

# eCOMMERCE USER RESEARCH IN CHINA

## BODEN

Usability24/7  
1 March 2017

# User research in China provides the insight for retailer Boden

Boden has come a long way since its launch in 1991. Back then, Boden was a mail order business with just 8 menswear products selling exclusively to the UK market. During the intervening period Boden has added womenswear, childrenswear, joined the digital revolution, entered America, Germany and more. It is now one of the most recognised brands for premium fashion online in the markets it operates.

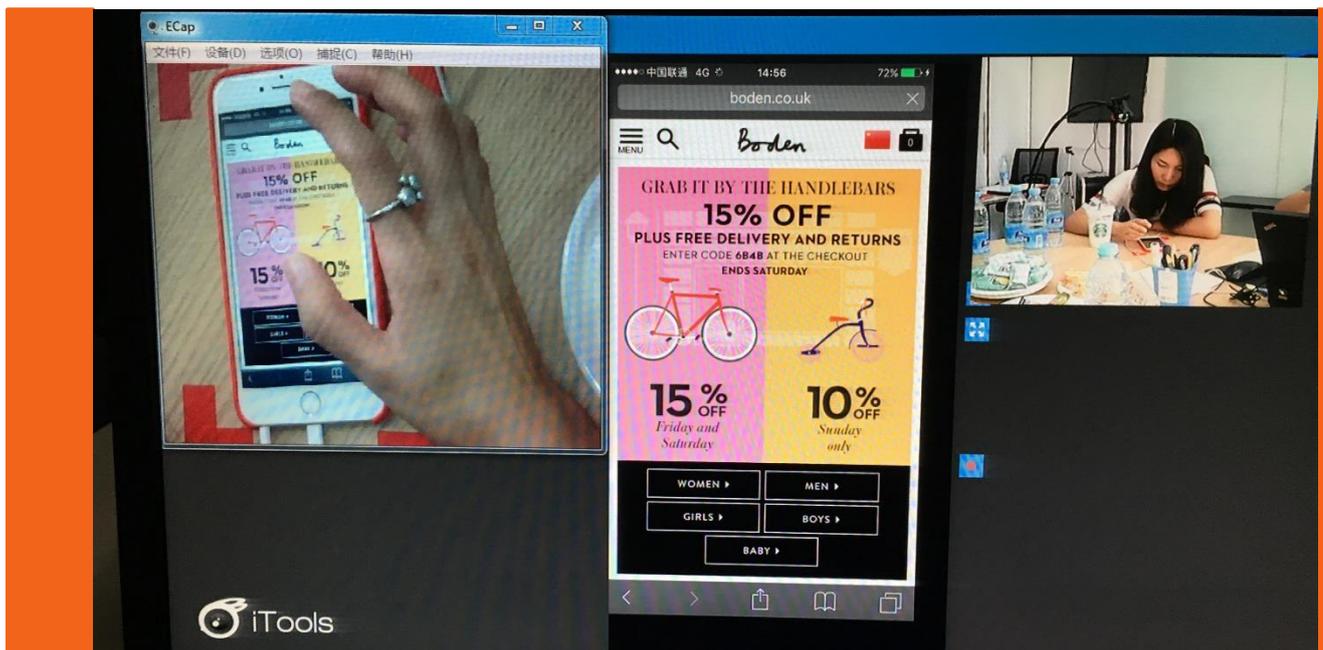
As part of its international strategy, entry into the Chinese market is now being reviewed, with demand for the Boden brand in China having grown entirely organically, through word of mouth and Boden receiving increasing quantities of orders via the UK website from Chinese customers in the last 18 months.

In order to better serve the local Chinese market, Boden wished to explore how consumers interact with the current Boden UK website. Also, whether the localisation steps they have taken with ecommerce partner Global-e were meeting the expectations of local users. Finally, the question of whether there was a requirement for a dedicated and localised Chinese Boden website was key.

Mark Batty, Head of International Development, explains the challenge. “As this was our first-time user-testing in China we needed an agency with both the experience and the contacts on the ground”. He set about looking for a suitable partner and found Usability24/7. “Usability24/7 demonstrated they had experience and a local team in place”.

Usability24/7 was tasked with organising the user research to take place in Beijing and to fit around Mark’s busy schedule.

The project organisation involved creating a recruitment screener that translated UK and understood market segments into the local Chinese market. For example, selection using middle class income levels was a requirement for the screener and it was important that Usability24/7 understood what household income range that meant for China.



Organising the local UX capability was relatively easy for Usability24/7 as they operate a global Accredited Practitioner programme. Everyone who works for the agency, whether full time, part time or freelance is evaluated against the accreditation criteria and all are senior and experienced UX researchers. Usability24/7 already had accredited practitioners in China and so the team was selected based on suitability and availability and brought the essential local knowledge required for the smooth running of the project.

The actual research involved the moderation of twelve individual sessions over two days on both mobile and desktop devices, followed by analysis and reporting. Mark from Boden was present for both days of the research together with Usability24/7 CEO Paul Blunden. A simultaneous translator enabled them to follow the conversation and feedback in the research room and gain insight first hand.

### Quick Facts

- User research conducted in Beijing
- Online shopping behaviour and usability
- Local team with local knowledge
- 12 one to one sessions on mobile and desktop

The scope went beyond usability testing and included more in depth research. This was all encapsulated into a detailed report structured to Boden's specific needs and including market insight together with user experience insight.

Key findings included:

- How Chinese consumers interact with international brands
- The localisation challenges for eCommerce and what needs to be done to facilitate the sale and drive conversion
- The channels Chinese consumers utilise to learn about brands, buy products and share information with friends and colleagues
- The delivery challenges Chinese consumers experience when buying online from international websites

“The insight generated from 2 days’ user-research in China was absolutely invaluable and more than we expected. If you’re looking for someone to support you gaining insight into your international customers’ online shopping behaviour and experiences I wouldn’t hesitate to recommend Usability24/7”

*-Mark Batty, Boden.*

Usability24/7’s local Chinese team provided detailed analysis of these issues and others together with recommendations that were relevant and specific to the Chinese market.

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