

Case Study

Sock Shop – Usability Testing June 2007

The Brief

Sock Shop, fondly remembered by most as a high street shop selling all sorts of socks & hosiery, has started selling its products exclusively online via

www.sockshop.co.uk.

The Sock Shop site is therefore a highly important channel for business for the company. Sock Shop wished to get

feedback on how users search for products. They also wished to get feedback on the

checkout process to try and increase conversion rates on the site. The outputs from this would feed into future developments of the site.

How we responded to the brief

We proposed testing with 3 testers making up Sock Shop's target audience (fashion conscious men and women in their late 20s to late 40s) followed by a facilitated discussion of the issues and to agree actions.

In order to ensure buy-in to the research results, we felt it important that key Sock Shop staff gained a shared understanding of the issues by observing users on the site. By following this with a facilitated discussion, it would allow the observers to identify the key issues and agree actions in a single day.

What we did

We discussed the objectives of the project with the project manager and prepared a facilitation guide to achieve these. We recruited 3 testers fitting to Sock Shop's target audiences.

The testing was conducted in our purpose built viewing studios where Sock Shop staff watched



the testing through a one way mirror.

A tester facilitator encouraged the testers to search for relevant products and go through the buying process independently whilst probing to get as much attitudinal feedback as possible – without interfering unduly in the user journey.

The observers were 'active', writing issues on post-its as they occurred.

Following the observed testing, a discussion was facilitated by a WUP consultant to agree the issues and appropriate actions.

The outcomes

A number of clear conclusions emerged from the research about the features that made product searching and buying easy for users. During the facilitated discussion, Sock Shop staff gained a shared understanding of these issues, and actions were identified that could be implemented

"Thank you for the excellent work you did for us – we found it extremely useful." Vimal Ruia – Sock Shop

Timing and costs

The project was conducted in June 2007 and took less than 2 weeks to complete from recruitment to delivering the final report at a cost of approximately £5,000.