



Consumers all over the world are increasingly feeling the toll of fast fashion. This approach to producing clothes and items quickly and cheaply to make them available to the widest number of consumers is adversely affecting the environment and to people's mindsets about responsible consumerism. Increasingly, wise consumers are turning back to sturdy bespoke items made to last.

R. Nicole Sharp had always dreamed of becoming a fashion designer. With her hard work and passion for buy-it-for-life items, she established R. Nicole Collection, a shoe designer company, and Tashka Store, a luggage company.

The R. Nicole Collection was born when Nicole designed a pair of shoes for herself to wear to a sorority conference. Her shoes were the envy of all, and it was not long before women began asking to purchase some. Now R. Nicole Collection designs shoes for groups and various organizations. They focus on stylish comfort along with back-end data analytics.

"We are different because the customer has a say during our made-to-order process," she said. The company releases a new design that is voted on by customers each year. Once the shoe is released, the customer lets them know if they have issues with the new designs; this is a novel approach to the made-to-order process.

To match the shoes, Nicole also started producing travel bags. When she worked in corporate America, she would often travel for work but found it difficult to pack suits, travel clothes, and gym clothes all in one bag. She searched the market for a carry-on that would accommodate a traveler like her, but she couldn't find anything. At the time, a lot

of travel bags and luggage designs were coming to the market, but not very many met her style and needs. So she decided to make a few designs and patent the bag herself.

Tashka is a patented convertible travel bag. The word Tashka is an Irish phonetic word for *Taisce*, which means to “store, treasure, or hoard items that we value.” The Tashka travel bag and luggage is unisex, and it comes in two different sizes — carry-on and extended stay. The carry-on travel bag looks like a weekender duffel bag, but it unzips into a rolling garment bag with visible and hidden compartments. It is perfect for travelers that take short trips and need to bring suits or those that need a stylish gym bag to ensure their clothes will never wrinkle. The extended stay travel bag is made for big and tall travelers, professional athletes, entertainers, and families that need big luggage.

Although she was familiar with the manufacturing process, Nicole had no idea how different it was to manufacture new and patent products that had never been made before! After traveling back and forth overseas to source the materials to make the product, it took her a few years to find a manufacturer to make her vision. After sourcing all the materials and making three product samples, she successfully brought the product to market and generated online sales immediately. She has shared her journey on social media.

If you're interested in these products, check out the R. Nicole Collection [here](#) and its Instagram [here](#). The Tashka online store can be found [here](#) and its Instagram [here](#). You may also browse Nicole's [Instagram](#) and give her a follow and her website [here](#).