could never successfully get. His unique imagination comes to life through his collection. Thom Browne has painted the fashion world grey, bringing back the look of the classic suit. Browne's innovative sense of style has kept his brand in the limelight. His contemporary cropped suits are the talk of the town.

Introduction

Thom Browne Express is a direct branch off of the Thom Browne brand. The founders of the company are Stefon Davis and Brittney Crespo. The company focuses on men's contemporary suits only. Men have changed the way that they wear their suits to adjust to the times of fashion. What was once looked at as being provocative is now considered being fashionable. The company aims to establish new styles and silhouettes for men's suits.

PART I

The first topic to be discussed is the factors of production in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Factors of Production

Land

Thom Browne uses natural resources from Pennsylvania to produce his contemporary suits. According to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (2013), the natural resources of the city consist of rivers and streams, wetlands, woodlands, floodplains, rich soils, carbonate rock, etc. Pennsylvania is also known for mining anthracite coal. Penn State University Libraries (2019), states that anthracite coal is mined in Pennsylvania. The landscape of Pennsylvania is filled with a lot of rural land and little streams that aid in its agricultural areas. Woodland areas in Pennsylvania are a primary source of timber (LVPC, 2013). These land factors make Allentown, Pennsylvania self-sufficient.

Capital

Thom Browne has strong capital in his hometown of Allentown, Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development (2019), states that Pennsylvania's geographical position between the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast gives it access to export and import goods globally. Shipping through ships, trucks, and trains is most beneficial to the state. According to Datausa.com (2017), there are an abundance of industries and manufacturing companies growing at a substantial rate. The city is filled with several metropolitan statistical areas, which are comprised of industry, housing, organizational structures, and many more. Allentown's metropolitan, statistical areas can be found in several

counties such as Northampton, Warren, Lehigh, and Carbon County (Bresswein, 2019).

Pennsylvania has more resources and merchandise that attract merchants and international investors.

Labor

Thom Browne's corporation contains semi skilled workers. Datausa.com (2017), states that the city of Allentown has more evenly distributed wages than that of the rest of the United States. Although there are inequalities in income, wages are substantially better. The average male and female salaries have risen to \$68,603 and \$51,375 (2017). With the development of more evenly distributed wages, apparel industries become more appealing. Data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), states that the highest salaries by race and ethnicity are Asian White, and American-Indian. Efficient labor factors are appealing for work intensive business, primarily for the apparel industry.

Entrepreneurship

Thom Browne's retail innovation keeps the brand at the forefront of the contemporary fashion world. His excessive use of the color gray has seriously stamped the collection (Harilela, 2015). Thom Browne's inspiration comes from his father who had to wear gray suits to work. More innovative features of Thom Browne's suit contains narrow, shrunken, cropped features (Blume, 2018). No one wears suits so small, so when Thom Browne does it just remember that he is making a statement. He has altered menswear drastically, changing the format of retailing today (2018). Thom Browne's, industry portrays a work intensive industry.

The next topic to be discussed is the geography of Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Geography

The origin of Thom, Browne’s brand traces back to Pennsylvania. According to Britannica.com (2019) Allentown is in the eastern-central region of Pennsylvania. It is the third biggest city in the state. The United States Census Bureau (2018), states that Allentown has an estimate of 121,433 people residing there. The city is multicultural, it is home to different races. Allentown has some size to it, covering roughly over eighteen square Miles (Byrne, 2015). Pennsylvania is right next door to the tri-state area so that gives the state many of commuters from different locations.

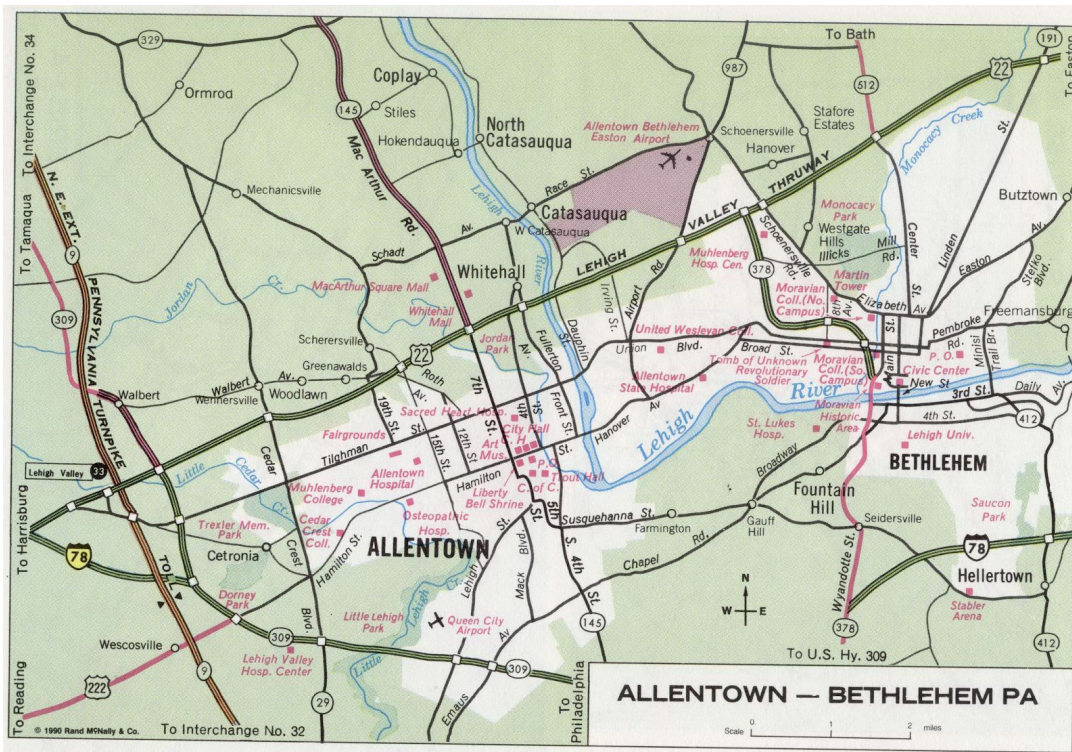


Figure 1. Allentown Bethlehem Map. This figure illustrates the different bodies of water in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Allentown, Pennsylvania has several bodies of water surrounding the city. According to the map above, these bodies of water consists of the Lehigh River, Jordan Creek, Cedar Creek, Lake Muhlenberg, Little Lehigh Creek, etc. The importance of these bodies of water is primarily based on importing/exporting and agriculture/cultivation. Pennsylvania has an estimate of 250 lakes throughout the land (Clinesmith, 2019). The rivers and lakes in the terrain are sources for maintaining recreational activities and wildlife. Worldatlas.com (2017), states that the Delaware River is one of the most important water sources near the border of Pennsylvania. There are a few essential rivers throughout the state.

The cultural geography for the residents of Pennsylvania varies. According to U.S. News: Real Estate (2019), residents in Allentown have different things that they can do in the city. These activities range from watching college games at the PPL Center, visiting different museums, going to the club, amusement parks, etc. The state is also known for its world famous waterparks, Wildwater Kingdom and Dorney Park (Ireland, 2019). When Allentown residents want to get away from all the action they head towards the theater district to catch a movie. This area is also filled with restaurants, boutiques, and several art walks (2019). Entertainment in Allentown is somewhat large-scaled.

The next topic to be discussed is the economics of Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Economics

The economy of Thom Browne's hometown city of Allentown is strong. Huduser.gov (2018), states that Allentown's economy over the last few years has grown considerably. Large manufacturers and industrial areas have contributed to the city's strong economy. According to

the data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), paying jobs in the city are computer and statistical occupations, law enforcement, computer, and engineering jobs. Although poverty is substantially a general problem, things are slowly getting better. Datausa.com (2017), states that some of the lowest paying jobs in the city are service occupations, firefighters, food preparation, cultivation, and forestry occupations to name a few. For the most part, Allentown's job market has increased greatly.

The economy in Pennsylvania's households have increased. Deptofnumbers.com (2017), states that the median household income is \$63,944. The median household income in Allentown is considerably more than that of the rest of the United States. Data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), states that there has been an annual growth in income of 1.46% since 2016. The average household size in Allentown ranges from two to three people per household. Datausa.com (2017), states that the median property value of a house is \$213,400. The value of houses in the state of Pennsylvania is significantly growing.

Allentown's unemployment and tax rates are huge factors to the economy. To Deptofnumbers.com (2019), unemployment rates have risen to 4.1%. Although Allentown's unemployment rate has risen, it is doing much better than previous years. The unemployment rate in Allentown was at its highest in 2010, peaking at 9.6% (2019). That is a major difference in rates, well over twice as much inflation. Pennsylvania uses a higher tax rate than New York (Manskar, 2019). These tax rates are sizeable when looking at living in Pennsylvania.

Several areas in Pennsylvania have different local tax rates added to that specific region. Revenue.pa.gov (2019), states that by Pennsylvania law, a 1% local tax rate is added to certain items purchased in Allegheny County. Taxes are mainly added to services or products that are

considered taxable to the state. According to [avalara.com](#) (2019), the sales tax rate for Pennsylvania is 6%. This is one of the only states with a single statewide tax. [Smartasset.com](#) (2019), states that the income tax rate of Pennsylvania is 3.07%. There are some taxpayers who are issued a tax forgiveness if their income is too low.

The next topic to be discussed is the climate of Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Climate

Thom Brown faces different weather conditions when working in Allentown. According to [Rssweather.com](#) (2013), Allentown's climate ranges from a low thirty-five degree's fahrenheit in January to a high of eighty-three degrees fahrenheit in July. Weather in Allentown is fairly cool for many of the year. Allentown's driest month would usually be in February with an average precipitation rate of 2.75 inches per month (2013). This amount of precipitation for the month matches it raining every eleven days. [Weather-us.com](#) (2019), also states that the wettest month would usually be in July with an average precipitation rate of 5 inches per month. This statistic shows that it rains at least once every week this month.

Pennsylvania is known for having severe weather. Some of these climate include flash floods, thunderstorms, tornadoes, blizzards, fires, etc (Nissen, 2018). Natural disasters occur much in this region of the United States. According to [Psecu.com](#) (2019), hurricanes do not often occur but still have crucial effects on the land. These natural disasters often lead to major property and electrical damages. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2013), states that flooding in Pennsylvania is primarily because of flash, river, and coastal flooding,

tropical storms, ice/debris jams, snow melting, and dam breaks/levee failures. Much of Pennsylvania's establishments are positioned along the bodies of water, which often get hit first. (Stefon)

The next topic to be discussed is Allentown's culture.

Culture

Thom, Browne is an American designer well known for reinventing men's suiting and changing its look. Born in Allentown Pennsylvania, he lived a regular suburban life. One of six, children attending catholic school most of his life to then study at Notre Dame. While attending school, he did not necessarily know or feel his calling (Iredale, 2015). After studying at an office where most aspire to be doctors, lawyers, or businessmen, Thom went off to Hollywood to be an actor. He spent some time living in California, where he made the decision to pack up and move to New York City to pursue a career in fashion.

New York treated Browne well he of course began designing and reworking the original men's suit. He began by wearing his clothing on the streets, where he received pleasant feedback and attention truly benefitting his current day career (Iredale, 2015). Browne has been able to not only establish himself as an American designer but as a New York designer as well. He tries to have a heavy focus and he is invested in having pieces mostly made in New York (2015). His suits were a hit in a New York one of the most iconic fashion cities worldwide. Once a style or designer receives the proper attention from New York fashion week, other fashion enthusiasts begin to watch, follow, adapt, and love his looks.

The inspiration of his iconic suit was his father and general common image of a corporate American male or female (Friedman, 2017). His father wore a grey suit faithfully to work. When one comes to think about it, it is essential that you at least own one good suit. In most cases one will not be perceived as professional or respected, without proper expected attire. Browne found a way to take the American man's uniform and give it a fashionable edge, with a more tailored look, highwater trousers, amazing fabric, and great attention to detail (2017). Browne, also attended catholic church growing up. In most churches the proper attire is a suit for men, especially during Thoms childhood. Which, interestingly reflects in his fashion shows and in his collections and what he likes to call a uniform.

One would identify the group that shops Thom Browne as believers when using the V.A.L.S model (Mostafa, 2011). The Values and Lifestyles model is broken up into eight separate groups. Some of the believer traits are conservative and predictable consumers who favor American products and established brands. Thom Brown is an established American brand that does not change much from season to season (Fury, 2015). Most believers favor consistency and routine.

The next topic to be discussed is Allentown's population and demographics.

Populations and Demographics

Browne began designing only men's suiting and is slowly making his way into women's wear. Seventy percent of sales are from men's wear while thirty percent are from women's wear (Friedman, 2017). Browne has been able to engage with the millennial consumer, which has been one of the most difficult generations to connect with for many retailers and brands.

He has no interest in having a humongous social medium reach or presence of course he does have an Instagram account for the business, it's necessary these days, and he did invest most on his ecommerce. Although, Browne is very clear with his vision as a designer (2017). Browne stated in an interview with the New York Times, “It refreshing when things do not change from season to season, and they stay the same. He has no interest in keeping up with what is cool and happening.”

Browne is clear on his vision and true to himself and that whom he is designing for. Browne designs classic clothing in great materials, that are meant to last season after season. When first introducing his suit, he knew eventually people will adapt and accept. He never spent time stressing trying to make the suit that everyone else was designing or buying. He made his model and stuck with it and it was ultimately up to the consumer to decide. There is much people who appreciate classics, timeless clothing, and not always following the crowd.

Picking one area and specializing in it has given Thom Browne much success in the United States. Allowing him to be noted overseas and eventually expanded globally. Sebastian Manes the Buying Director of Selfridges, stated that Thom Browne is one of the main reasons he attended New York Fashion week. Brownes collection is sold at Selfridges and is a hit in the European market. Europe contributes to about forty percent of its sales in the lead compared to Asia and America adding up to about thirty percent of Brownies sales. Browns clothing is sold at Barneys, Bergdorf Goodman, and his flagship store located in Tribeca, which started out as a customized location. He has received attention globally allowing him to open about ten stores in Asia as well. He received a twenty percent investment from a Japanese apparel company, Strip

International made back in 2009 (Bergl, 2017). This investment allowed him to open about ten stores in Asia.

The next topic to be discussed is Allentown's technology.

Technology

Thom takes pride in every detail of his work, with that being said production is extremely important to him. The way Browne conducts business is also important to him. He is selective on his brand partnerships and collaborations because he does not want his name too into fast fashion, or the mass produced market (Lipton, 2018). That aspect of the fashion industry has growing controversy and has been known to add to many environmental issues in this present day.

Browne takes a great sense of pride in being a New York designer, having the clothes well cut tailored, and made in New York and loves everyone knowing it (Fitzgerald,2015). He has worked with guipure lace with mink trim, organdy embroidered, men's fabric trimmed in horsehair or 3-D appliques (2105). Browne was able to purchase a hand tailoring facility in New York ran by his longtime tailor Rocco Ciccarelli (Iredale, 2015). This event allows Brown to have much control, being able to oversee production ensuring that quality and other standards are met.

PART II

The following section covers some of the current events in the state of Pennsylvania.

Current Events # 1

A Sustainable Answer to Industrial Pollution? That's 'Bananas'!

In a recent article from Pennsylvania State University, two Indonesian graduate students from Penn State are experimenting to find out if fruit peels can be used to take out high amounts of metal in wastewater coming from textile mills. They initiated their experiment by cleaning orange and banana peels and drying them in a low temperature oven for two days where they are further dried and crushed. The peels are then mixed with a solution containing chromium and put through a strainer for further processing. Their research shows that the peels stick to the metal very efficiently. This is very beneficial for local and foreign industries looking to maintain a stable environment. Manufacturers can incorporate this method into mass production, aiding in the efficiency of the textile industry. This development affects retailing in Pennsylvania, now manufacturing garments will be less harmful towards the environment.

Current Events # 2

Is 2019 The Year Pa. Raises Its Minimum Wage? The 'Good Economy' Might Make that Possible

In a recent article from Pennsylvania Real-Time News, the state's Budget and Policy Center is aiming to increase Pennsylvania's \$7.25 an hr minimum wage. The government has made many propositions to increase the wages but Republican lawmakers keep shutting them down. The Republicans believe that the increase will be harmful to business owners who own

small companies. They also believe that raising the wages will eliminate the minimum wage jobs. But legislators have recently given it some consideration because Pennsylvania has the lowest wage accepted by law. The increase in minimum wage rates can be very beneficial to the state because it can build a stronger workforce for the economy. Residents of Pennsylvania will be able to manage their households more efficiently because of higher incomes.

Current Event # 3

Thom Browne Launches First Ever Line of Genderless Fragrance

Big news in the world of Thom Brown, for the first time ever he releases a fragrance. He has been in business for about sixteen years already and has finally created his own fragrance. It took about two years to work on (Sharma,2019) The fragrance comes in six scents and is genderless. This will be a collaboration with the swiss perfume manufacturer Givaudan. Main note is vetiver, with extracts of cucumber, grapefruit, and rose scents.