



Kat Maconie steps up her exports with UKTI

Fast facts

Company: Kat Maconie

Industry: Fashion

Target Market: China, Global

UKTI Services: Passport to Export, Trade Missions, Tradeshow Access Programme, Market Visit Support, Gateway to Global Growth, Export Communications Review

www.katmaconie.com



Advice, guidance and financial support from UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) has helped shoe designer, Kat Maconie, identify new markets, secure orders and achieve exports of 70 per cent.

Having always had a creative flair and an eye for style, Kat Maconie started her designer shoe business with the savings she had built up working in fashion recruitment. Beginning with ballet pumps, her range now includes heels and boots.

Around 70 per cent of Kat's sales come from outside the UK. As well as selling directly to retailers, she has a distributor in Italy and agents in Japan, France and the US. Over the years, she has used several UKTI services to boost her exports, including Passport to Export, the UKTI programme that helps businesses to prepare for international markets. She has also joined trade missions to Japan, South

Korea and Brazil, giving her the chance to explore these markets in person.

"Building up an international business, it's absolutely key to get to trade fairs," says Kat. "You meet international buyers and learn about new markets in a way that you simply can't without actually going there. But traveling and exhibiting costs a fortune. I've been amazed by the grants available from UKTI and how supportive and pro-active they have been in making overseas markets accessible to small British businesses."

Targeted support

When in 2013 Kat decided to pursue opportunities in China, UKTI was again on hand with the support she needed. She took part in a delegation to Micam, a leading international footwear fair in Shanghai, supported by the British Footwear Association. Through its Tradeshow Access Programme and Market Visit Support, UKTI provided

funding towards her travel and show costs.

Meanwhile, Kat joined UKTI's Gateway to Global Growth programme through which an International Trade Adviser (ITA) helped her to devise an international strategy for the following 12 months.

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The support she has received has helped her to expand her business in the US and carry out market research in Paris and Milan. The ITA also advised on how she could protect her intellectual property in overseas markets and discussed Kat's recently launched website. Kat is now looking to do further work to internationalise the site and will use UKTI's Export Communications Review to identify ways of raising the brand's profile overseas and directly accessing new customers.

“Gateway to Global Growth has given me the chance to explore various different markets and look at different aspects of my business and how to make it more appealing to overseas markets,” says Kat. “People in China love British heritage and recognise Britain as a design hub, so it's useful to be part of a British group and leverage that brand. I already had some contacts there, but being able to meet them face to face at Micam solidified relationships and smoothed the way for new orders. The funding that UKTI offers is absolutely great. It helps you get so much more out of investing in your own business.”

Future plans

UKTI continues to create exciting new opportunities for Kat to connect with potential overseas clients. In January 2014, its London Fashion team organised fashion clinics in London with its commercial officers from various markets. Kat met with a number of them to discuss her brand and how best to grow her business in their markets. As a result of what she learned, she is now considering using UKTI's Overseas Market Introduction Service to find a distributor in Australia.

In February, UKTI's China team are bringing over a delegation of Chinese buyers looking to meet with fashion, consumer goods and luxury brands that they can do business with. Following on from her success at Micam, Kat has registered to attend a Meet the Buyer event in London where she will talk in

person with some of this delegation in the hope of securing new business.

“UKTI is like a British Club, with contacts all over the world who can carry out background research and advise on issues like protecting intellectual property,” says Kat. “They encourage you to think differently about how to increase your exports. For example, I never would have allocated budget for a review of my website it wasn't for my ITA. UKTI's support is having a very real impact on my business.”

The UK and China

The Chinese economy has grown at almost 10 per cent a year for the last 30 years, effectively doubling in size every eight years

In 2009, China overtook Germany to become the world's largest exporter; in 2010 it overtook Japan to become the world's second largest economy; and in 2012 it overtook the US to become the world's biggest trading nation (imports and exports). China is also expected to become the world's largest goods importer by 2014.

In 2012, the UK's goods exports to China increased by 12.8 per cent to £9.9 billion, making this the UK's largest goods export market outside the US and EU. Imports from China to the UK also grew by 0.4 per cent to £32.9 billion. Total bilateral trade in goods and services in 2012 was £46.5 billion (US\$73.8 billion), and the two countries have agreed a target to increase this to US\$100 billion by 2015.

The China-Britain Business Council (CBBC), UKTI's official trade service delivery partner for mainland China, provides advice and UKTI services to UK businesses via its network of offices across the UK and China.

For more information visit www.cbcc.org

Helping you to do business abroad

Doing business in another country can be a challenge, so it's good to know that UK Trade & Investment is there to help you succeed.

Through a range of unique services, including participation at selected trade fairs, overseas missions and providing bespoke market intelligence, UK Trade & Investment can help you crack foreign markets and quickly get to grips with regulations and business practices overseas.

Through our Passport to Export programme we offer new and inexperienced exporters:

- Capability assessments
- Support in visiting potential markets
- Mentoring from a local export professional
- Action plans
- Customised and subsidised training
- Ongoing support once you're up and running

UKTI was delighted to support Kat Maconie in its business overseas.



To find an adviser in your chosen market and begin your own success story now, scan this code with your smartphone, visit www.ukti.gov.uk/trade, or email enquiries@ukti.gsi.gov.uk

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