

Small Texas Rodeo Brand Wins Customers From Big-Box Western Wear Chains

Western Apparel Brand Without a Single Retail Store

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, August 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Horns & Heels Rodeo Company, an Austin-based western apparel brand with no retail stores, is gaining customers as national data shows a growing share of shoppers switching away from big-box and mass-market apparel chains

Horns & Heels Rodeo Company, an independent western apparel brand based in Austin, Texas, has built a growing customer base by selling hats, hoodies and rodeo-inspired gear exclusively through its website, hornsandheels.com. The company has no retail stores, no wholesale distribution deals and no big-box shelf placement. Every order ships directly from Texas to the customer.



Horns & Heels Rodeo Company — A Texas-born western lifestyle brand built on rodeo tradition, hard work, and authentic cowboy culture.

The company's growth comes as national research shows a broader shift in how apparel shoppers spend their money. A 2026 consumer report from market research firm Mintel found that 63% of U.S. consumers have purchased from a direct-to-consumer brand, and 77% say they are open to exploring more online-only options. Separate research cited by data firm Numerator found that 61% of consumers now buy from direct-to-consumer websites at least sometimes, and 53% of those shoppers rated that experience better than shopping on a traditional retailer's website. A Wakefield Research survey reported by trade publication WWD found that 55% of U.S. shoppers say they prefer specialty and independent retailers over big-box stores, most often citing a desire to find something unique.

Horns & Heels was not built around that data. It was built around a stolen roping bag.

"This brand didn't start in a boardroom, it started because my son's roping bag got stolen.

Twice," said Mike, known throughout the rodeo world as "Big Mike," founder and owner of Horns & Heels Rodeo Company. "I'd been team roping since I was young, and after that happened I just started making gear I could trust for my own kid. It turned into a real brand because other rodeo families felt the same way. They wanted gear made by somebody who's actually been in the arena, not a logo picked off a shelf at a chain store."

Every hat and hoodie the company sells is printed and sewn in Texas, rather than mass-produced overseas for distribution to a national chain. Big Mike said that manufacturing choice, combined with selling directly to customers instead of through a store, is central to how a small operation competes for attention in a market long dominated by much larger companies.

"We're a small team going up against companies with a lot more money and a lot more stores," Mike said. "But more rodeo families are choosing to buy straight from a brand they trust instead of off a shelf at a big-box chain, and that's where we're picking up ground. We don't have a corporate campus or a shareholder call. What we have is one website, one team, and rodeo families who'd rather buy from somebody who's actually stood in the box."

The rodeo family is central to how the company describes its own growth. Rather than pursuing wholesale accounts or chasing shelf space, Horns & Heels has focused on building direct relationships with customers through its website and word of mouth within the rodeo community, a strategy the company credits for its expanding order volume over the past year.

Horns & Heels Rodeo Company continues to expand its product line while staying close to its original customer base: rodeo families who want gear made by people who understand the sport firsthand. The company said it plans to keep manufacturing in Texas and selling exclusively online as it grows.

About Horns & Heels Rodeo Company

Horns & Heels Rodeo Company is an independent, direct-to-consumer western apparel brand based in Austin, Texas, offering hats, hoodies and rodeo-inspired gear printed and sewn in Texas and sold exclusively online at hornsandheels.com. The company was founded by lifelong team roper Mike "Big Mike" after his son's rodeo gear was stolen at the arena.

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